

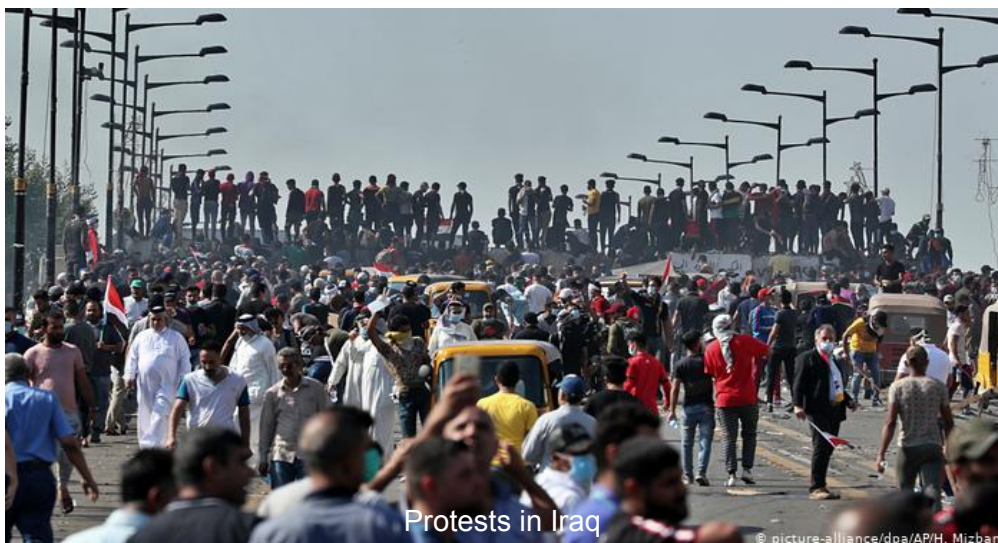
An assessment of the November uprising

A triple increase in the petrol price to 30,000 rials a litre (about 0.27 dollar) – which was announced at midnight – led to a massive protest from early hours of Friday 15 November and spread across the country quickly. The nationwide protest against the hike in the petrol price immediately turned into a protest against the regime's leaders and the totality of the ruling power. The accumulated anger and discontent, which was like a dormant volcano for a while, suddenly erupted to set fire to the existence of the Islamic Republic regime.

The society has been like a barrel of explosive for years. The very tough economic conditions, rising prices, unprecedented and uncontrollable inflation, vast unemployment, deteriorating livelihood, misery, hunger and poverty which has undermined the majority of the working people is now beyond the people's endurance. On the one side, tens of millions of workers, toilers, futureless youth and the unemployed are falling into the pit of poverty and hardship, and on the other side, a minority of parasites are amassing money and windfall fortune and enjoy living in fancy palaces and outlandish luxury. ▶ 2

On Lebanese and Iraqi people's uprising against poverty, corruption and sectarian ruling system

The Middle East has plunged into a political turmoil. Political upheaval has swept the whole region. Demonstrations, riots, civil wars, regional conflicts, all-out crises gripped religious corrupt and plundering government, sectarian clashes, the intervention and military expeditions by imperialist aggressing powers are the characteristics of the current political conditions of the Middle East. Under these circumstances, the people in all countries of the region are ready to revolt in order to overthrow the reactionary regimes that have taken hostage millions of the working class masses by plundering resources and exercising dictatorial rules and repression. The latest development in this region was the uprising of masses in Iraq and Lebanon to bring down reactionary sectarian states. It is about a month since the beginning of a new wave of Iraqi people's uprising against gangs of Islamic Shia robbers. More than 200 Iraqis were killed and about 6,000 were wounded and became disabled. Only on Friday 25 October, the Iraqi army, accompanied by terrorist Shia ▶ 5



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Sheer corruption and the disappearance of billions of dollars, which are the product of the working people's labour, has become routine, and this has left no doubt that the regime and its leaders are rotten to the core, and that plague must be overthrown. While the big majority of the society live in hardship, billions of dollars robbed by the regime are spent in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and Syria to finance Shia Islamist groups or religious institutions and the extension of superstitions.

Along with the dire economic conditions, the political area has become more closed, and harsher repression is being used. Workers, teachers, students, women, writhers, civil rights activists, environmentalists etc. are arrested, imprisoned and tortured for simple activities and protests. Many of these activists have been sentenced to long prison terms.

In this extremely polarised society, the working class and the poor can no longer tolerate the situation. Confrontation between the ruling class and the political regime which protect interests of that class, on the one hand, and working class and the poor, on the other hand, has intensified more than ever before. The strife has reached a critical point so that any small or big incidents may lead to an explosion.

The outburst of anger due to the hike in petrol prices happened in this context. The masses have learned by experience that a rise in petrol price will extend to other goods and services. They have felt with their flesh and blood that their living conditions have fallen in 40 years of the disgraceful Islamic regime. As experience shows, the petrol price hike will adversely impact the people's livelihood and economy. Petrol was a mere impulse that incited poor and working masses to rise to settle their account with the 40-year reactionary rule.

In fact, the new revolutionary era started with the mass uprising in January 2018. This wave continued despite all ups and downs of the people's struggles. Following the January uprising, we had vast street protests in summer 2018. Ahvaz steel workers and Haft-Tappeh workers hap-

pened in October and November 2018. We had major strikes in Haft-Tappeh, as well as frequent demonstrations by Hepco and Azarab workers in Arak, which are ongoing. November 2019 uprising, though is an extension of the January 2018 struggle and is highly similar to it, has its own characteristics which distinguish it from previous fightbacks. Let's see what these similarities and dissimilarities are.

A very important characteristic of both January 2018 and November 2019 uprisings were their complete independence of the regime's factions. "Reformists, Principle-ists, the story is over!" This was a main slogan in January which was voiced again. Both spread fast across the country and targeted the regime's leaders, including Khamenei and Rouhani and the totality of the dictatorship. This orientation is seen in the slogans such as "death to Khamenei" and "death to the dictator" and was manifested in the act of setting fire to Khamenei's pictures. Both immediately turned into a political battle.

Another similarity was the class base and demands of the protesters. Urban toilers, the youth, the jobless people, women, workers, the poor, residents of shantytowns were the main drive of these struggles for job, bread and freedom. More people from petty bourgeoisie and the poor participated in the 2019 as compared to the previous one. This shows larger parts of population have been hammered under economic pressures and the policies of the regime, and have been pushed to lower classes. Millions of young people and the unemployed, even university graduates, live on a car and by transporting merchandise or passengers. Other millions do the same job by just a motorbike. Evidently, tripled petrol price interrupt the normal life of these people, and more clearly these people would be at the forefront of protests against the hike in the petrol price.

On the other hand, we can highlight these characteristics which mark the November 2019 uprising from its predecessor.

The 2019 movement was much broader and



a larger number of people engaged in it. Many towns and cities which were absent in the previous uprising appeared on the stage. Mass protests and riots erupted in more than 100 towns and cities in 22 provinces, and turned into a nationwide movement with a higher speed and even spread to Tehran. Deputy Commander of the Guards Ali Fadavi confessed that 28 provinces and more than 100 towns and cities were involved. In January 2019, only one district in the cities witnessed the protests while people in multiple districts staged rallies this time. For instance, demonstrations happened in Khorasan square, Shush square, Tehran Pars, Sattar Khan, Vali Asr, Mirdamad, Sadeqieh (Aryashahr) and some highways in Tehran and blocked roads. The sporadic demonstrations and blocking the roads not only strengthened the protests but also reduced the regime's forces mobility. The protests in 2018 mostly were at nights to prevent the regime from identifying the protesters. This time, the protests happened round-the-clock. The people destroyed and disabled CCTVs in city centres. They took down the flag of the regime in Ahvaz and Tehran. The protests were so massive and large and some tactics such as blocking roads were so effective that schools, universities and some state departments were closed down, and the protest movement took a more general characteristic.

The new methods and forms of struggle is the most prominent difference between November 2019 and January 2018. This is true that street protests were the main form but this came along with attacks on the centres of suppression and oppression. Several buildings of the paramilitary Basij Organisation, the Guards, the police, offices of Friday prayer leaders and other centres for the propagation of religious superstitions were set to fire. By attacking these centres, as well as banks, the people showed their hatred of the ruling theocratic regime. Adopting more radical methods and burning banks and religious centres reveals the people's consciousness and knowledge of close ties between these centres and the organs of oppression. Exploited masses exhibited their deep wrath of the capitalist system and its financial institutions and their hatred

of the apparatus which protect the capitalist relationship. Not only the radicalisation of the struggle is a distinction between this battle and that of 2018, the people's offensive mood and their confrontation with repressive forces and even pushing them in some cases is a characteristic of the recent protest.

The backward Islamic regime, which had been panicked by the uprising of angry people, knew its throne would fall if the protest continued. For this reason, it tried to crush the protest with maximum brutality and force. Khamenei called the protesters "thugs" and thereby ordered a massacre. The president of the regime and its interior minister and Guard commanders repeated Khamenei's words. Khamenei warned against "war on security" and stressed the need for further repression. To justify the suppression more freely, the regime linked the protest to other countries and the most notorious groups in the bourgeois opposition.

The number of the deaths exceeded the number of victims in 2018. On 19 November, Amnesty International said 106 people have been killed. More people lost their lives in within days and the number of victims grew notably. The security forces often shot at the people on their head and chest to kill them, however we have a large number of the people suffering injuries. The security forces searched hospitals to sport the people wounded in the protest. Hospitals were ordered to report "suspicious cases". Hence, many wounded people avoided going to hospitals and some resorted to emergency services.

In order to intensify its suppression and prevent the circulation of reports on the protest, the regime imposed an internet blackout. Based on some reports, the security forces have stolen bodies of victims from hospitals and legal medicine offices and have charged 400 million rials (4,000 dollars) families for handing over the bodies.

Tens of students in the University of Tehran and Allameh University, who had held rallies in solidarity with the mass protest, were arrested



and imprisoned. About 50 students were arrested only in the University of Tehran. More arrests in cities and towns have been reported. About 400 were arrested only in Mashhad. If even one-fourth of this figure is the number of the detainees in other cities, the number of the people arrested must reach 10,000, which is twice the number of arrests in 2018.

The gangs of the establishment, including the leader to the Judiciary and the government, the parliament, Guards commanders, Friday prayer imams, heads of religious organisations, all in chorus described the protesting people as “rioters”, “vandals” and “thugs”. They threatened the protesters to the maximum punishment and called for shedding the blood of the poor. Although they tried to pretend that the number of protesting masses was not high but they have not been able to deny the significance of the uprising and acknowledged it in one way or another. The paramilitary Basij Organisation’s operation commander said “all-out world war” was against the Islamic regime was a surprise which took the country suddenly. He said, “we had seen many riots, but this one was completely different!”.

After a total internet shut-down and the intensification of massacre, the regime officials claimed

they crushed the protest. Of course, the regime’s fear of the protesting masses and its use of violence and cruelty are obvious. The Islamic regime may destroy the mass uprising by coercion, killing and filling prisons with the people. However, there is no doubt that it will have to face larger uprisings and greater waves of mass protests. The January 2018 uprising was brutally quelled but new protests emerged. All underlying causes and motives for the November uprising exist as before. As long as this situation persists, mass uprisings and social explosions will be inevitable. These uprisings, each time they erupt, make a new progress. As we have been witnessing, the rising people’s consciousness has improved since 2018. The number of people engaging in protests has increased. The movements have been radicalised continuously. The path of these movements is spiral-shame, and sometimes at a slow pace forward.

The Islamic regime cannot save itself from the workers and tailors and angry masses. It cannot escape it’s doomed future – falling by the people’s power – for ever. As a famous saying goes: Anything you can do with a bayonet except sitting on it.

Article from “Kaar”; No. 848; Nov. 2019



November Protests in Iran

On Lebanese and Iraqi people's uprising...

cliques such as Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq and Hashd al-Shabi, which are commanded by the Islamic Republic of Iran, murdered about 50 Iraqis and injured 2,000. Before that, the Iraqi government had confirmed 149 were killed and 4,027 were wounded during the protests. It is also a week that an uprising has started in Lebanon by the people against religious and ethnic sects, which have plundered the country. Since the balance of power does not allow Islamist Shia monsters such as Hezbollah to create a bloodbath in Lebanon like Iraq, the suppression has been limited and the casualty has been very low.

The problems facing Iraqi and Lebanese people are almost the same. Workers and toilers in these two countries have opposed poverty, unemployment, hunger, rights violation, inequality, big gap between the poor and the rich, corrupt government and the plunder of the national wealth by the ruling sects. The people seek to bring down the entire political power. Lebanon is in a serious economic crisis and financial bankruptcy. The GDP growth rate has dropped to -2 per cent. Foreign debts of the country have exceeded 86 billion dollars, much more than the GDP, which is 60 billion dollars. Within less than seven years, the foreign debts grew by 30 billion dollars. The last year's inflation rate reached 6 per cent. The UN Development Programme says one-fourth of Lebanese people live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate among the youth below 35 is 37 per cent. Between 2005 and 2014, 25 per cent of the national income was appropriated by the richest one per cent who now own 58 per cent of the country's resources. Civic services have been damaged tremendously. Frequent cut in water and electricity and problems with waste disposal are other problems dismayed the people.

The deeply corrupt structure of the Lebanese government is another problem which enticed the people into an uprising. Among 180 countries, Lebanon ranks 138 in terms of financial corruption. The extensive corruption stemming from the political structure has divided political

power among religious and ethnic sects and allows them to continue looting resources without any fear. The power structure which appeared at the end of the civil war divided power among Shia Amal and Hezbollah, Sunni al-Mustaqbal group, Druze, and Christians. Besides plundering domestic resources, these gangs are affiliated to various regional and world powers and receive money from them. The Lebanese Hezbollah's leader clearly admitted that the Iranian regime finances his group completely.

Based on Taif agreement in 1988, the Lebanese president is elected from Maronite Christians. The prime minister and the parliament speakers are the share of Sunnis and Shia, respectively. Furthermore, the seats of parliament are divided among Christians and Muslims. This is the political structure that has led to this deep economic and financial crisis. The government, which is responsible for the increasing debts year after year, decided to borrow 11 billion dollars from the world financial institutions last year. However, these institutions said they would lend money to Lebanon if it adopted economic reforms and an austerity policy. This meant that new taxes on tobacco, fuel, petrol, and electricity would be levied and more pressure on workers and toilers would be exerted. One of the taxes was a monthly six-dollar tax for using WhatsApp messaging application that led to an uprising. This was a just a spark to a powder keg.

Demonstrations started by erecting barricades in streets and blocking roads from 17 October. Clashes erupted between the people and the forces of repression. On 20 October, the demonstration turned into an uprising. One and half million people in Beirut, Tripoli and Tyre. The people attacked banks and blocked roads and streets and ignited fires in streets across the country. Many state and private centres were closed. Pictures of Islamic leaders were burnt in Tripoli and Nabatia. The people, irrespective of gender and age, without sticking to religions and sects, had joined the uprising. No religious sign or sectarian flags were seen. These one and a half million people could not be controlled by force. Prime Minister Hariri, who had do re-

scind the WhatsApp tax, promised to carry out more reforms. He said the salary of presidents, ministers and present former MPs would reduce by half. Some state institutions, including the Intelligence Ministry, would be disbanded, and an anti-corruption committee would be formed and social security services for the old would be carried out by the end of the year. He said no new tax would be introduced in 2020. An 13.3 million aid to poor families, increasing tax on bank deposits, and some other economic measures were among his promises. However, the people did not believe these promises and called for a revolution. They responded to Hariri by staging a general strike. The people said they no longer care this or that group or even the resignation of the entire cabinet and they want the removal of the political system based on religious and ethnic sects. They said all most go and the political system must transfer to a provisional committee comprising of judges who are independent from political currents. They said the stolen money should be back.

The Lebanese people's struggle was underway that the second wave of demonstrations started in Iraq, and state buildings and offices of sectarian parties, especially those linked to the Islamic Republic of Iran were attacked. In Iraq, like Lebanon, the people live in serious living conditions, even worse than Lebanon, while Iraq exports four million barrels of oil per day, and earn an annual income of 80-100 billion dollars. Despite this huge income, the country suffers from huge unemployment, and the rate of unemployment amounts to 40 per cent. In other words, 14.8 million Iraqis out of 38 millions are jobless. Between 40 and 50 per cent of Iraqis, especially in southern areas, live in absolute poverty. According to the International Monetary Fund the majority of Iraqis are deprived of medical services and proper education. A large number of Iraqi people don't have access to drinking water and electricity.

In a country with such enormous oil revenues – about one trillion dollars since the fall of Saddam Hussain – the people suffer from such horrific misery and poverty. Nevertheless, Iraq's foreign

debt is growing and amounts to about 130bn dollars. What has happened to this money? Some say 450bn dollars of Iraqi oil revenues has gone missing. Other sources say this figure is 300 billion dollars. It is obvious that these funds have not gone mission but have been looted by sectarian groups. For this reason, in a list addressing corruption in 180 countries Iraq stands at the rank of 170.

Obviously, a country with these characteristics should explode. Iraqi people held broad demonstrations in southern areas in protest at corruption, poverty and lacking access to water and electricity. The protests continued for days but were subsided after the government made promises which were never met, and the people's situation escalated. Therefore, since 2 October, the people engaged in demonstrations in protest at poverty, unemployment, rising prices, inequality, vast corruption in the government and large-scale embezzlement by ruling Shia sects. The people's anger at the system was manifested in their uprising. The people stormed the offices of ruling religious parties, especially puppets of the Islamic Republic of Iran. During their struggle they showed they want the collapse of the sectarian and ethnic political system which has been imposed due to a collusion between the US imperialism and Iran's reactionary Islamist establishment. The protests went on for days and millions of Iraqis participated in the protests. In the course of these actions, mercenaries of the ruling groups and puppets of Iran's regime killed 149 people and injured 4,207.

The Iraqi prime minister who ascend to power based on agreement between ruling sect last year claimed it had never ordered shooting at the people and ordered the formation of a fact-finding committee to discover who was behind the massacre. The committee found out that the military, the police and the militia affiliated to the Islamic Republic of Iran were responsible for the killings. However, the ruling sects did not accept the committee's findings and the story was over. He also promised to take measures in support of the poor, to combat corruption and control armed groups and Shia perpetrators. How-

ever, it was clear that these were empty promises and would get nowhere because these sects are main shareholders of political power.

The reactionaries thought they could harness the uprising by these empty promises but the second wave of the protests started on 24 October. A day before that, the Iraqi Interior Ministry announced it would guarantee the security of demonstrations and no massacre would be allowed. At the same time, the prime minister issued a statement to reiterate his empty promises for reforms. The statement said reforms would be free from the influence of sects and would be based on merits, and that the minister would act independently. He also called on parliament to pass a law to discover how the rich have accumulated their wealth.

Reducing by half the salary of the four highest ranks, including the heads of the three powers, ministers, MPs, holders of special posts, heads of departments and directors-general was promised. The government promised that resources provided through reducing the salaries would be saved in a social security fund. However, as soon as the people started their peaceful demonstration they were shot by the police. About 65 people were killed and 2,000 were wounded but the protests continued in a number of towns and the martial law has not been able to put an end to the protests.

The demands of the uprising people are clear; the resignation of the whole cabinet, the dissolution of parliament and political parties, the establishment of a non-sectarian political system, and the realisation of the people economic and social demands. It is obvious that criminal plundering and corrupt groups which rule Iraq and Lebanon do not easily leave off their robbery and plunder and they will not surrender to the masses simply. They will commit any crimes to protect their position. But, on the other hand, the anger of the Iraqi and Lebanese masses is no longer controllable. Despite all difficulties and interruptions, the struggle will continue up to the day that the people will take arms to bring down the reactionaries. (Article from "Kaar"; No. 844; Oct. 2019)

Stop the aggressive attack...

this region.

The Turkish military offensive in northern Syria takes place at a time when the working class and other oppressed people in the region are regaining consciousness. Daily strikes and protests in Iran over the past two years, growing protests in Iraq against oppression, corruption, ..., the Turkish labor movement and civil society have been actively fighting against Turkish government policy for years.

The current situation in northern Syria also contains a very important lesson for all oppressed peoples in the region. The struggle for freedom and self-determination can not be separated from the fight against imperialism and the rule of capital.

The Foreign Committee of the Fadaian Organization (Aghaliyat) condemns the Turkish military offensive to the Syrian Kurdish region. We call on the Kurdish population in Syria not to rely on the help and support of imperialist powers, but on their own strength and willpower. We call on them to fight and oppose the occupying powers and reiterate the need for international solidarity among the progressive and communist forces worldwide.

Long live the international solidarity of the workers!

Down with capitalism – long live socialism!

Foreign Committee of the Organization of the Fadaian (Aghaliyat)
10 October 2019



Stop the aggressive attack and war of the fascist Turkish regime on Rojava!

On Wednesday, 09.10.2019, the reactionary Turkish regime launched a long-planned fascist war of aggression on Rojava (northern Syria) coordinated with NATO partners. As so often, the Turkish military is actively supported by NATO partners. The Turkish regime is not sending tanks against the Kurdish population for the first time. The Turkish military offensive on Afrin in northern Syria in January 2018 happened only a few months ago.

Although the Turkish regime once again justifies its invasion under the pretext of “cleansing Turkish borders of Kurdish terrorists,” one of the key objectives of this invasion policy is to consolidate Turkey’s political position in the clashes between reactionary regional states and imperialist powers.

The Erdoğan government, which faces a profound political and social crisis in its own country,

uses the war to distract itself from the situation at home, to strengthen religious nationalism, and isolate leftist and progressive forces. While at it defending its own strategic policy of oppression and massacres towards the Kurds in the region.

The part of the Syrian Kurds and the YPG who were hoping for US support against Turkey and having learned nothing from the military occupation of Afrin, accuse Trump of having “stabbed them in the back” because the Turkish military offensive took place two days after withdrawal of US forces. Undoubtedly, this military offensive has been planned and prepared for a long time. The agreement in August between the US and Turkish governments on a security zone on the Syrian-Turkish border in northern Syria was the green light for a major military offensive in northern Syria. The Erdoğan government is planning, among other things an ethnic

cleansing in northern Syria. Instead of the four million people living there today, two million Arab Muslims are to be settled. This can only be achieved if the ethnic groups currently living in this region are displaced.

Northern Syria is inhabited mostly by Kurds, Assyrians and Armenians. This area is a self-governed region in which a democratic, equal, multi-ethnic coexistence is ensured. This is not only a thorn in the side of the Erdoğan regime. The Turkish regime is also trying to prevent these achievements from spreading to other reactionary regimes in the region.

The Turkish military offensive, on the other hand, is also part of years of conflict, aiming for a redistribution of the entire Middle East. Imperialist powers and regional powers are the source of numerous wars, with countless deaths, millions of expulsions and massive destruction in



Contact Us

The organization Fadaian (aghaliyat)

<https://fedaian-minority.org/index.php/english/>

info@fedaian-minority.org

The Abroad committee of Fadaian (aghaliyat)

ac.fedaian@gmail.com