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BIKE  
COMMUNITIES  
AT SERVICE:  
GREEN IS NOT  
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Ehsan Marzban



## BIKE COMMUNITIES AT SERVICE: GREEN IS NOT JUST GREEN

by EHSAN MARZBAN


**T**onight we are left in the dark, me and Leila! Our energy quota for this month is over. I was sick, and Leila's feet were blistered from riding too much.

Five years ago, the government limited and rationed household energy consumption in order to achieve environmental goals and reduce carbon emissions. Since then, many people's lives have been disrupted, and many protests have been sparked.

They announced that any family that exceeds the set limit for energy consumption (100 kilowatt-hours per month) must pedal stationary bikes in their home to meet their excess consumption. So one morning, they brought an on-site bike with a series of wires and equipment to the door and installed it. Of course, people have been riding pedal bicycles on the long streets for many years, but in my opinion, this one is very unfair.

Leila and I do not like TV, we do not use a lot of light at home, we do not have any problem with sports, and we do not want to endanger the climate of the world with two home LED lights! However, we do not want to be under pressure and return to the era of slavery in order to meet our primitive needs and basic rights. In fact, we have usually been in the low-consumption group, and not much of our work falls on these unsightly stationary bikes. Nevertheless, this month was a special situation, and, for the first time, our energy quota ran out ten days before the end of the month.





I told Leila I would rather be in the dark than sit behind that stupid piece of equipment and pedal and pedal. Therefore, she got up and lit a row of candles here and there. We decided to ride the on-site bike for one hour a day this week just for basic needs like cooking. However, the situation for most people is much more chaotic. They have to ride on-site for four or five hours a day. If you ask me, this situation is ridiculous.

Human beings are not electricity-generating machines. Worse, if you are a migrant or a permanent resident like Leila and me, your energy quota is 30% lower than that of other citizens. “Those with the most resources and highest carbon emissions are now forcing immigrants to bear more of the burden,” I said. But she replied, “At least these foolish environmental fascists are more tolerable than authoritarian governments, which destroy the lives of people and nature at the same time.”



I think that the heat produced by people's bodies while pedaling and the sweat they shed is not less than the heat of fossil fuels, and the earth is still warming somehow! However, many believe that we should thank God that everyone is still responsible for meeting their own electricity needs. The government has presented a plan, according to which people will be obliged to provide for the needs of industries and the public sector by riding stationary bikes starting next year.

Human rights activists consider this decision against the basic freedoms and privacy of citizens. But government officials believe that all people should compensate for their share and duty towards the warming of the earth by pedaling, while this participation is a form of public exercise and beneficial for their health. I can consider this situation a post-modern communism that has adapted to the needs of capitalism. If you ask me, they are just committed to productivity and don't care about human well-being, or the peace on the earth.







These bikes are connected to the national grid through a set of local sub-grids and provide electricity through people's legs to homes, cars, industries and the commercial sector. Policymakers have considered various incentives and punishment schemes to encourage people to fulfill their mandatory social duties.

Any family that consumes more than 100 kilowatt-hours of energy per month should be disconnected from the national electricity grid or sit on a bike and pedal. However, for those with more money, there is always a way. They can legally buy electricity from the open market at many times the price. Although wealthy people use much simpler and less expensive solutions in practice. They hire needy people to pedal for them. The government does not approve this work officially, but it has no will to stop it either. Maybe they consider it a form of job creation in a critical economic condition. Anyway, fascism has never been a democratic approach. All the methods of imposition and threat in the modern era have been based on gradual and unconscious processes. Before the body, they bind people's minds and souls first.





In the beginning, this pedaling epidemic was proposed in the form of a voluntary and collective movement by the municipalities. No one was forced to ride on-site bikes to participate in the energy supply, and energy access was still a basic right.

It was about ten years ago that the government implemented this competitive plan, and those who engaged in it could benefit from special benefits. I myself had a friend who a few years ago won a special recreational tour to visit the beauties of the earth due to his special and sincere efforts in preserving the environment.

Reaching 100,000 laps in a month, he was honored in an official ceremony in the presence of government officials. The poor young man was so enamored with winning the prize that he spent half of his day riding stationary bikes until his wife divorced him, and he lost his job.

Anyway, it was six years ago that a group of both developed and developing countries - in the form of a new union and in concerted action, influenced by strong environmental lobbies, - concluded that, in order to prevent the slowdown of industrial growth, people should be exploited.

However, not everybody was happy with this: some democratic countries due to violation of human rights and civil liberties, and some non-democratic countries because they have neither a chance for industrial development nor value the environment.

The night is getting deeper and the weather is getting colder. Leila wrapped a blanket around herself. I barely got up to get on the stationary bike and turn on the heating package.

“Why should we be captivated by these ugly instruments?”



“Because communities cannot shift away from the growth-oriented economy and focus on human well-being within planetary boundaries,” I said.

“Is there any place where people can treat themselves and the earth fairly?,” Leila said.

“I don't know, maybe somewhere,” I said. “Maybe one day,” she immediately replied.

I am pedaling and whispering, “I can't go on,” and some more pedals: “I will go on!”

