

# AGAINST WAGE-LABOUR

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## Editorial

Dear Comrades:

Welcome to the sixth issue of *Against the Wage*, an online publication highlighting the struggles of workers around the world and how the various struggles demonstrate that the workers' labour force is the real power to fight capitalism and its brutal nature against humanity. The power of workers must not be underestimated. Workers in various industries, in both private and public sectors, have the capacity to deal real blows to capitalism and the bourgeoisie.

This power was exemplified in some of our backyards here in Toronto recently. On May 29, 2006, the workers of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 went on strike during early morning hours. The issues were that the mechanics and janitors who had previously worked day shifts were being changed to night shifts, as well as job security and job safety. The workers went on an illegal strike as their anger had been brewing for some time and they were not being heard. The rest of the union's workers refused to cross the picket lines and so a 1-day

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## Repression of Sicartsa metal workers in Mexico:



This article is both a continuation and deeper analysis of the previous May Day report from *Against the Wage*. In early April Sicartsa metal workers in the town of Lázaro Cárdenas in the state of Michoacán, Mexico went on strike to protest the Government's replacement of their union leader, Napoleon Gomez Urrutia, by another individual who favours the company.

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"In 1968, during the height of the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights struggles, I came to think that society as a whole needed to be much more humane."

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## Editorial

strike ensued. With a complete shut-down of public transit in the City of Toronto, hundreds of thousands of people were forced to find alternative ways to work. These workers flexed their muscle and it showed. They messed up an entire city's regular work day.

Unfortunately as this was an enormous inconvenience to commuters, there was angry backlash against the union. Anti-union rhetoric dominated the mainstream corporate-owned media. Newspapers focused primarily on the enraged public, the economic losses of businesses during the strike, and the 'hardships' of the transit riders. People were only focused on their predicament of going to work and were unable to see the 'bigger picture' – that these workers had very serious issues and resorted to what they knew would be widely unpopular, however they had to demonstrate their strength so that their demands be met. Even union leadership was not totally supportive as it was the membership who forced this move. This was an action taken by the rank and file workers. Solidarity from other unions with these workers was not forthcoming. The divisiveness of unionism became markedly clear. The transit workers were on their own, other unions did not offer support, and by 'law' they were forced to return to work.

This strike was illegal. The workers were breaking the law of the capitalist system. With the laws, the system is able to override any power by the working class. The government is able to step in and force workers back to work. This intervention of the 'law' steals away the effective tool of the workers, their labour power. If the workers cannot withhold their labour power to improve their working situations, then their power is turned upside down. The union and its leadership are negotiators that work within the legal framework of capitalism, therefore the demands and needs of the workers are 'bargained' and 'compromised' to the point that there is now an overall erosion of benefits and wages that workers of the past fought for and sacrificed for. The law is not

just, as it was created only for the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois classes. The workers are therefore obligated to break out of this paralyzing agenda and take illegal strikes. Illegal but not unethical.

The strike of the Toronto Transit Commission workers was a clear and spontaneous demonstration that workers can and will act in the interest of their respective collective groups. The union leadership cannot control the workers as it is the workers who have the power, the clenched fists to fight for their immediate reforms. Within this issue of *Against the Wage*, it is mentioned in Naser Paydar's article discussing how both sectarianism and trade unionism divide the working class and do not promote anti-capitalism as the end goal. Furthermore, the article by Bahram Dezeki, which discusses the recent events of the Bus Company workers in Iran, the growing power of other workers' struggles in Iran and the failure of the unions to represent workers. Also we congratulate workers in Iran for the dropping of the charges against the workers for their participation in Mayday 2004, however more recently charges were laid again, this time charging them with 'national security' threats. Lilia from Mexico City provided us with some feedback about the nature of the unions in Mexico – same brutality, different country. Additionally there is an article about the Sicartsa metal workers in Mexico who went on strike, resisted the 'law' and 'order' by the police and military, and in doing so, many were injured and two were murdered. Workers every day put their lives and their welfare on the line at work and when they go on strike, especially if it is deemed 'illegal'. The rank and file workers themselves are the only ones who can make demands as the unions are pawns in the system and therefore truly ineffective. The workers have the means and the power to control productivity in the workplaces, such as the workers in Argentina who control the ceramic tile factory. Their direct democracy is an example of how workers can overcome

the odds and the many obstacles in our society to be able to have real power in their workplace. The Future of the Union is another example of rank and file workers through their own self-activity, educating, striking and providing solidarity to other autoworkers and workers in general. Larry Christensen is a retired autoworker who has provided us with some information in a written interview about Future of the Union, their principles and their activities.

The many workers' struggles often occur in isolation as they are divided by their unions, the management, and the capitalist system, and are dismissed by the various left parties and organizations which impose their own intellectual 'professional revolutionary' standpoint on workers. The working class will only emancipate themselves by themselves and therefore, emancipate everyone. No union, 'professional revolutionary', boss, petit-bourgeois, intellectual lefty will release the chains on workers. Movement towards socialism occurs as workers realize that the imprisonment of wage-slavery is what they must resist against first, foremost and ultimately.



### To our comrades in Norway:

We are writing to congratulate you on the successful launch of the Anti-Wage-Labour website in Norwegian "*Mot Lønnsarbeid*". As worker comrades we all must ensure that everywhere workers have access to the information on our websites. Little by little, we can reach more people by making our website available in different languages. Thank you for increasing our capacity to connect more workers to 'Against the Wage'.

In solidarity,

Against the Wage Editorial Committee Member

Anti-Wage-Labour collective activist

## Class consciousness Raises the spectre of socialism

**By: Nancy LaPlante**

In response to this deemed 'illegal strike', Sicartsa fired an undetermined number of workers, approximately 300, and cancelled their collective agreement of the Local 271 National Mining Syndicate. Sicartsa declared that anyone who did not sympathize with the illegal strike could be rest assured that they would not lose their jobs. The General Secretary of Local 271, Martín Rodríguez Piedra, confirmed that the notices of the rescinded contracts had begun arriving at the workers' homes but he remained clear that their movement would not end. The Sicartsa workers were joined in their struggle by the nearby Mittal Steel mining workers.

The Financial Director of the Grupo Villacero which owns Sicartsa, Ignacio Treviño Camelo, at a press conference on the previous Wednesday evening had summoned the workers to return to work so as not to put their jobs at risk. The director at this time warned that from 12:00 p.m. on April 5<sup>th</sup> onward, it would be considered that anyone abandoning their work, the rescinding of the contract would follow. During this time the workers demanded the return of Urrutia as the leader of the National Miners Syndicate, and occupied the company and were armed with machetes and Molotov cocktails. By their very nature, workers are anti-capitalist, that is, they are not in control of their own lives, they are under control of the system to survive. The union's role takes away the workers' power by becoming a negotiating body with the bourgeoisie and so the union or syndicate are only tools of capitalism to subdue the true character of the worker masses. The power of the workers to resist and fight back such as this 'illegal strike' by Sicartsa workers is an important example of the muscle of the workers. This strike of Sicartsa and its affiliates after five days registered losses in the area of 50 million dollars!! The government and the company can be brought to their knees when they lose their ability to create profits is affected. However, this does not happen without a fight. The bourgeoisie does not take this re-

sistance lightly and so they do not withdraw their control without bloodshed.

It is fundamental to note that the workers had previously tried to come to an agreement and were rejected, including by President Fox who visited Michoacán three days before the tragedy in Lázaro Cardenas. Following his visit, there was bloody repression. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, Héctor Alvarez Gomez, a miner of Mittal Steel, and José Luis Castillo Zúñiga, a Sicartsa worker, were murdered by the police who were given orders to shoot at the protesters' 'feet'. These two workers and many others who were injured stayed their ground to fight the protectors of the bourgeoisie. They used Molotov cocktails, sticks and stones and machinery to uncompromisingly combat their exploiters. Fox's presidential spokesman, said that the violence took place because the Mine Workers Union and the mine workers don't respect the law. This 'lack of respect for the law' demonstrates that the bourgeoisie must work with the unions to 'respect the law' and therefore to agree on their own terms, and so do not recognize the resistance by the rank and file. The syndicate is the bargaining unit used by capitalists to ensure they have control over the labour power and similarly, the union must bring the worker resistance inside the capitalist framework in order to do their job. Fox's spokesperson also said the government would not give in to the workers demands that their former union leader, Urrutia, be returned to his position as General Secretary of the union. The Villacero Corporation, which owns SICARTSA, accused the miners of being "terrorists," and defended the actions of the corporation and the government. The Michoacán Business Coordinating Council praised the government for taking action to evict the strikers from the plant, accused the Miners' union of violence and showed no sympathy for the families of the dead or for the wounded. COMPAREMEX, the Mexican Employers Association, also supported the Michoacán authorities for having taken action. The workers' confrontation with their

bosses despite the strength of the military and police and their risks of being injured demonstrates their lack of choices. Their choices are to wage-slave with dangerous working conditions risking their lives without even the compromising voice of their chosen union representative, or to risk their lives, stand up and fight their employer, and possibly win some reforms while maintaining their dignity. The collective consciousness of the workers leads them to fight cohesively against this brutal system.

Some of the central demands of the National Front for Union Autonomy and Solidarity (FNUAS) were:

- \* Recognition of Urrutia, the union leader as chosen by the mine workers.
- \* End repression at the SICARTSA plant.
- \* Removal of Francisco Xavier Salazar Sáenz, the Secretary of Labor.
- \* Political trial of President Vicente Fox by the Congress (impeachment).
- \* Punishment for those responsible for the violence against the workers.

The explosion and cave-in at the Pasta de Conchos mine in San Juan de Las Sabinas, Coahuila in northern Mexico on February 19 trapped and killed 65 miners. The miners' union leader, Gómez Urrutia, had blamed the employer, Grupo México, calling the deaths "industrial homicide." The Pasta de Conchos cave-in had set off a storm. Throughout Mexico, politicians, academics, intellectuals, and ordinary people criticized the mining company. The Grupo México stock fell. Copper and other commodity prices rose. While miners throughout the country mourned the death of their brothers and complained of health and safety conditions in their own mines, there was no official or wildcat strike in the immediate aftermath of the accident. The fiery anger of workers was brewing.

Lately, however, Gómez Urrutia had begun to challenge both the employers and the Congress of Labor/PRI leadership. In June 2005, Mexican miners

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joined their compañeros in Peru and the United States as more than 10,000 miners carried out a simultaneous protest against Grupo Mexico to demand that the company stop violating workers' rights. The three unions accused Grupo Mexico of having a policy of repression, exploitation and unwanted involvement in union affairs. The protest was organized by the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) in the United States, the Federation of Metal Workers of Peru (FETIMAP), and the National union of Miners and Metal Workers (SNTMM) of Mexico. The international solidarity against the Mexican mining company was backed by the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF).

The bourgeoisie and their allies, the government of Mexico have a lot at stake with Sicartsa. It is a basic concept that these workers produce an enormous wealth for the

company and in return for their labour power they are provided with a wage while the employers pocket the huge surplus value. To better grasp the inequality of the capitalist situation and in particular this example of wage-slaving exploitation, it proves 'interesting to expose the details of this company, Sicartsa and a bit of Mexican politics. It exemplifies the brutal capitalist system, as all huge corporations do.

SICARTSA is Mexico's most modern, efficient and productive steel mill and the largest steel plant in Latin America. It is also the steel mill with the lowest production costs in North America. The plant is a completely integrated facility that combines mines, port facilities,

basic steel mills, and production of finished products, principally iron bars and wire which are used in construction and manufacture. The mines, located just 27 kilometers away from the plant, have enough iron to last the next 50 years. The plant, which is capable of producing 2.4 million tons a year, currently produces 1.7 million. The plant's sales were more than 500 million dollars in 2005.

The SICARTSA complex was originally built by the Mexican government in the

economic program calling for open markets and the privatization of Mexico's state-owned companies. In 1991, under President Carlos Salinas, the Mexican government sold the plant, part of the sell-off of more than 1,000 state-owned companies during the Salinas years. SICARTSA was purchased by Grupo Villacero, a multinational steel company. A few years earlier, in 1986, the Mexican government closed down Latin America's oldest steel mill, the Fundidora plant, located in Monterrey, Mexico, laying off 6,000

steelworkers and affecting the income and lives of some 60,000 people.

According to 'Odious Debts', in the 1980's Sicartsa Phase I brought with it a more than willing United Nations of financiers. Each country with a share of the action made sure money was available. The European banks offered \$180 million, nine govern-



ments of industrial nations \$170 million, the Inter-American Development Bank \$54 million, and the World Bank \$70 million. Mexico only needed to provide the remaining \$86 million, or 15 per cent of the total. According to [www.villacero.com](http://www.villacero.com), Grupo Villacero, its parent company is one of the lowest cost producers in the NAFTA region, due to its integrated steel-making process. This process obviously includes slave-wages for the workers. It is the largest steel distributing company in Mexico. As of 2004, its total annual sales exceeded more than 2.5 billion U.S. dollars. It can serve competitively NAFTA, the South American markets and the Pacific Rim.

During the 1980s, a group of so-called "technocrats" took over the leadership of the PRI and adopted a neoliberal

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While the fat cats in Mexico live in grotesque luxury off the sweat and blood of these workers and their families, the metal workers earn approximately 15,000 pesos per year (INEGI). These wages do not represent what is truly owing to the workers. The workers are the true possessors of the production yet they earn a fraction of a fraction of the wealth produced.

What is behind this brutal repression, which is the bloodiest in Fox's six-year term of office, is the necessity for federal and state governments to protect the interests of magnates in metallurgy and mining in Mexico. The bosses and government acted as guarantors and guardians of the millionaire fortunes of those who own the mining industry, based on the hyper-exploitation of workers who risk their lives.

The attempt to evict strikers from Sicartsa is the high point in the government and bosses' offensive against workers and their organizations. In spite of an intimidating operation by the police, accompanied by the Army, workers managed to repel the police, since support contingents began to arrive from other plants, after six hours of confrontation, and the cops got an order to withdraw to the beaches and

"vital" points of the city. What the government wanted to avoid was the possibility that the population (composed of workers' families) and new contingents, would join in defending the plant, and this would become a real uprising by all the working people in Lázaro Cárdenas.

Although the workers are maintaining control of the plant, the site is surrounded by repressive forces, and a new attempt at evicting the workers is possible. For this reason, it is necessary that all of us begin an urgent, active solidarity campaign to repudiate government intervention in workers' organizations and in support of the right of workers to defend themselves against repression. It is necessary to provide solidarity and support with the heroic comrades in Lázaro Cárdenas to compel the immediate withdrawal of the Army and repressive forces, to bring those responsible for planning and carrying out the repression and assassination of the two worker comrades to trial and punishment, and to fight against government interference in workers' organizations.

The workers of Sicartsa are not just fighting against the CEO's of Sicartsa and Villacero, but also the many na-

tion-states who have an economic stake in their production and profits. The ability to struggle and fight back comes from the labour power of these workers. This is their weapon – the lost production during the strike. Capitalists do not give up easily as there is too much to risk – but the capitalists should be afraid – these workers making ultra-shitty wages, being exposed daily to extremely dangerous working conditions, barely able to feed and house themselves and their families unfortunately have nothing to lose. Their labour power *can* be inimitable and omnipotent compared to the illusory economic bottom line. As the class consciousness of workers is seen in the resistance by Sicartsa workers and other workers being exploited around the globe, solidarity and cohesion are fundamental to a unified front against capitalism, and to advance to a more just society. Unions are not the container for this struggle, rather an impediment to advance the state of workers' lives. As workers begin to control the production, socialism begins to disseminate to all forms of production and services. "Consciousness has found its Notion in Utility". (Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, 1977) ■

## Congratulations to the Working Class of Iran and of the World!

### Long Live the Worker's Anti-Wage Labour Movement!

The war between workers and the bourgeois government over the captivity or freedom of the worker-activist arrestees of May 1, 2004 resulted in the defeat of the bourgeoisie and a victory for the workers' movement. The capitalist Islamic government of Iran under huge pressure of workers unwillingly withdrew the 5-year sentences for anti-capitalist working class activists.

This 2-year battle became one of the most important chains of struggle for the working class against capitalism. The withdrawal of the sentence of the Mayday activists where they would have endured years in prison was an immense victory of the worker masses in Iran. This victory was a result of the brave resistance of the accused. Of the large-scale protests by workers in Iran and around the world against the sentences the most important was fundamentally owing to the struggle and resistance by the working class against capitalism. The triumph in this battle shows that the bourgeoisie in the most brutal form can be defeated by the wave of struggle of workers. This demonstrates that the working class, no matter where in the world holds the power, their labour-power to defeat the bourgeois capitalists and that the unity and solidarity of the working is an imperative factor in the resistance. This victory was not a result of reformist unions, rather it was due to the struggle of worker masses everywhere against the wage-slavery system. The working class is innately anti-capitalist and as the ravages of capitalism fester in workers' hearts, the resistance and solidarity grows.

We sincerely congratulate this worthy and significant victory to all workers in Iran and the International working class and to those arrestees and their militant resisting families!

Anti-wage-labour collective activists.

May 6, 2006

### An Examination of the Role of the Formation to Advance the Workers Strug-

mittee to call for the strike.

At this time the election for the grocery co-op of the company had come, but that night (Friday night) that was supposed to be the election for inspectors, the grocery co-op executive was afraid of the workers to get elected like other times with agreement of some of the steering committee and the police force call off the election. The workers gathered in front of one of the terminals, were chanting and asking for the release of Osanloo and around 1:30 this ended by the police force.

After this gathering and contrary to the previous one and mainly the negotiation and meeting was taking place with the presence of the syndicate steering committee, the mayor asked for negotiation either with the morning shift of the afternoon shift. The afternoon shift workers already were in the 'Freedom Stadium'(that day was May First), and after the speech of the Mayor, the workers carried one of the steering committee members close to the microphone to speak about the workers demands, however he refused to speak.

After the ceremony at the 'Freedom Stadium,' workers started to chant and call for the release of Osanloo. In fact, what the workers wanted from this steering committee member was to speak and say what they said themselves.

The agent of capital and bosses realized that it is the rank and files that are paying particular attention to their demands and if the demands were to be ignored the workers would take serious action. On the other hand, the workers showed their opposition against the wasteful negotiation and the wearing out of workers by chanting their own slogans and went in their own direction, because there was no other way left.

Finally, the steering committee of the syndicate agreed with the strike however, they had been against it. In fact, it was the rank and files that were pushing for the strike.

The agent of capital had two days time until the strike, and by letting out many of the buses to another parking lot, by having the buses operated by a paramilitary force around the city, by attacking the houses of many workers and by arresting the organizer of the strike, in fact, they halted the engine of the strike. But, in some part the workers resisted against the operation of the buses. For example, in one of the areas the workers resisted against police force pressure and as a result most of them were arrested.

One of the workers of the Bus Company had resisted against the pressure and force by the police until 10:00 and as result they were arrested too.

Many of the workers were released due to the support of their families, but many of those workers have not been given permission to return to work and some of them remain in jail.



### A letter from Mexico

Hi friends:

I don't understand exactly what is the real aim of a Union. We have taught that a union is created in order to defend the working class rights.

In Mexico the culture of unions works like follows: We have different industries like in many countries: The industry of mines, telecommunications, film, and so on. We have workers on education, justice, banks, hospitals, etc. and of course the most forgotten class, workers of the field "CAMPEÑINOS" (in fact, there is no a union for this working class, there is a confederation).

The point is that all this working class are represented by unions, unions who are lead by persons like you and me, but with a little difference. The leaders of any union you want, they are rich people, they are owners of houses en Mexico as in other cities. They have important business, their quality of life for them and their families does not correspond to the quality of life of a working class. They can possess several goods.

This leaders negotiate with the bosses, they make arrangements with the capitalist people and with the government. And on the other hand they convince the working class by telling them lies that they are defending their rights.

Meanwhile, the workers are paying part of their salary every month (CUOTA SINDICAL), and this amount is supposed destined for their union, however they keep on surviving the wage-slavery.

Sincerely,  
Lilia  
Mexico, City.

PS.- My English is not so good.

## Bourgeois Socialism and the Strategy and Tactics of the Worker Movement

By: Naser Paydar

### Part 2

... irrelevant to the class struggle and as a result is a perspective of the bourgeois reformist. This kind of view according to the working class struggle is a place of unity of the entire divided spectrum of the bourgeois socialist. In this place all the differentiation and disputes among this divided spectrum comes to a fundamental commonality. For example, Marxist-Leninists against Khrushchevists, Maoists against Trotskyites, Trotskyites against Stalinists, and all not in the abstract theory but in the social action, are crossing out the role and importance of the wage-labour relation and in the end, state capitalism is a result.

All these current spectrums, mentioned above, contrary to their arguments among themselves, have a fundamental commonality and inevitably the same perspective with respect to the working class struggle. Some of the important factors of these commonalities are:

1. All of them deny the potential of the working class being organized against wage-labour and its struggle to abolish wage-labour. The working class by its own nature has its own metabolism for organizing against their own social order and for organizing towards its own resistance.

2. The relationship between theory and practice in Marx's analysis is contrary to the claims of these spectrums which separate this praxis both in depth and in actuality. The critique of political economy of the working class on capitalism has been reduced to abstract forms of which only sophisticated elite intellectuals of the upper class is capable of both discovering and understanding the abstract forms. In this direction and view, Marx and other proletarian thinkers have not viewed this abstraction as either political or practical in the realm of the social class war rather they have judged this by their own genealogical family. The result of this metaphysics-

empiricist common view of these spectrums is that the proletarian class consciousness is a gift that has been given by the devoted thinkers of the bourgeoisie who are ready to break from their own class and join the working class.

3. According to these spectrums the worker masses, therefore, are neither sufficient nor capable of the cognition of capitalism in its own social existence, and they must take a legal and union stand for their struggle in the framework of capitalism for their better conditions.

4. The workers need a party which contains pioneers, forerunners, and a professional revolutionary. With respect to this party that leads the workers from the top, the party is not a container of unity and formation of the workers against wage-labour, rather it executes the commands of the centralized party. This party negates the current struggle of the working class against capitalism, as that is only the realm of the elites' 'Central Committee'. The party's objective is to overthrow the political regime but its conflict with any other regime does not pursue an anti-capitalist movement with the workers, rather it pursues democracy. And according to this party, 'Communism' is an historic utopia, a kind of an ideal or faith, and in reality its struggle has been tied to democracy and is anti-imperialist. This party proclaims 'the right of nations to self-determination' and based on its own interests, they sometimes formulate themselves under the name of Populace Democratic Republic, Socialist Republic, and workers' Republic Council, or other names. This party recognizes itself as the leader of the proletarians and the leader of the struggle of the working class against capitalism. However, they believe in that the working class only can go against capitalism by accepting the yoke of their party leadership and become the army under the party commander.

5. All of these divided spectrums while they dispute among themselves, they do have agreement that the work-

ing class needs to have two different organizations. One organization takes the economical struggle and political demands related to reform within the capitalism structure, and the other one represents its anti-capitalist struggle. Based on this, they all agree that having the union as a container for the first one, and the party for the second one.

6. All of these current spectrums, with respect to the above points, wanted and they want from the working class in the meantime to organize themselves in unions or other similar organizations; also under the party's flags that they mobilize to overthrow the political regime and to recognize the party as a leader of its class. At the same time its imperative emphasizes that the proletarian recognize that the party is the ruler and acts as the sovereign of its class.

All of these spectrums separate the struggle of the working class against capitalism and against the different forms of disenfranchisement i.e. women worker movement against sexual discrimination, workers struggle against national/racial apartheid, the movement of abolishing child labour, environment, the struggle for political and social rights freedom, etcetera. The struggle against these forms of disenfranchised are not recognized by these spectrums as connected realms to the anti-capitalist movement for abolishing the capitalist system, rather it is a democratic struggle adding these realms to the anti-wage labour movement frontline and has been called ultra-left.

These spectrums' views and their tactical position are identical with their class war strategy. All of these theories, commands, and directions are standing on bourgeois political economy premises which results in state capitalism despite what they may present in their books or papers.

Their tactics are to promote the syndicalism struggle which is organized in an economy guild and trade union, a tactic that dismantles the working class into different divisions and dismisses every one of these divisions as a round

## An Examination of the Role of the Formation to Advance the Workers Struggle

### A Glance into Current Workers' Events: An Examination of the Role of the Formation to Advance the Workers Struggle

By: Bahram Dezeki

During these past few years, especially this year the working class in Iran has had an actual presence in the stages of struggle against capital. As we are witnessing each day the various workers' protests in different forms such as strikes, blockades, and gatherings in front of particular offices and sit-ins are examples of such actions. The strike of the textile workers in Sanandaj for two months, the workers strike in Ghazvin, the strike of the Poli Ekrit workers in Esfehhan and the textile workers, protests of the nurses, and the Barez tire workers, as well as the various protests of the workers in Gilan have all occurred but to examine each of them in a comprehensive manner, an independent article would be necessary.

The gathering of the teachers in front of Majles (Parliament) to protest the lack of wages and the late payment of their wages are these workers' issues. It is enough to drop by to the labour offices to see the workers who were either kicked out from their jobs or looking for jobs at these places. The workers' gathering in front of labour offices is a part of the social movement of the workers against capital. But this movement and action are scattered and without organization, they are only spontaneous. However, the social movement of the working class itself must be conscious. The consciousness will itself become a more experienced and sharper one by going through the social practice and by directing the social movement of the working class. However, this widespread movement is separated and even though it is without formation, they would plan their pivotal demands and needs in their struggle against capital; the struggle against lay-offs, unemployment, contract work, low wages, compulsory overtime, lack of job security etcetera. If these de-

mands are understood, we would find that all of these demands are tied together, that is they have a common element.

Also, this year, the women's movement has had a different atmosphere with respect to quantity and quality. This movement by imposing its social, political, and economic demands, by gathering together for one hour in Tehran with a very heavy police and secret police presence, by having banners and chanting songs, it was hugely manifesting itself more than ever. However, the agents of capital do not hesitate to oppress either by jailing the workers or assaulting them, yet this movement is another link in the chain of the social movement of the working class against capital.

The arresting of more than a thousand of the Bus Company Workers, the laying off of some workers who were released from jail and the arresting of dozens of workers in Qhazvin, all demonstrate the antagonism of labour and capital. The worker is struggling for a means of subsistence for themselves and their family, and the capitalist is assaulting this means of subsistence in order to accumulate surplus-value as a result of the worker's labour. On one hand, capitalism is using its financial force, propaganda, and oppression firmly against workers, and on the other hand, the wage-labourer, the social capital producer, is acting without being organized and the solidarity of workers is divided. The oppression and tyranny is an important factor in not having an anti-capitalist class formation, and the lack of consciousnesses among the rank and files is a reality which the working class is suffering from and the need for it to be discussed is tangible. Another issue that needs to be discussed is the lack of a cross-country formation that is able to unite one sector of workers with another. For example, while the Bus Company workers are engaged in their struggle with capital, the class formation can bring out support and solidarity from other sectors of the social movement of labour with workers that are engaged in the struggle.

The anti-capitalist social movement is a place of invasion by 'reformism', that is, non-worker tendencies. Also, within the same scope, forming a worker's international that is able to support this social movement of the working class through its own practical presence across the world against capital is essential. It does not solve any of the problems of the working class by merely issuing support letters. A five minute walk out of the workplace with an anti-capitalist aim is what is truly able to impose the retreat of capitalism. Action speaks louder than words.

The workers who meet their subsistence needs either by manual or intellectual labour and oppose poor working conditions and with their pivotal demands without an anti-capitalist class formation will less likely achieve their demands. If there was a worker organization of the same magnitude the success of the workers would be greater. For example, the textile workers in Kurdistan had obtained some of their demands due to having a relatively higher consciousness and a worker formation. But, due to the lack of solidarity from other workers' sectors with these textile workers, they were not able to obtain their central demand which was the returning of all workers to their positions. In short, the social labour movement in proportion to the immensity of itself, its own organization is slow. Organizing and educating workers in order to organize the rank and file is the responsibility that rests on the shoulders of the worker pioneers.

#### The struggle of the Bus Company worker

Moving on, we proceed with the discussion about the Bus Company workers' struggle, so first of all an examination of the process of this labour sector struggle is relevant. In this regard, we will examine the general cases and points of view which advanced and slowed down the struggle of the Bus Company workers that were formed either before or during the struggle, but will not go into the details because it has been done either in different re-

## An Examination of the Role of the Formation to Advance the Workers Struggle

ports, articles or pamphlets.

The outline of the Bus Company worker demands and their struggle within this sector for the realization of their demands began in February 2005. In March 2005 it became a practical aspect for the workers to walk out of one of the Bus workstations. It is important to mention that the workers, in the process of their struggle, realized that the only thing that can be effective and to get the attention of the possessors of capital to meet their demands is a practical struggle through their own action. Meanwhile, the workers already had sent their issues and demands to the bosses and municipality, and what the bosses were saying was nothing but lip service. In the gathering of the workers in one of the workstations, while having some speeches, the workers announced that on April 5<sup>th</sup>, they would walk out from their job in order to achieve their demands.

From this point on, the bosses were running about and in order to prevent the workers' from striking suggested that there be negotiation between the bosses and the worker's representative. Some workers agreed to this direction either because of their particular view or lack of consciousness and illusion.

Furthermore, the 'Labour House' which is an agent of capital and so its real existence is to be against workers, and also on May 1st, the workers realized that this was an anti-worker organization, and therefore, demanded to abolish 'Labour House.' Therefore, 'Labour House' was furious about not being able to impose itself on the workers and subsequently, in order to oppress the workers they attacked the Bus Company worker's meeting which was organized by the Bus Company Syndicate, and injured some of the workers including Osanloo, the chairperson of the syndicate. The action of 'Labour House' attacking the workers became a clear sign of its destructive nature for many workers who had probably an illusion about this anti-labour organization. There were many different meet-

ings which took place in the Labour Office and other governmental offices in Tehran. According to the report from the steering committee of the Bus Company workers' syndicate, all of these meetings did nothing but wear out the workers' strengths and break up the workers and if there was any beneficiary it was capital which obtained it. In this report there was discussion among the workers the strike as one of the tools for which different answers were extracted. For example, two of those responses were the following: 'a strike is the last resort' and the second one was: the workers voted 50% +1 to the strike, and that it could happen at any time. In this report the syndicate mentioned the strike as a tool for the future. This means that less discussion was taking place about the strike and in proportion to the first view it was not organized and was separated in reality, during the process of the struggle it proved its necessity.

The education which was taking place at the syndicate's office was focusing on labour law, constitution etcetera and was also focusing on whether the 'Islamic Council' or 'Labour House' can be recognized as a worker organization from the perspective of the law and whether they should be deducting money from the workers cheques without their consent. This is when the workers had reached negation of the 'Labour House' on the First of May by leaving the rally that had been called by 'Labour House'.

It needs to be mentioned that we are not ignoring these discussions but also that it is an imperative necessity. However, from which stance are you standing? Yet, what was being taught in those educational classes was in keeping to proceed with negotiation with the bosses.

It is natural to have negotiation, but the aim of the negotiation is to advance the struggle and ignoring this would be to slap the process of the struggle. Sometimes, the negotiation has been viewed as only a way to realize the workers' demands, and discounting it and proceeding with other ways such

as striking is rejected due to breaking the capital framework. This framework is a barrier in front of workers to prevent any strike to capital. In fact, this kind of view will compromise the worker formation against capital.

The sit-ins of the workers in the bus depot were to be able to elect grocery co-op worker inspectors of the Bus Company and to ensure acknowledgement of the election by a co-op executive. It was only in writing yet it was an achievement for the workers that consequently the report from the steering committee of the Bus Company was a result.

What I am trying to say that it was the practical struggle of the workers that was imposed on the bosses to be agreed upon to elect co-op worker inspectors. Even though all the negotiations and meetings had no result rather they wore out the workers force. And, when strike time was getting close, the agent of capital became active. It is because the negotiation for preventing the strike did not have a result, and consequently the worker syndicate office shut down and many of the steering committee members were jailed. On Friday, the workers gathered in front of the syndicate's office. The workers were surrounded by the police. The workers continued their gathering till 10:30 at night. It was there that the workers announced that on Sunday they would walk out of their jobs.

The workers proved through their actions that is not just a few individuals who want to have a strike rather it came from the bottom - rank and files - the entire body of workers and they had showed their readiness months ago.

The night of the strike many of the strikers who were arrested, were released except Osanloo. The workers were active to re-open the syndicate's office and asking for Osanloo to be released. The negotiations and meetings for releasing Osanloo had no results. The murmur of strike among the workers started. A sector of workers had been pressuring the steering com-

## Anti-Wage Labour Movement — Both a Strategy and Tactic

of demanding a democracy movement. The tactic prevents the worker masses from uniting and organizing against the base and foundation of capitalism which is wage-labour. The tactics from these spectrums rest with their strategy which shows an organic unity. The worker movement under their theory, direction, and solution in the end, and in the best situation replaces capitalist production planning with the centralization of production planning which is having power over the working class

in the name of the party.

Despite the unity of their tactic and strategy of these spectrums regarding replacing one program with another one; from capitalist planning to the centralized planning of the State, the existing wage-labour relation remains with the same magnitude yet is the opposite of their proclamations. For example, their tactics for organizing workers in the guild or syndicate is based on the dismissal of the workers struggle from the base and foundation

of capitalism - wage-slavery. This tactic not only inevitably is taking away the political struggle of the working class and refers this one to the party which commands over the workers struggle and is also separating the workers movement into different guilds or unions. This view of the worker movement is nothing but a dismissal of the working class struggle against capitalism to state-capitalist planning.

Continued in next issue

## Sharing some ideas and background of Future of the Union

1. *“As a matter of an introduction, please tell us about yourself, your involvement with the union, your experiences as both a unionized autoworker and now as a retiree. Please share with us how you came to be involved with Future of the Union. Also, if there is anything else you would like to share with us regarding yourself personally as a worker or any particular experience that you feel is important to share with us.”*

In 1968, during the height of the Vietnam war and the Civil Rights struggles, I came to think that society as a whole needed to be much more humane. I came to think that if the millions of workers in the country could find a way to unite in common cause, there would be nothing we could not do. We could end the war. We could end poverty and injustice. By 1972 I had hired in at Chrysler and became a UAW member. Then I started to learn how many problems stood in the way of my goals! I suppose I was just too dumb to listen to all my fellow workers who told me there was nothing you could do. To make a long story short, I took up the cause of my fellow workers and spent from that day to this working on it. I retired in 2002. In 2005 the UAW pushed through retiree health-care cuts at GM and Ford, at the same time that Delphi was declaring bankruptcy. I was clicking around the internet looking for some way to help keep the retiree cuts from coming to Chrysler. I found UAWForum.com and a posting

on that led me to Todd Jordan's Future of the Union.com, and there was the Soldiers of Solidarity starting up. I volunteered to help Todd with his avalanche of correspondence. I'm still helping.

2. *“The Future of the Union (FOTU) discusses the issue of ‘union’ and this can be to some extent ambiguous and controversial. What does FOTU mean about another kind of Union? I mean, the union movement has a specific meaning. The base and foundation of the union movement is based on reform within capitalism. This view shows something different. FOTU was mentioning that ‘it stands for the abolishment of the capitalist system of exploitation and wage slavery’ as well as trying to expose all the treacheries and decisions that your leadership makes in order to have a better union. How would you explain this contradiction? Let me say explicitly, does FOTU want a reform within the union or to go beyond the unionism movement and organize the anti-capitalist movement of the working class?”*

When we say we want “another kind of union,” we mean a union that is democratic and accountable to its membership. The UAW began as a much more democratic union; for instance, members were fined if they did not come to union meetings. But today the union has changed into an insulated power structure run by a network of “good ol’ boys” which does everything

possible to reduce membership participation to near zero. (All the while complaining about how no one comes to union meetings. But watch out if you come and say the wrong things!)

The answer to your “explicit” question is yes, and yes. We are after a reform in the UAW at this time, since this is where we are. Hopefully there are others in other unions attempting the same sort of thing. Our hope is that we can have enough success in our small struggle that others will be encouraged to think once again about the possibilities of workers to organize, fight, and win. We are not drawing any boundaries about where to stop.

3. *“FOTU discusses its role which is to educate and inform the rank-n-file auto workers about their union activities. What does education and inform mean in this context? Does FOTU try to educate workers about the exploitation and all the crimes that capitalism imposes on the rank-n-file workers and/or educating them about their rights in the framework of legality, order and the capital condition of work? Is FOTU trying to expand the radical consciousness and the class critique of the working class on the foundation of capitalism to the conscious subjectivity of the rank-n-file or informing them about their union rights within the framework of ruling capitalism?”*

The Future of the Union website has links to all the education that a worker

## Sharing some ideas and background of Future of the Union

might want, at whatever level he or she wants to go. There are links to union history, to contract interpretation, to court and NLRB decisions, to other reform groups, as well as to many groups that advocate revolution in one form or another. In addition, Future of the Union is the best clearing-house for any and all breaking news items in any media, regarding the UAW and Delphi situations. Plus, workers can always e-mail us with inquiries, questions and comments. FOTU exists to help workers go as far as they wish to go, in learning about the situation of workers in this capitalist society, and in linking to others who want to organize and fight.

4. *"It has been inferred from FOTU that on one hand, it is standing for a radical union movement and on the other hand, standing against the base and foundation of capitalism. Does FOTU believe in two different movements and therefore two different ways of organizing the working class? Does FOTU believe that the rank-n-files must struggle within the union in order to have a better life and at same time fight with the capitalist that they need a political party?"*

Taking the last question, our answer is yes.

5. *"FOTU has said that it supports the mobilization and building unity of the class struggle. How clearly does FOTU carry this out in practice? How do you see the process of mobilization and unity of the working class? What is the container of this struggle? What is the main differentiation between what the FOTU is pursuing and the union movement itself?"*

First of all we are not into "containers," we are into "spreaders." FOTU helps as a center of contact, to help link up the various people who are struggling in their own local unions for greater democracy and accountability. FOTU was one of the important centers of contact leading to the formation of Soldiers of Solidarity, and we are immensely proud of this accomplishment. Soldiers of Solidarity now has its official website at

[www.soldiersofsolidarity.com](http://www.soldiersofsolidarity.com), but many people still think of FOTU as operational headquarters. FOTU continues its mission of education and information. An idea of the significance of the fight that Soldiers of Solidarity is leading can be gained from the traffic at FOTU: we had 500,000 hits in March, and taking March and April together, we averaged 100,000 hits per week. Last September, for example, we had only 40,000 hits for the whole month.

"The main differentiation between what FOTU is pursuing and the union movement itself" is that FOTU is a website and the union movement is people.

6 *"FOTU discusses international solidarity of the working class struggle. How does FOTU envision the realization of this solidarity? It is clear that by issuing a few pamphlets of solidarity for one group or another does not solve any of the deeper problems. Does FOTU think that it's time for anti-capitalist activists of all countries come to a common manifesto of fundamental proclamation of demands?"*

FOTU's vision, using shorthand, is 20, 30, 40 SOS's coming into existence and linking together in whatever fash-

ion they determine best. We don't approve of imposition of structure from above. We don't approve of 20 people getting together in a room, issuing a declaration, and thinking they've done something. FOTU is dedicated to promoting rank and file organizing. We think those who organize together need to decide for themselves how best to proceed. Promoting democracy and accountability from the ground up is our watchword. FOTU fully expects that the future SOS's on every continent will decide to link themselves in common struggle, since the same multinational corporations are our common enemy. It's in that sense that we speak of international solidarity.



By visiting our websites in 3 different languages, you have possibility to contact our comrades in different locations. Help us to get better. By contacting us and sending us articles and news, we can inform the working masses about the situation of working masses of other locations. Please feel free to circulate this publication among workers and tell them about our web sites.

**English website:**

[www.againstwage.com](http://www.againstwage.com)

**Norwegian website:**

[www.mla.no](http://www.mla.no)

**Persian websites:**

[www.simaiesocialism](http://www.simaiesocialism)

[www.kaargar.com](http://www.kaargar.com)



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## Joining the International Solidarity Campaign with Tile-factory Workers in Zenon Argentina

Based on news that the Coordinating Committee received, workers of the tile factory in Zenon-Neuquen Argentina initiated a campaign to be recognized as having workers' control over the factory. For four years these workers are struggling for workers' control over the factory, and in most difficult situations they were able to run the factory by obtaining financial assistance. During this period, the workers were able to create 210 positions and build a Health Centre for the community. At the same time, they were warning that nothing is guaranteed and there is still a risk of lay-offs and the kicking of workers out from the factory.

The judge of this case has recognized the control of workers over the factory for one year. According to the judge, the main reason that the judge recognized the worker co-operative was the report of Neuquen's police which states: "Today it was not possible to move ahead and evict in order to terminate and liquidate the factory due to the social impact this would have."

It is now obvious that the judge due to the fear of the response from the workers did not issue an order to kick out the workers, and there is no guarantee of the future after this period ends in one year, in October 2006, that the judge will not evict the workers from the factory.

In this situation in the city of Neuquen there is a solidarity campaign with the workers of Zenon to recognize the workers' control of the factory and therefore, the factory being at the service of the community, putting together a civic plan to build social housing, hospitals, schools, etc. This campaign contains a petition demanding from Argentina's government that as soon as possible to expropriate the factory officially and recognize the workers' control of the factory. Signatures will be received until April 30<sup>th</sup> and on the First of May all solidarity signatures will be submitted to the provincial legislature of Neuquen. The fax that these workers ask to be sent signatures is: 00542994413063

Thus, we-organized workers in the Coordinating Committee to Form Worker Organization in Iran support this campaign.

April 24, 2006

[www.komiteyehamahanqi.com](http://www.komiteyehamahanqi.com)