

## Economic sanctions against the people of Iran

Two years have passed since the intensification and diversification of sanctions against Iran; among which delimitation of Iran oil purchase, embargo on bank system and international financial transactions, sanctions against key industries such as petrochemicals, deterrence of imports of production raw materials and tools, and deterrence of specialty goods can be mentioned. Oil sanctions, decrease of Iran's foreign income, and restriction of access to the income from oil sales have left the country with barter trades in order to import its staples; what practically puts Iran in the road to the tragic destiny Iraqi people faced by "Oil-for-Food Programme" after the first gulf war. Sanction on the central bank of Iran and boycott on currency transactions through SWIFT have resulted in 90 per cent disorder in foreign trade which led to expensiveness of consumer products and scarcity of some vital products including medications. Therefore, it can be said that the most conspicuous pressure dimension of the sanctions on public masses is manifested as scarceness and shortage of pharmaceutical items; to the extent that a significant number of patients who couldn't afford to buy their medications from "illegal" markets have lost their lives. This fact per se symbolically reveals how economic sanctions are linked with gradual death of peoples.

Now we are clearly witnessing the direct and indirect impacts of sanctions on economic status and sustenance of laborers and the poors; on one hand, inflation growth has increased consumer products prices, and on the other hand, the domestic production level has decreased due to expensiveness/scarcity of raw materials and technical equipments. Consequently, the previous closedown or semi-closedown process of factories and workshops has intensified. The process has not only increased consumer products prices, but also played its role in increasing of unemployment rate and job insecurity. Furthermore, reduction of oil sales has caused reduction of government's resource allocation and investment in economic projects, accompanied by a fall in foreign investments, in turn accelerated the unemployment rate and over-complications of employment status. Thus, sanctions have imposed growing advancement of the following: shrinkage of households' food basket and epidemic of malnutrition, reduction of access to staple goods, rise of unemployment and further hardening of employment conditions, reduction of safety level in work environments, reduction of public health and medical care levels, etcetera; in a way that the pressure from these circumstance has driven the sustenance hardships to a the edge of crisis.

All this happened while, until a few months before the recent presidential election, Iran government - taking a reactive approach and in order to keep its autocratic appearance especially in the domestic realm - denied any harmful effect of the sanctions and presented them as a factor and motive for a

national epic towards economic self-sufficiency. In the same direction, official dissemination of the tragic outcomes of sanctions was avoided and available resources were not distributed based of crisis management till then. On the other side, the fact that Iran government declared sanctions ineffective in its official propaganda gave the United States government and its allies the excuse to intensify the sanctions to such an extent that cannot be denied anymore. Thus, government policies served to even increase the devastating pressure of sanctions on peoples.

In the meanwhile, loss of even minimum democratic supervision of society on the function of the Islamic Republic political system has provided the government with the feasibility of reduction of sanctions impact on its own economic benefits, political apparatus, and strategic goals by arbitrary allocation of national resources. In addition, sanction circumstances have fattened the powerful economic monopolies which are able to get around the sanctions because of feeding off special econo-political relationships with allied countries. Such monopolies - which form the econo-military mafia - are capable of benefiting copious profits from all of their semi-official and underground economic channels, in addition to all the official channels of their advantageous privileges. Therefore, we can decisively say that despite the sanctioners' claims, the shattering pressure of sanctions is imposed not on the government but on the back of the subaltern majority of the society.

On the other hand, domain overlap of public impacts of country's economic neo-liberalization with harmful effects of sanctions on sustenance of peoples has let the government conceal the disturbing consequences of its neoliberal policies and also its chronic dysfunctional and internal corruption. In the same direction, the government has managed to pursue its neoliberal economic policies with more facility by aggrandizing a sort of "emergency status" linked to sanctions. Particularly the past government could decrease public services and social supports budget to the benefit of its own priorities by aggrandizement of this emergency status. The fact that International Monetary Fund introduces Ahmadinejad's government as an exemplar for other states for its remarkable "success" in pursuit of economic programs of this new world order institution reveals the truth that sanctions pressure not only has not been a deterrent factor on government's grand economic policies, but also has been utilized by the government as an excuse to accelerated development and more expanded execution of the structural economic "reforms" which its most important indicators are: continuance of libertine privatization, omission of subsidies, and reduction of legal support for laborers (for the purpose of dispossession of work force). The direct consequence of this approach has been inflicting further pressure upon oppressed sections of the society and intensification and expansion of misery and poverty among laborers, toilers, and the bereft.

On another hand, the new government's cabinet structure, slogans, programs, and economic directions clearly indicate that the fresh government also is determined to continue the previous "structural reforms" in economic domain while pursue the execution of a new phase of the neoliberal plans which are now reintroduced as "the necessity of business environment improvement". The difference is Rouhani's government is able to utilize public discontent of the past government and also sanctions repercussions and military invasion risk to express "moderation"-oriented rhetoric in order to back up its economic plans by its relative popularity. In fact, in the ultimate analysis, the most important reason of public affinity towards electing Rouhani in the recent election was also the sanctions pressure and military invasion risk. In other words, reduction or removal of sanctions and riddance of the intimidating phantom of war substituted the demands which peoples requested during the uprisings after 2009 election - which was faced with government's intense and extensive suppression. Thus, it was not the government but the opposition and protesters who - because of imposed pressures from abroad - "retreated" and conceded to participation in presidential elections. In return, relying on this "emergency status", the government managed to lead peoples' discontent from sanctions towards repair of the old chasm between people and itself, while politically exuviating into a new government to settle a fake environment of "national reconciliation". In brief, we can say that the pressure of economic sanctions along with government's planned propaganda to aggrandize "the foreign enemy" as the first and foremost cause of current predicaments resulted in attenuation of criticisms against the government. Accordingly the chasm between people and government has been significantly repaired without any serious change or "retreat" from government's side. In such a delusional environment which reintroduces governors' strategic deviation as peoples' fights accomplishments, several previous people achievements have waned and substituted with a wave of passive expectation (looking at "contrivable" hands of government) and harmony with power.

Meanwhile, the sanctions resulted in empowerment of political front of the currents that have always pursued leading of public discontent towards reconciliation and harmony with the government; the currents that throughout the protesting movement after the presidential election in 2009 didn't compromise to control and suppress movement's radical fight potentialities, so that redirect the released energy of people uprising to the path ending in election box. Before this round of elections also, these "reformist" currents and their like-minded spectrum (either inside the power structure or in the periphery of it) harmonious with the official propaganda apparatus, spoke about the emergency status in order to pretend electoral participation as continuance of the previous fights, thus emphasizing the necessity of political ambition restriction and ultimately correlating it to the

necessity of "national reconciliation" and hopefulness about the moderate and wise portion of the government.

What is activated under the name of "No to Sanctions Campaign" in Iran political and civil environment is also comprehensible by the same logic. It's a campaign aiming to make an extra-class national front against foreign oppression and threat which tried to capture political environment and amalgamate the potentialities of social movements and public discontent into itself. The essential paradox of this campaign is that its leading political forces - while utilizing the rhetoric of "pressure of sanctions of peoples' sustenance" - have always been one of the major supporters and founders of neoliberal policies themselves. Particularly, "Chamber of Commerce" which is the most principal institution for arrangement of the commercial and financial bourgeoisie's benefits and thanks to organic connections with the government has a major share in grand economic policy makings plays a significant role in leading this campaign. So no wonder the most remarkable organic intellectuals of the governing bourgeoisie who are senior state consultants and specialists in execution and pursuit of neoliberal policies have an active presence in this government-like campaign along with reformist and close-to-government opposition-like currents. Since this campaign in its social spread path (in the actual context of acute predicaments and public concerns) inevitably puts the oppressor and the oppressed together in one line, it will as well inevitably tends to disarm the subalterns and toilers who are both the main victims of the imposed sanctions and bearer of scourge scars of structural "reforms" and neoliberal economy on their tormented bodies. In other words, political functions of such a feigning fake front serve the same "national reconciliation" policy of the government. Hence we should remember that if sanctions cause intensification of class oppression, then fight against them will inevitably be a fight with a class nature!

It should be further considered that economic sanctions have diminished the possibility of participation of laborers and the oppressed in politics and their independent organizing capabilities in a direct fashion by making their living environment and sustenance insecure and critical.

What has been said is the reasoning for the truth that economic sanction which in the sanctioners official claims are supposed to target the oppressor government and make it change direction, in practice, have obviously resulted in reinforcement of the government domination on the dominated peoples. Of course such a paradox in sanctioning states' claims and approaches is not an accidental ordinance or calculation mistake whatsoever; but essentially the manner of imperialistic powers in their temporary challenges with local and regional powers has been always based on weakening people forces. Because by deprivation of peoples from amenities required for construction of their

needed political alternative, powerful states will always be capable of forming their own future political alternative based on temporary instabilities and from the existent political forces and impose it to peoples. Historical example of Iraq in the ominous years between the first and the second gulf war (over more than a decade) clearly shows the strategic goals of these sanctions which has not and is not been anything but raising pressure on nations and preparation for war, foreign intervention, and making up alternatives.

In regard to sanctioners' policies, outlining this other point perhaps suffices that American and Israeli governments emphasize on intensification of sanctions (as a pressure leverage to prevent Iran from access to atomic weapon) and make military threat as part of their diplomacy in this field, while they themselves possess the largest atomic weapon warehouse and committed war and bloodshed more than all other countries in the last decades.

On the other hand, Iran government emphasis on defending the right to utilize nuclear energy is merely an excuse for guaranteeing its own survival and political authority perseverance. And this well delineates the humongous economic and political costs that are spent in this path for peoples' loss and despite their will and impose devastating repercussions upon them. Besides, nowadays with the catastrophic consequences of atomic reactor accidents in Chernobyl and Fukushima, it should not be doubted that nuclear energy itself is a lethal threat against human life and natural ecosystems, hence not the guarantor of peoples' future, but a threat against it.

### Call to Action

Since the governors make policies not based on peoples' demand but in regard to their own grand goals and benefits, addressing governors of the United States of America and other western states and requesting them to reappraise sanctions execution will not have any function but legitimizing their dominant position in deprivation and suppression of nations. Instead - considering that oppressed peoples' will is revealed through associated fight and their demands are realized through connected pervasive protests - we want all leftist forces and organizations and intellectuals and the awakened conscience in sanctioning countries and other countries to take removal of economic sanctions into their fights. We expect our comrades in the whole world particularly in the sanctioning countries - not only in the hope for reduction of other humans torment but also in order to resuscitation of the possibility of people fights in different regions - to associate their endeavors and fights against class oppression, neoliberal policies, war mongering, and weapons of mass destruction to fight against economic sanctions and imperialistic (either humanitarian or punitive) interventions. Because economic sanctions and foreign interventions are not only the dawn of military wars and the precursor of systematic suppression but also associated with gradual silent

death of humans and again destruction of their amenities and collective hope for change of their oppressive circumstance. Thus, we summon all of our comrades in the whole world to a consistent fight against economic sanctions and imperialistic interventions. This fight undoubtedly is an important practical arena which can connect our political endeavors and effectively strengthen our international solidarity towards resuscitation of liberating political actions.

Moreover, we want all aware laborers, labor activists, and labor leftists of Iran to strengthen their independent fight fronts to effectively encounter the imminent conditions and organize their fights in the path of class struggle so that labor movement potentials - which is the fruit of the tradition of consistent liberating fights and the backup of the oppressed and the subalterns- would not be destroyed in toxic winds of politics.

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Praxies