

Against the Current

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In this issue:

- [Active Boycott of "Seventh Elections" And Endless Skirmishes within the Regime](#)
 - [IT IS KNOWN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS CATASTROPHE?](#)
 - [IRAN NEWS](#)
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Active Boycott of “Seventh Elections” And Endless Skirmishes within the Regime

- Within few days, the Islamic regime will arrange another puppet show. All the supporters of the current ruling system, both externally and internally, call it: the Seventh Election of Islamic Majles (Parliament). The reality of situation and the expectations from both fractions have caused tensions and conflicts between the two fractions in order to get larger number of representatives to Islamic Majles.

It is a well known fact that what the Islamic regime calls the election within the frame of the ruling system is nothing but an exaggerated joke! In Iran, it is not the people who elect their representatives but the Guardian Council. The Council permit some of the nominates, nearest to the regime, to be candidates to Majles and the people can "elect" some of them to Majles. At present, the crises within the regime are getting deeper and deeper every day, and therefore any "election" turns out to be a battle field between the two fractions. A terrible match has begun between the fractions of the regime in order to rescue the Islamic Republic from overthrow. This match has become so intensive and serious that each fraction accuse the other that they play in a team belong to supporters of "overthrowing-the-regime". They accuse each other that the other one causes tensions, conflicts and crises. After 6 years appearance of the Reform-willing fraction, the contrasts between the fractions has been sharpened. Today, it is so obvious that within the current political frame, there is no even a solution to reducing the crises. except limited number of supporters of the two fractions and the whole brogues opposition of the regime who are afraid of masses' initiatives, Iranian masses are well aware of the fact that it is not possible to fulfill even their primary demands and needs within the current political and social frame and the Islamic Republic. Four years mandate period of Sixth Majles proved so well that the Islamic Republic is not a regime to be reformed and the structure of the system has no further capacity for changes. Iranian people witnessed that in very beginning of the Sixth Majles, even though the "reform-willing" representatives had the majority, they could not get throw the bill they wanted in order to change the Press Law back to the one which was before the Fifth Majles. The bill stopped by "Governing Order" of Vali-Faghih (Khamenei, Supreme Leader). Some of his speeches were enough to make these representatives to lose their legitimacy and not to be nominated for Seventh Majles. The rival to the "Reform-willing" fraction of the regime has been waiting long and has been counting every second in order to get control over the whole organs of ruling. Their attempt failed once when the election conducted for Second mandate period of Presidency of Khatami, they want to win badly this time. But the current regional and international changes and circumstances do not allow Khamenei Fraction to use easily the main tools in their organs in order to remove the rival fraction from the "less-important" organs such as Presidency and Majles and duly get control over all the governing organs. On the other hand the "reform-willing" fraction notice clearly that their share will be reduced and therefore after 6 years of presidency and 4 years of having majority in Majles, now they are acting by organizing some, to participate in a sitting action in Majles.

Some days passed but the sitting action got not even the smallest support from the people. This is not because the sitting action has been organized by the "reform-willing" representatives but because the people's main issue is not any longer watching how the rulers deal with the conflicts. It is a while now that Iranian masses

struggle against the Islamic Republic in a much more open and direct manner. “Reformists”, once said, they want to rescue the Islamic regime before these masses’ actions overthrow the whole system. They wanted to use these protests in order to get some scores against the rival fraction, but today the masses’ actions spread much wider and without any consideration in favor of how the “reform-willing” fraction acts. A very simple comparison between the number of conducted actions in forms of demonstrations and strikes by workers, teachers, students, women and other masses at present with the number before the presidency of Khatami shows that the people’s consideration is nothing to do with the conflicts between the two fractions. For instance, you can see the upraise of masses in different cities of Iran during the month June last year which were unique during the ruling of the Islamic Republic. Another example is the wide spread boycott of election for Islamic Council in Cities and Villages, even though hard liners of the regime did not stopped the candidates of the rival fraction in the same volume they did this time for the seventh election of Majles. Now we must see if the boycott of election alone is enough as a solution or not? Parameters in class struggle say that today just boycotting the election cannot be enough. When people in Samiram and Saravan show that they want to struggle against the whole regime, when people in Tehran, Tabriz, Mashhad and some other cities organize themselves in an upraise for ten days against the regime, when the first ever largest public’s independent help involve themselves in rescue action for the Bam earthquake because people no longer have even the smallest trust to the regime, though just boycotting the election alone cannot be enough. This type of boycott cannot even stop Majles to be not opened. Today, people are considering more direct struggle against the regime, therefore, they not only have to stop Majles but also targeting other suppressive organs of the regime by their well spread actions. Thus, active boycott of the election along with other forms of struggle go beyond the boundaries of Law and attempt to cross all the objections and high walls created by the regime. The actions taken by people have proved that they have the potential and the power to weaken the Islamic Republic in its attitude for suppression, even though these actions at present may not cause immediate overthrow of the regime.

But the question may rise that why when people are going for more direct and open struggle, there is no chance for immediate overthrow of the regime? The main cause is that there is lack of a revolutionary leadership. All actions taken by the workers and other hard working people have more and more a revolutionary attitude but they have not find yet their leadership. The pressure upon people struggle is not only from the suppressive forces and two fractions of the regime but also from the Iranian bourgeois who are even outside the regime, reformist or conservatives, republicans or monarchists. They all attempt to stop people from going for revolution and fundamental changes by their press, publications and board castings. It is the duty of Iranian communist and revolutionary forces to try more, even though they have very limited accesses, in order to encourage people to boycott the election actively and organize a wide spread political public strike. By establishing Strike and Demonstration Committees, people can organize their struggle much more effective and can find new forms of protest actions in order to overthrow the regime. The only way to fulfill demands of workers and other hard working people, no matter if it is about daily bread or freedom and democracy, is to establish a direct form of democracy in soviets. Passive boycott of the election is not enough; an active boycott can be an answer to move on with!

IT IS KNOWN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS CATASTROPHE?

On the night to 24th December, while tens of thousands of Bam citizens went to sleep along with their wishes and hope, no one knew that they will not wake the next morning neither to be witness to destruction of their own city.

In early hours of Friday morning 25th December, when the darkness could not yet be covered by the shine of the sun, a horrible earthquake destroyed the whole city and near by villages to earth. This earthquake did not come out of blue. Several small earthquakes alarmed about this big one, but in a country there no human life have had ever any value; no one alarmed a soul. Even several hours after the earthquake, only the survivors of the catastrophe were aware of the disaster, though the issue about helping the people under the ruin is out of question. First after several hours, the so-called “in-charged- authorities” got the news and several hours after that, the very first rescue teams reach the place with the very limited equipment and not aware of the consequences and needs. The first news, officially announced, reclaimed that 5 thousands lost their lives due to an earthquake in Bam. The truth but is still unsaid. Maybe for a regime so disconnected with the masses, is so ware to know about the wide range of catastrophe. How is possible that in a city with roughbricks houses and poor people being destroyed at night and only 5 thousands people getting killed? Mean while all the International News Agency announced the number of lost up to 20 000. At the very first days, thousands of people died and tens of thousand injured.

One day passes, but there is no facility what so ever for survivor of ruins whom being helped by the people. Hundreds of injured died due to cold and lack of first aid at the corridors of the Airport. People from the near city rushes to Bam in order to rescue the life of injured under ruins and treat those who are survived. But chaos is rolling. The regime sending military forces to the location but instead of helping, stopping others that they are specialists in helping people in catastrophe. They are not there to help but control. Foreign rescuers cannot either help much. No one gives them information from the place. They do not where to reach after, where have been searched and where can they are in order to treat the injured. They leave Iran after some days. The exact number of loses is not yet announced after a week. A number of 30 000 to 50 000 has been announced. This number still consider the loses in Bam and not yet consider near villages of Bam. Several weeks should be passed by until the real picture of catastrophe being described.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS HORRIBLE CATASTROPHE? WHO SHOULD BE BLAMED?

If the leaders of the Islamic Republic were not afraid of masses’ aggression, they would say that talking about the responsibility is against God. This is a God’s wish and should be grateful towards to. They may even unofficially say that this is an aggression by God against the people whom they deserve. And the leaders, of course, are not the people to blame. Thus in order to rescue their skin, they have to find a person to blame. Nature is easy to blame at. In this issue, they are not alone, thousands of supporters of the capitalist system and politically unaware people standing behind

such explanation. Tens of years ago, we could blame our disability to deal with catastrophe and not understanding the nature's power but to day with all the specialists around and advanced equipment; we can easily locate the coming earthquake. It is not in far future that we can even say the exact time of accordance. To day, the only person to blame is the ruling system that stops people having so much welfare in order to be save in their own homes, even though it is the masses how produce the wealth. Khatami is joking when he says that we build again Bam within few months. Let's us say he is telling the truth. The question is why first 50 000 people should lose their lives and then a city with resistant to earthquake should be built? If Iran has so much wealth to construct tens of cities like Bam to be resistant to earthquake, why not building them before a catastrophe? Isn't it a fact that annually billions of dollars comes to interest of few capitalists? Isn't it a fact that all this wealth is produced by the masses and therefore it should go to their welfare?

In Iran, billions of dollars spends annually for military and administrative organs, if a suppression does not exist, then all this amount may go to welfare of the masses. With this amount you may rescue the lives of millions.

In near of Bam City, there are towns of Golbaf and Lar; both of them have been witnessed to several horrible earthquakes. Thus this region is known as earthquake region. Even the region spreads it self to northern part of Iran. Experts have been talking about earthquake in Tehran since the Shah's time. This earthquake will not have the "limited" consequences as a small city such as Bam. Lives of millions are in danger. What is done since now? Nothing. There should be an earthquake in order to re-construct Tehran.

Let us say that after the earthquake in Bam, some houses will be re-build, is the problem over? The answer is no.

It is already a known fact that several contractors are in Queue in order get well paid and have contacts with the regime. People have no influence in the matter. The contractors think only about financing and the profit, it is the people of Bam who know best what suits them due to means of financing of houses and the location. Thus the only way to guarantee the quality of the houses is to involving people and make sure that the houses are really suitable for those who wants to live in them. Experience says us that even if the houses built, the final touch and finishing job of houses in order to live in them are going to be responsibility of those living in them. People, who have lost every thing, should go for loan in order to prepare houses. Because they are very poor, they will not be able to finance the loans and there for after few months, they will sell their own houses and again have no place to live in. Bam is located in Flat. It is hard warm up the houses in winter and cools them in summer. The costs are too high. Though when the masses have to other place to live in, they will start to build the old fashion but cheap rough bricks houses. And the regime would say that these people have no culture of living in fine houses and send their Municipal forces to destroy the "unauthorised houses". The result is the at the end, it is again the masses who take the consequences and not the personas in charge. The regime does not say that it is the poverty that leads the masses to be in danger of all these types of catastrophe. It is the system, which leads them to be in danger.

Thus it is obvious that who is responsible for this catastrophe. It is the ruling system and its regime. As long as this system exists such catastrophe may cause thousands of

causalities. The guilty one is not the nature but the system. Subconscious of thousands of aware people condemns this system, not only because of the lost of 50 000 lives, but also for thousands of similar cases in which children have become orphans, thousands have become disabled and thousands have lost their lives.

IRAN NEWS

- * Workers and staffs at Abadan Petrochemical plant have again gone on strike demanding the same employment conditions as the Iranian petroleum Ministry. Workers said that they will not go back to work until their demands are fully met. On 14th December 2003 Abadan Petrochemical workers protested against privatization of Iranian Petrochemicals industry. At the same time Petrochemical workers at the city of Arak continued their previous protests to have their demands met.
- * More than 2000 workers and pensioners gathered in front of government's building in city of Yazd on 14th December 2003 protesting against Parliament's latest decision to establish a Ministry of Welfare. They issued a resolution demanding repeal of parliament's decision as they protested against "temporary employment".
- * Workers at "Kashan Silk and Velvet" fabrics held a protest rally demanding implementation of the Early Retirement Legislation. Despite several official approvals, the social security office still refuses to recognise those workers' hard work conditions.
- * Workers at the Harir Plant held a rally at the workers club protesting against closure of their factory. The factory has closed after 20 years and all workers laid-off. Workers demanded re-opening of their workplace and payment of their 4 months delayed wages.
- * Workers at the "Gilan Carpet" haven't been paid for the last 3 months. On 5th January 2004 they gathered at the factory and marched towards one of the government buildings to demand their wages. They threatened that if they did not get their unpaid wages, they would block the main road between Tehran and City of Rasht. These workers have been covered by the unemployment insurances over the last 15 months and management had promised to re-open the factory, but workers are still waiting to return to their jobs. On 11th January 2004 the workers gathered in front of government offices and demanded their unpaid wages and re-opening of their work-place.
- * On 4th January 2004, workers at "Khuzestan Pipe-factory" got together and in protest to non-payment of 4 months delayed wages and management's plans to privatise the factory, blocked the main road between Ahwaz and Khorramshahr for 20 minutes. In continuation of the protest they also marched towards the state buildings on 5th January. The factory has been closed for the last 2 months.

* Workers and staff at Arak Petrochemical plant held a rally at the plant to continue their protests against privatisation. They demanded that the factory to be transferred to the Ministry of Petroleum.

* Workers at "Pars Textile mill" have been gathering for 22 days in front of Gilan State Offices to demand their 7 months delayed wages.

* On 11th January 2004 workers of the sub-contractor for "Iran Motor Works" went on strike protesting the decision of management to pay ordinary wage for work on holidays. Prior to the action, Omid Oladi, a young worker, had died under sever pressure of hard work at the plant. Bonus payment and having the same employment conditions as workers employed by "Iran Motor Works" are their other demands.

* On 31st December 2004 workers at Shahed Sugar mill went on strike demanding payment of 4 months delayed wages. According to the workers communiqué, after the action government officials had requested 2 weeks grace to investigate the problems and asked workers not to spread the action to outside factory gates. Workers decided to return to work but not allow products to be dispatched from the factory.

* Workers at Ghazvin Carton fabric are threatened with dismissal. Management intends to dismantle the factory and move it to another town. Some equipment has already been moved and workers registered for unemployment insurances. Workers are worried about their future.

* Health care workers at shut down Beheshti Hospital in city of Qom have protested again to clarify their unknown future. The hospital was closed down more than a year ago and all 515 employees lost their jobs. After a year, several workers' actions and several promises from different officials, there is still no sign of paying the workers more than one year's delayed wages.

* A member of parliament's finance commission has recently said that unemployment will rise by the end of this year (Iranian year) to 6,3 million. Meanwhile the rate of unemployment will reach 23%.

* According to Ina, Iranian labour news agency, only 9 out of 4000 carpet weavers in the city of Savodjbolagh are covered by social insurances. There is 1 million carpet weavers working in Iran

* According to an official of Ghazvin Workers' House (regime manufactured yellow union) more than 80% of worker's salaries are spent on rent, hence they have to work more than 15 hours a day.

* On Jan. 23, in the city of Baft, 400 miners gathered outside the county offices in protest of 8 months delayed wages. The action continued throughout the next day. The miners have not received their health benefits during the last 2 years.

* On Jan. 16. workers at Yaraghe, a producer of tools, strike for the third time during a week. These workers demanded their 3 months delayed wages, in addition to their health benefits which they have not received in the last 40 months.

* On Jan. 18. all the workers at Samico in Hamedan picketed in the local mosque demanding that their delayed wages were paid. The factory has over 200 workers whom have not received any health benefits since last year.

* Workers at Abadan Petrochemical plant have continued their struggle in the last month. The giant plant will be privatized and workers have attempted in the last several months to hinder this, by emphasizing their discontent in an open letter to Minister of Information and Security and governor of Khuzestan. They also demanded to be covered under the employment rules of Ministry of Petroleum. In the letter they stated that If their requests were not met by the authorities, they would cease work completely on Jan. 25.

* After 5 months the owner of Babakan textile mill in the city of Amol has decided to close down the mill and fire all workers, employed at the factory. None of the 800 workers have received any wages in the past months and face futures without jobs, poverty and families to support. They have protested on numerous occasions but all in vain.

* Privatizations are continuing in Iran. Recently it was Gilan's turn, an electronics production factory, in the city of Rasht, to be sold to an unknown capitalist with a significant cut price. The factory has over 600 workers and 20 production halls. As one of his initial cut-down plans, the new owner attempted to demolish one of these halls. This action gave rise to concern among the already dismissed workers as they picketed outside the factory demanding their jobs.