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A Look at Iran's Recent Upsurge

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What's going on in Iran right now is without a doubt an intense scene of class struggle throughout the country. But the fact that you can't sense any one particular class characteristic in the current spontaneous movement, or in other words, the fact that its class nature looks murky is because of two main factors: a) the very class composition of revolution in Iran, and b) the state and balance of power within the forces of revolution.

On the one hand, we see a growing working class who's been faced with capitalist exploitation on an unfathomable scale while being kept deprived of the most basic rights such as the vital right of forming an independent class assembly and organization. And on the other hand, we are faced with considerable sectors of the rural and urban petite-bourgeoisie which is commonly known as "the middle class". From small-scale producers which have been squeezed to the bone and are shrinking progressively like small farmers, fishermen and various types of craftsmen, to local, minor entrepreneurs such as shop keepers and vendors, to salaried employees such as teachers or nurses, to professionals such as doctors, lawyers, university graduates, artists, and an array of intellectuals, etc.

What brings all these sectors together is a common enemy: the state; a dictatorial regime that serves the interests of the big bourgeoisie of which itself is a major part since bureaucratic capitalism (the state) is not only the largest employer throughout the country but is also in total control of all socio-economic and political spheres of life. This characteristic of the ruling regime has created a systematic and sharp polarization in the fabric of society, and as a result, masses of people from various walks of life are suffering in one way or another while a relatively small portion of the population is enjoying a parasitic life whether as private or bureaucratic capitalists.

Consequently, in the class war that's being waged right now, we see two main camps: one that includes all those exploited, squeezed and suppressed, and the other which includes the ruling bourgeoisie and its representative political apparatus; the government.

At this stage, what's happening is a general fight waged by a variegated amalgamation of people against their common enemy. And of course, fighting the same enemy by no means suggests that all the layers within the people's camp have a single demand (let's say freedom) or a single alternative in mind (let's say a political revolution/regime change). No! There is a pile of accumulated demands and grievances that for years have remained unanswered. These demands and