



Flashes FROM WFTU

JUNE, 2010

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New Delhi

WFTU on Bhopal Gas Disaster Judgement and beyond...

WFTU, ARRO vehemently condemns the mockery of justice played in the worlds' worst industrial disaster, a quarter century ago, by one of the profit- hungry- safety- devoid multinational company Union Carbide. The disaster makers having killed over 15,000 and maimed over 5.7 lakhs people are rewarded with a so-called punishment of 2 years jail term which was also immediately bailed out. This speaks of volumes of injustice having been done to the common people, which is merely a tip of the iceberg in the loophole ridden Indian judicial system, the dubious role of the prosecution, including the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which placed the case before the judiciary in such a way.

Long ago, unfortunately, the Apex Court of India had diluted the case from its original serious violation of law under Section 304; And in connivance with the company and the Govt. they fixed the compensation which worked out to a mere INR 12414/- per victim in this worst ever industrial disaster, which still remains a shameful black spot.

While the 7 offenders get a mere 2 years jail term and the main culprit, the then Chairman Warren Anderson who was abetted to leave India with the Govt's. support and police protection is living in Newyork as an 'absconder' and the US govt's. untenable argument, contrary to Indian law, that the Indian Court has no jurisdiction to try him thus refused his extradition so far and the present owners Dow Chemical accepts no responsibility, the price of Indian victims was valued at **INR 12,414**. This is the most glaring case of criminal negligence of the Government (state & centre) as well as the judiciary's deficiency and a great victory to the inhuman multinational. Such a heinous crime on the part of all these persons/authorities should not go unchecked and unaltered. The incompetence, openly or concealed, of the investigators, the naked deficiency of the prosecution and the inhuman attitude of the powers that be should shake the conscious of the people everywhere, the working people in particular.

The Indian parliament, representing the people of India should very seriously consider and review all aspects leading to the dismal failure of justice in Bhopal gas disaster. The Govt's. proposed "Civil Liability Bill" on nuclear disasters, in the light of the outcome of the Bhopal case, should be totally altered to provide fullest compensation.

By the mere utterance of empathy that "**justice delayed, denied and buried**" takes us nowhere. By affirmative emphasis and strong action, justice and fairness to be actually done, the compensation to be reviewed and adequately updated and the culprits, who were responsible for the culpable homicide must be severely punished, whosoever they may be. The MNCs like Union Carbide, Dow Chemicals should be taught unforgettable lesson, which will become deterrent on other MNCs, foreign and Indian, so as to make them responsible and responsive. *(Also see page 19)*

(H. Mahadevan) n

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"Solidarity with the Palestinian People" - WFTU's Call

8, June 2010

Three-day Strike for Israel commercial vessels

Dear colleagues, trade unionists and workers,

The Secretariat of the World Federation of Trade Unions has today decided to call a strike for three days at all ports of the world against Israel commercial vessels to or from Israel.

We call on all naval workers, dock workers and all workers and all unions in the ports to refuse to load or unload ships coming or heading for Israel.

The TUI Transport of the WFTU is at the forefront of this strike.

This action is a practical demonstration of the militant solidarity with the Palestinian People. This is a proof of militant solidarity against the blockade of the Gaza Strip.

In this way we express our demand for an independent and democratic Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Furthermore, we demand the immediate lifting of the blockade on the Gaza Strip.

We condemn the killings of nine Turkish activists and once again we express our sincere condolences to their families.

The world working class watches with dismay the tactics of the UN and the hypocrisy of the European Union. At the same time, we are aware of the inter-capitalist competition and the dangers it creates for the peace in the region of Southeast Mediterranean. Moreover, it is clear that the Israeli government could not carry out these crimes with impunity without the support and encouragement of the U.S. and its allies.

Colleagues, trade union leaders at the ports of the world,

No one must remain silent! No one must remain neutral!

We must act now because we are all Palestinians!

You decide the dates in the month of June for the three days of strike-boycott against the Israel policy. You choose the best way to react, the best way of showing solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Palestinian People. Let's all act now.

3-DAY STRIKE IN ALL PORTS

- Stop the blockade of Gaza now
- Free, Independent and Democratic Palestinian State

THE SECRETARIAT



WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

PRESS RELEASE

New Israeli barbarism in Palestine

May 31, 2010

The World Federation of Trade Unions condemns the new Israeli barbarism that has resulted in the murdering of people who just wanted to express their solidarity with the people of Gaza.

We are firmly on the side of the Palestinian people and we demand the withdrawal of all occupation troops from Arab territories. We demand the Gaza blockade to be immediately lifted and all passes to be opened straight away without restrictions.

We demand the recognition of the Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We demand from the UN and international organizations to condemn the new incursion of the Israeli army and the U.S. policy, that supports this barbarism.

We call upon all WFTU affiliates and friends to express their solidarity in every possible way.

THE SECRETARIAT

Asian left parties: "Lift the siege on Gaza!"

Support boycott, divestment and sanctions on apartheid Israel

Statement by Asian left organisations*

June 25, 2010 -- As Israel stands increasingly isolated following its manufactured confrontation on May 31, 2010, with the peace flotilla in which nine Turkish activists on the /Mavi Marmara/ were murdered, now is the time to increase the pressure on Israel to lift the siege of Gaza. Israel's criminal blockade of Gaza is aimed to collectively punish 1.5 million Gazans for their choice of government.

The attack on the flotilla was aimed at demoralising Palestinians and their supporters. But, as we've seen from the global protests -particularly in Turkey and the Arab world - it has backfired on the Netanyahu government. Turkey, once a close political and military ally, has now distanced itself from Israel and supports attempts to break the Gaza blockade.

The attack on the /Mavi Marmara/ has spurred on the global campaign to force Israel to respect international law. In the same way as apartheid South Africa was isolated, so too the global boycott, sanctions and divestment campaign, launched in 2005 by Palestinian unions and other civil society groups, is growing.

On June 7, the Palestinian trade union movement expressed its support for the BDS campaign like this: /"Gaza today has become the test of our universal morality and our common humanity. During the South African anti-apartheid struggle, the world was inspired by the brave and principled actions of dockworkers unions who refused to handle South African cargo, contributing significantly to the ultimate fall of apartheid. Today, we call on you, dockworkers unions of the world, to do the same against Israel's occupation and apartheid. This is the most effective form of solidarity to end injustice and uphold universal human rights."

We support the global peaceful call to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel for its international war crimes. It must: lift its illegal siege of Gaza - completely; recognise the democratically elected Hamas government of Gaza; support the right of the refugees from 1948 and 1967

to return to their land; and tear down the apartheid wall.

We call on all progressive organisations, especially trade unions, to join the international boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign to isolate apartheid Israel.

Signed by:

- * ***Socialist Alliance* (Australia);***
- * ***Socialist Party of Malaysia* (PSM);***
- * ***People's Democratic Party* (PRD - Indonesia);***
- * ***Working People Association* (PRP - Indonesia);***
- * ***Party of the Labouring Masses* (PLM - Philippines)***

Strike of PAME 23rd of June

The new strike of PAME, yesterday 23rd of June met great success. Once again, for 10th time during the last 6 months hundreds of thousands of Greek and immigrant workers went on strike. The capitalists, using their media tried to provoke our struggle. Their plans did not succeed.

The ship-owners and the Justice system called our strike illegal. PAME responded by mobilizing thousands of workers to support and protect the strike in the ships. The Port of Piraeus flooded by workers who wanted to express their solidarity. No ship sailed until the end of the strike. Ship-owners asked the arrest of 5 trade unionists, members of PAME, because they organized the strike and did not obey their demands.

They will not scare us

We have called for a new strike on the 29th of June, next Tuesday

"We won't make any sacrifices for the capitalists

They caused the crisis, they must pay"

RESPONSE TO ISRAELI SHIP BOYCOTT

A.N.S.W.E.R.

Act Now To Stop war and End Racism Historic Victory at Oakland Port – Israeli Ship Blocked from Unloading



In a historic and unprecedented action today, over 800 labor and community activists blocked the gates of the Oakland docks in the early morning hours, prompting longshore workers to refuse to cross the picketlines where they were scheduled to unload an Israeli ship.

From 5:30 am to 9:30 am, a militant and spirited protest was held in front of four gates of the Stevedore Services of America, with people chanting non-stop, “Free, Free Palestine, Don’t Cross the Picket Line,” and “An injury to one is an injury to all, bring down the apartheid wall.” Citing the health and safety provisions of their contract, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union workers refused to cross the picketline to report for duty. Between 8:30 and 9:00 am, an emergency arbitration was conducted at the Maersk parking lot nearby, with an “instant” arbitrator called to the site to rule on whether the workers could refuse to cross the picketline without disciplinary measure. At 9:15 a.m, after again reviewing the protests of hundreds at each gate, the arbitrator ruled in favor of the union that it was indeed unsafe for the workers to enter the docks.

To loud cheers of “Long Live Palestine!” Jess Ghannam of Free Palestine Alliance and Richard Becker of the ANSWER Coalition announced the victory. Ghannam said, “This is truly historic,



never before has an Israeli ship been blocked in the United States!” The news that a container ship from the Zim Israeli shipping line was scheduled to arrive in the Bay Area today has sparked a tremendous outpouring of solidarity for Palestine, especially in the aftermath of the Israeli massacre of volunteers bringing humanitarian aid to Gaza on May 31.

With 10 days advance notice of the ship’s arrival, the emergency “Labor/Community Committee in Solidarity with the Palestinian People” was set up. On Wednesday, some 110 people from unions and community came to help organize logistics, outreach and community support. Initiating organizations included the Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition, the ANSWER Coalition, the Bay Area Labor Chapter of USLAW and the Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace & Justice. This week the San Francisco Labor Council and Alameda Labor Council passed resounding resolutions denouncing Israel’s blockade of Gaza. Both councils sent out public notices of the dock action.

The ILWU has a proud history of extending its solidarity to struggling peoples the world over. In 1984, as the Black masses of South Africa were en-

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RESPONSE TO ISRAELI SHIP BOYCOTT

Israel Fearful of an All-Women Aid Flotilla

One day after Israel threatened to attack a new Gaza-bound aid ship with only women activists on board, the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah highlights Israel's fear, saying its military ability is "deteriorating." "Israeli threats against women activists and journalists who are organizing new flotillas serve as proof of the immense fear the Zionists are living in," Israeli daily Ynet news reported Hezbollah's Executive Council Chief Hashem Safieddine as saying on Saturday.



Activists have announced a plan to send an aid ship loaded with medical supplies to Gaza, which has been under siege since 2007. The organizers are yet to announce a departure date for the ship, named "Mariam" in honor of the Virgin Mary. The pro-Palestinian campaigners planned the mission after Israeli commandos on May 31 stormed the Gaza Freedom Flotilla aid convoy, killing at least 9 civilian activists and injuring dozens of others. Several activists are still unaccounted for.

Israel claims that the new all-women Gaza-bound aid flotilla is linked to the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah. However, Hezbollah has denied having ties with the new convoy, saying it would not join the humanitarian mission as it did not want to give Israel an excuse to attack the Gaza campaigners. "Hezbollah confirms that it decided from the very beginning to stay away from this humanitarian act in terms of organization, logistic support and participation so as not to give the Israeli enemy any pretext to attack the participants," the group said in a statement.

The comment comes after earlier on Friday, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gabriela Shalev called for a halt to the Gaza-bound aid ship scheduled to set sail from Lebanon, warning that Tel Aviv would use "all necessary means" to stop the vessel. Israel "is terrified by a boat carrying women who want to deliver aid to Gaza. How will this Israel be able to face the rockets and the resistance bloc in the next confrontation?" the Hezbollah official asked. "This is the Zionist entity in its current state and its deteriorating ability".

A group of 50 female Lebanese and foreign ac-

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gaged in an intense struggle against South African apartheid, the ILWU refused for a record-setting 10 days to unload cargo from the South African "Ned Lloyd" ship. Despite million-dollar fines imposed on the union, the longshore workers held strong, providing a tremendous boost to the anti-apartheid movement.

Today's Oakland action, in the sixth largest port in the United States, is the first of several protests and work stoppages planned around the world, including Norway, Sweden and South Africa. It is sure to inspire others to do the same. The goal is for a 24-hour shutdown of the docks where the Israeli ship is docked, so the protest is planned again for 4:30 p.m.

Subscription Enrolment Form

Dear Brother,

I send by money order/enclose a DD in favour of WFTU for Rs. _____ towards _____ number of Annual Subscriptions to FLASHES. The mailing address is given below.

Yours sincerely

Address

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Subscription Rates

Inland	:	Rs. 5 per copy Rs. 50 per annum Rs. 100 for 2 years
Abroad	:	SAARC countries US \$ 5 per annum
Others	:	US \$ 10 per annum

Palestinian trade unions' support for international unions "ban-Israeli-trade-and ships"

By the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee, Palestine

June 7, 2010 -- The Palestinian trade union movement, as a key constituent member of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) calls on dockworkers' unions worldwide to block Israeli maritime trade in response to Israel's massacre of humanitarian relief workers and activists aboard the Freedom Flotilla, until Israel complies with international law and ends its illegal blockade of Gaza.



Drunk with power and impunity, Israel has ignored recent appeals by the UN secretary general as well as a near consensus among world governments to end its siege, putting the onus on international civil society to shoulder the moral responsibility of holding Israel accountable to international law and ending its criminal impunity. Dockworkers around the world have historically contributed to the struggle against injustice, most notably against the apartheid regime in South Africa, when port workers' unions refused to load/offload cargo on/from South African ships as a most effective way of protesting the apartheid regime.

Today, we ask you to join the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), which resolved not to offload Israeli ships in Durban in February 2009 in protest of Israel's war of aggression on Gaza, and the Swedish Dockworkers Union which resolved to blockade all Israeli ships and cargo to and from Israel in protest of Israel's attack against the Freedom Flotilla and the ongoing deadly Israeli siege of the occupied Gaza Strip.

Israel's ongoing blockade of essential food, health, educational and construction supplies is not only immoral; it is a severe form of collective punishment, a war crime that is strictly prohibited under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, that is inducing mass poverty, water contamination, environmental

collapse, chronic diseases, economic devastation and hundreds of deaths. This three-year old medieval siege against 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza, has been squarely condemned by leading legal experts, including UN special rapporteur on human rights, Prof. Richard Falk, who described it as constituting "slow genocide".

Israel's deplorable attacks on the unarmed ships are a violation of both international mari-

time law and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which states that "the high seas should be reserved for peaceful purposes". Under article 3 of the Rome Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation of 1988, it is an international crime for any person to seize or exercise control over a ship by force, and also a crime to injure or kill any person in the process. As prominent international law scholars have recently confirmed, there is absolutely no legal justification for Israel's act of aggression against international civilian ships carrying humanitarian and developmental aid to civilians suffering under occupation and a patently illegal blockade, which has created a man-made and deliberately sustained humanitarian catastrophe. Our response must be commensurate with this crisis.

Gaza today has become the test of our universal morality and our common humanity. During the South African anti-apartheid struggle, the world was inspired by the brave and principled actions of dockworkers unions who refused to handle South African cargo, contributing significantly to the ultimate fall of apartheid. Today, we call on you, dockworkers unions of the world, to do the same against Israel's occupation and apartheid. This is the most effective form of solidarity to end injustice and uphold universal human rights.

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Ore of the Many Encouraging Letters

Dear WFTU,

I read with great pleasure that the WFTU will for three days of strike-boycott against the Israel policy. I am sure that you will be attacked and labeled as anti-Semites, anti-Israel, Jew haters, pro-terror..... they will do everything to let you down and to make you change your decision! But please be assured that we are with you and support you, and we expect that the WFTU will take more decisions in this direction to support peace and justice and to end occupation and injustice in the Holy Land.

We value your decision and believe that it is a step in the right direction! we support you, and we will do our best to defend you and the truth. We all know that you are not anti-Semites and definitely are not Jew haters! we know that you differentiate between Judaism and Zionism. We also know that not all Jews are Zionists and not all Zionists are Jews!

Billions of Christians, Muslims, Jews, Palestinian, Arabs, Europeans, Africans, Americans, Canadian, Australians, Asians, Latinos... admire your courage for speaking up the truth; we are proud of you and support you!

Thanks a million from Palestine!

Salaam, blessings and love from Palestine!

Jack

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Signed:

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU)

General Union of Palestinian Workers (GUPW)

Federation of Independent Trade Unions (IFU)

Palestinian Professionals Association **

Youth Workers Movement (Fatah)

Central Office for the Workers Movement (Fatah)

Progressive Workers Block

Workers Unity Block

Workers Struggle Block

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUPE) – part of IFU

Workers Liberation Front

Labor Front Block

Workers Solidarity Organization

Workers Struggle Organization

***** Includes the national syndicates of engineers, agricultural engineers, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, lawyers and veterinarians.***

APFUTU, PAKISTAN

by Pirzada Imtiaz Syed, Secretary General

The Labour Trade Unions Federation condemn the Zionist Israel brutal attack at the humanitarian aid, which is known as Freedom Flotilla. The humanitarian was composed of six ships which were carrying 10,000 tones of aid. The plan is to bring the aid to Gaza which has been blockaded since 2007 by the Zionist Israel.

The blockade has caused misery to the 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza. In those ships were also dozens of journalists and volunteers. A very very famous journalist Mr. Syed Talat Hussain, his wife and nine others. The raid itself has caused dozens of people die and tens of others injured. Israel has also put in prison the volunteers. This crime against humanity is one of many crimes which have been perpetrated by the Zionist Israel, which Israel hasn't yet been held responsible. This is also because of the support from the US ruling regime, even from Obama who recently received Nobel peace prize. This support is clearly seen from US veto against all UN Security Council resolutions that can put Israel into disadvantage, and how easy Israel can break all the resolutions from the UN Security Council. US has also provided 3 billion dollar support every year since 1985, excluding billions of dollars of military aid which the US provides every year.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani regime is not any different as it readily accepts military aid from the US. They are more concerned about building image through statements of principle, but they never use their political power to genuinely help the liberation of the Palestinian people.

That is why the All Pakistan Federation of United Trade Unions (APFUTU) demands:

- a. Stop the blockade against the people of Palestine in Gaza.**
- b. Free all the volunteers and journalists who are in the Freedom Flotilla fleet.**
- c. Obama to stop military and diplomatic supports that have been given by the US to the Zionist Israel.**
- d. APFUTU demand the UN to bring the Zionist Israel to the International Human Rights Tribunal for their crimes against humanity and war crimes.**
- e. To support and call for the building of international solidarity to fight against the Zionist Israel and US Imperialist regime.**

AROUND THE WORLD

12000 Nurses set a day strike Twin Cities Nurses Prepare for One-Day Walkout



Twelve thousand nurses in the Twin Cities set a one-day strike for June 10. They're fending off a well-coordinated attack by corporate health care interests on their union.

Photo: Minnesota Nurses Association.

Twelve thousand nurses in the Twin Cities are fending off a well-coordinated attack by corporate health care interests to diminish the power of our union. In a metropolitan area with one of the highest densities of organized nurses in the country, we know that if the employers take down the Minnesota Nurses Association, they can take down anyone. The nurses authorized a one-day strike last week by more than 90 percent of 9,200 voting. Negotiations with 14 Twin Cities hospitals owned by six corporations started in March, but little actual back and forth has taken place. One bargaining session lasted 12 minutes before management walked out. Another was over after 20 minutes. MNA set a strike date for June 10, but the employers are threatening a lockout on June 1, when the contract expires.

Nurse negotiators from each hospital voted unanimously to recommend the one-day strategy to their members because it will cause minimal disruption to our patients while causing maximum pain to our employers. For the employers, a one-day action could cause significant disruption as they attempt to find scabs willing to travel for a one-day commitment and scale back their most profitable service, outpatient same-day surgery, in preparation. It also struck a nerve with the powers that be that nurses have the

audacity to walk off the job and determine their own return-to-work date.

The nurses have been building up to this point for months. Hundreds have packed meeting rooms to face management, marched on the boss to deliver notices detailing how we felt about the assaults on our contracts, and rallied in red union T-shirts at the vote locations. We conducted two informational picketing events during Nurses Week May 6-12 that attracted thousands of nurses to demonstrate in front of the hospitals, making plain our concerns for patient safety and making public the hospitals' attacks.

BIG CHANGES

Management continues to push through elective surgeries when we don't have enough nurses to care for the needs of those already in the beds. They have systematically chipped away at contract standards in order to gain more control over our work and the environment in which we deliver care. They have hired consultants to institute the Toyota lean manufacturing philosophy in our hospitals, to increase the speed of care and try to replace nurses with less skilled workers. They want to keep the beds filled even when there are no nurses to safely provide the care. They want us to continually do more with less. But when it comes to the lives of patients, we can't rely on recalls to fix problems! Despite much research that shows thousands of patients die every year in hospitals due to unsafe staffing levels, and many more suffer preventable injuries, our proposals for mandatory nurse-to-patient ratios and enforceable language to close overstretched units temporarily to new admissions are falling on deaf ears.

The hospital chains have other plans. They made a bid to return to 1984, when Twin Cities nurses had to strike for 38 days in order to protect seniority rights in times of restructuring, layoff, and recall. This time, the week before the strike vote, the employers dropped this take-back proposal, which had galvanized nurses like no other. But they left many additional demands on the table. They want concessions across the board, economic and non-economic, trying to extract something in exchange for dropping other proposed cuts. It's as if someone walked into your house, stole your furniture, and then tried to sell it back to you for a higher price than you first paid for it. They want us to take six days off every year unpaid, so those working 12-hour days—as

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many nurses do—could lose 72 hours of pay, equal to a two-week furlough. They propose to slash the defined-benefit pension plan by more than one-third and eliminate all early retirement options. The hospitals are targeting part-time nurses—which they demand in the name of scheduling flexibility—especially hard, attempting to strip their health insurance, sick leave, and vacations.

These “not for profit” hospitals reported more than \$700 million in profits in 2009, and have showered executives with bonuses, plump retirement schemes, and golden parachutes. They claim they are paying 60 percent of their revenue to labor costs—the same amount they say they paid in 1984.

CONCESSIONS COLLUSION

The employers have devoted significant resources to psychological warfare, hiring public relations firms and crisis-management teams in an effort to discredit the nurses and the union. They call us “emotional” and “dramatic” when we cite the numerous examples of patient suffering. They try to attack our pensions and health care coverage while claiming we demand too much in salary. When asked why the hospital would not even engage a discussion of our patient care concerns, one manager spilled the beans, saying there was a power greater than those at the table that was making the decisions. MNA filed an unfair labor practice charge on May 17 against the employers’ collusion to undermine collective bargaining.

We have worked hard to earn the public’s trust, putting up billboards that question whether safety or profits is more important. Hundreds of “We Care For You” lawn signs have gone up around the cities. We put out YouTube videos explaining our campaign, and actively use Facebook, email, Twitter, and blogs to interact with members and the public. Labor and faith leaders have rallied in support. We’re getting support from our sisters and brothers in National Nurses United, the nationwide nurse alliance which Minnesota belongs to, because we’re all in the same boat—these employer attacks are part of a national campaign by corporate health care. We’ve learned from NNU about strategies to win these kinds of difficult negotiations, and the union produced a video of nurses around the nation declaring their backing.

Whatever it takes, we will keep fighting for safe patient care and good jobs for nurses because these issues are inseparable.

How do we solve our problems in Thailand



* "Workers:
take control !"
* No to Abhisit
- No to Thaksin
* Yes to
Workers'
Government !

For the 6th time in the past forty years the Thai government has used military force to suppress popular discontent against inequality and corruption. But sending tanks against protesters does not solve social problems.

Working people in Thailand face many problems, including a lack of democratic rights, poverty and repression. The outcome of the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD Red Shirts) rally shows the limits of protesting against a government that simply does not care about the lives of working people.

DPR KOREA

10th Anniversary of North-South Korea Joint Declaration Kim Pyong Phal, President, Central Committee General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea.

The 15th of June is a significant year celebrating the 10th anniversary of the publication of the north-south joint declaration. On 15th of June, there was a successful meeting of the Heads of north and south in Pyongyang after 55 years of division and the new limestone of revolution, the north-south joint declaration was published. The publication of the June 15 north-south joint declaration is a great fruition of the Songun leadership of the great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il and a historical event which brought great joy in the hearts of all fellow countrymen in north and south.

In 2007, the October 4 declaration, the practical program for implementing the June 15 north-south

AROUND THE WORLD

Joint declaration was published. After the publication of the June 15 north – south joint declaration, an era of reconciliation and negotiation instead of disbelief and confrontation in the relationship between north and south, the June 15 reunification era, was opened up during last 10 years. But the present conservative authorities of south Korea, as soon as they took authority, are running amuck with confrontation racket with DPRK, under the wire-pulling of the U.S., completely denying the June 15 north-south joint declaration and thus escalating tension in Korean peninsular to the extreme.

Moreover, as it was reported already, in order to get rid of the crisis, generated by the results of their anti-popular policy, they fabricated an infantile plot for war, forcibly linking the case of sinking of south Korean navy ship with DPRK and advocated an anti-DPRK confrontation completely destructing north-south relationship. And thus the Korean peninsular is strained to the breaking point of war, today.

This year celebrates the 10th anniversary of the publication of the June 15 north-south joint declaration and at the same time it is the 60th year of the outbreak of the Korean War forged by the U.S. (June 25, 1950), the 3rd year of the publication of the October 4 joint declaration and the 30th year of the proposal of the plan for establishment of the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo.

I, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the publication of June 15 north-south joint declaration, believe that WFTU will send support and solidarity as before to our people's just cause to hasten the national reunification with national unity under the banner of the north-south joint declaration. I also would like you to kindly call upon all the affiliates to WFTU to conduct various solidarity measures from 15th of June, the 10th anniversary of the publication of the north-south joint declaration, to 10th of October, the 30th anniversary of the proposal of the plan for establishment of the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo, in support of our people's struggle.

I believe that you, our intimate friend, will as before inspire our people in their struggle to decorate this year as a year of a new phase in achieving an independent reunification by vigorously conducting a reunification march opposing all kinds of challenge under the united power of our whole nation.

SOUTH KOREA

Ssangyong unionist sentenced to four years jail



On February 13, 2010 Mr. Han Sang Kyun the Chairman of the Ssangyong Motor Company Union was sentenced to four years in prison. AAWL is campaigning for his release.

Mr Han led a 77 day strike at the Ssangyong vehicle manufacturing plant in protest against mass sackings. The company and South Korean government responded with violent police attacks against the strikers and solidarity supporters including the use of chemical agents. They blockaded the workers and denied them food, water and medical aid. The strike ended in August 2009.

CUBA

A MESSAGE TO THE FRIENDS OF CUBA

Dear Friends:

Once again a selected group of individuals, whose identities are quite unknown to us, have listed a number of countries that could be summoned for rendering account to the ILO Standard Commission. Again, the chosen ones are characterized for being predominantly from third world and underdeveloped countries and only very few from highly developed countries.

It seems that for the makers of this list, the huge salary, pensions and social budget cuts, as well as the massive lay-offs implemented by decree in many countries of the civilized and democratic Europe and other developed nations, joined by the brutal repression suffered by thousands of workers who protested against such injustice are not being considered and do not constitute a violation of trade union and human rights for the millions of those affected.

However, in this list they have included a country like Cuba that in spite of being a small and underde-

AROUND THE WORLD

veloped country, have created many mechanisms for a broad and real dialogue and participation of workers and unions in the economic, political and social life of the country. In the midst of this difficult stage, subdued by the international economic crisis, which imposes strong limitations on us, we work with creativity and flexibility in order to confront these problems, emphasising on the protection of workers and the respect of their rights.

Because of the here in above, the Cuban population maintain their massive support to their Revolutionary Government, made evident to the thousands of trade unionists from across the world that visits us, amongst which were the more than one thousand who joined us during the MAY DAY celebrations this 2010, witnessing the vibrant march of almost one million citizens only form the capital city.

From the very onset of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, the US Administration agreed to fabricate, organize, fund and lead a Cuban opposition from inside and outside of Cuba, to which purpose they have dedicated millionaire digits, that only this year, surpasses the 20 million dollars; an opposition that acts under the guidance, with the financial and material resources provided by and hatched in the offices of the US interest Section (Their Embassy) in Havana.

Thus, it becomes unacceptable and painful for the Cuban workers and people that the Experts Committee, disregarding the vast and extensive arguments and reasoning offered by the genuine organizations representing Cuba, have adopted the defence and representation of political activists who acts against the interest of their own country and people, and that the ILO offers its quarters and its prestige for the development of manoeuvres of subversive political proselytism carried out by these individuals against a member State.

Considering it necessary, we are attaching other documents that could furnish you with a clearer vision of our truth and we hope to count on you understanding and solidarity, in our struggle against the partiality and political alignment that day after day and more and more ballasts the ILO.

**THE CUBAN WORKERS TRADE UNION
CENTRAL**

JAPAN:

5,200 youth rally for better working conditions

With determination to further expand their network of solidarity to achieve decent working conditions, about 5,200 young workers on May 16 took part in the Youth Rally 2010 at Tokyo's Meiji Park. Participants gathering from all 47 prefectures throughout Japan gave warm applause to each speaker who reported on their unionized efforts to correct major companies' use of workers as "disposable labor".

Reporting on his struggle against NEC Semiconductors' dismissal of temporary employees, Shibata Katsuyuki from Kumamoto Prefecture said, "Since I joined a local union, I have received much support from colleagues throughout the country, and my feeling of desperation has turned into hope." Kawamoto Takeshi, who is striving to achieve direct employment from Panasonic Wakasa Division in Fukui Prefecture, criticized the Worker Dispatch Law as allowing selfish corporate practices and stressed the need to revise it.

Executive director of the Anti-Poverty Network Utsunomiya Kenji, who recently became the president of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, stated that poverty is the main human rights issue. Anti-Poverty Network Secretary General Yuasa Makoto and National Confederation of Trade Unions (Zenroren) President Daikoku Sakuji also spoke. The rally adopted a resolution demanding the following things: drastic revision of the Worker Dispatch Law; improvement of social security programs; a raise in the minimum hourly wage to 1,000 yen; eradication of unpaid overtime work, long working hours, and excessive workloads; and creation of job opportunities.

The rally's organizing committee consists of Zenroren's youth division, the Tokyo Metropolitan Youth Union, and the Democratic Youth League of Japan. Representatives of the organizing committee on May 17 made representations to the Labor Ministry, calling on the government to realize the demands expressed in the resolution.

Rengo-affiliate NTT union does not speak for workers

"The union didn't protect us at all." "Is this really a workers' union?" Former contract work-

AROUND THE WORLD

ers of Nippon Telegraph and Telephone East Corporation Hokkaido Branch (NTT East - Hokkaido) are raising this question concerning the NTT Trade Union's function.

In early March this year, NTT East - Hokkaido was trying to change the status of its 700 contract employees to temporary worker status of an NTT Group's staffing agency. At that time, the union, affiliated with the pro-corporate Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo), held a meeting to explain to these contract employees about the company's employment transfer plan. A union official told them that a female contract employee in her 30s had joined the National Confederation of Trade Unions (Zenroren)-affiliated Tele-Communication Workers' Union and had retracted her written consent on her transfer. She will remain to be a contract employee as before, the official explained. However, he went on to say, "Don't you think that she is a sneak? While all of you here are being asked to be staffing agency workers, only this person can remain on the company's payroll. That's not fair, is it? But, don't worry! She will no longer receive seasonal bonuses and her contract will not be renewed next time." A person who was present at the meeting said, "I was made to feel that the union was blackmailing us into being quiet and accepting the transfer." With what qualification can the union speak of the worker's future treatment on behalf of the company? This union does not protect workers' rights but harasses workers in league with the company.

The NTT Trade Union has consistently worked along with NTT East - Hokkaido in regard to the transfer plan of all contract employees to the NTT Group-owned staffing agency. Several months before the company's announcement of the transfer plan, the union began calling on the contract employees to be NTT Trade Union members. Most of the contract employees joined the union because they thought that the union would do something to protect their employment status. They are now very disappointed with this union. The NTT Trade Union reportedly makes a considerable amount of political donations to the ruling Democratic Party of Japan by using a loophole in the law. This clearly reveals that a union which supports a specific political party and acts together with management does not defend workers' rights at all.

GREECE



The workers in our country have no responsibility for the crisis. Responsible for the crisis are the industrialists, the ship-owners, the bankers, the merchants. The debt of Greece has been created due to the tax benefits given to big business, due to the excessive military costs in order to serve projects of NATO, due to the capitalist way of development.

The assets of the large banks have increased from the amount of 275 billion euros in 2004 to the amount of 579 billion in 2009. The off shore companies (of Greek interests), which are more than 10,000, handle annually about 500 billion euros tax-free. The amount of tax- evasion of the about 6,000 known large companies, is 15 billion euros. Only the companies in the Stock Exchange Market had profits 11.8 billion euros in 2009.

PAME, which expresses the class-oriented union movement in Greece, since December 2009, was the main organizer of the struggles of the working class, organizing general strikes, demonstrations in 65 cities, the symbolic occupation of the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Finance and the Stock Exchange Market.

These grandiose rallies in our country, lately, indicate that the majority of workers, of poor self-

AROUND THE WORLD

employed and farmers are against the barbaric measures of the government, the EU and the IMF. We had many messages from trade unions and ordinary workers all around the world and Europe, who express their solidarity and urge us to continue on this path. PAME represents 700,000 workers in our country and struggles with the self-employed and the poor farmers, in order not to pass the measures, for people not to bankrupt and to fight for a development for the people and their needs and not for the profits of plutocracy. The

ITALY



JUNE, 2010

crisis is global and pan-European and not only a Greek phenomenon.

At the summit of 16 countries - members of the Euro zone, it was agreed to provide 720 billion euros to European banks (the 2008 EU governments have already given two trillion euros).

Despite the crisis, there is money- money for capital, but not for the people. At the same time they have decided on long austerity, on unemployment and hit on the rights of the peoples of Europe to increase the profits of monopolies.

***The Workers should not make any sacrifice
The Plutocracy must pay the crisis***



SPAIN

We are at the beginning of new and bigger crisis. This system can not be corrected; it becomes more brutal, it is rotting. Under these conditions international solidarity and coordinated action by the class-oriented trade unions of Europe are necessary.



FLASHES FROM WFTU

AROUND THE WORLD

SWEDEN

In this regard the contribution of the World Federation of Trade Unions – WFTU is important.



Symbolic Blockade in the Ministry of Labor



SALONICA



BANGLADESH

Thousands of Bangladeshi garment workers clash with police; dozens injured, factories shut

By Julhas Alam

Thousands of stone-throwing garment workers clashed with police in a manufacturing hub outside the Bangladeshi capital Saturday as they swarmed the streets and factories to demand higher wages. Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to regain control and by evening, the crowds in Ashulia had dispersed, according to local police chief Sirajul Islam.

About 50 factories in the area shut because they feared attacks by workers, an official of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association said. The protest began when 7,000 employees of one shop walked off the job to demonstrate on the premises. Thousands more workers from surrounding factories later filled the streets, Islam said. He would not say how many people were injured in scattered clashes, but one protester, Abdus Salam, said at least 100 people were hurt and many of his colleagues were taken to hospitals. A police official later said that about 40 policemen were among the injured.

Salam said the workers are demanding that the minimum wage rise to 5,000 takas (\$73) a month. The current average monthly salary hovers around 2,000 takas (\$29). The garment industry, which employs 2 million people in Bangladesh and is a mainstay of the impoverished country's economy, has been hit hard by the global recession. Workers have staged a series of violent protests in recent months to demand higher pay. Bangladesh exports about \$12 billion in garments each year, mainly to the United States and Europe.

AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES

Filipino 'Workers of Triumph' Fight Layoffs

Lingerie workers in the Philippines and Thailand knew that they had to take action against cut-and-run bosses when managers at Triumph International announced plant closures and layoffs of more than 2,000 workers last June. The Filipino union, the New Union of Workers of Triumph, tried to keep some jobs or negotiate adequate severance pay for the fired workers, but management refused to come to the table.

Saying that the German/Swiss-owned manufacturer was expanding operations in non-union shops while firing union members and harassing lead-

ers, workers picketed and prevented the company from removing equipment from the factory.

Two hundred security personnel attacked the picket line and the NUWT offices May 4, destroying equipment and makeshift housing workers had set up on the picket line and removing computers and other equipment from the union offices. Triumph International has a reputation for over-the-top responses to labor activists, most recently in 2008 when the company fired the Thai union president for expressing her political views on her own time.

"We are still under threat to be dispersed violently," said Isabela de la Cruz, the Filipino union president. "We appeal to everyone to support us in our struggle, to find justice and condemn the perpetrators of the violent dispersal [of] our picket."

Turkish expert says

Unions necessary to prevent mine disasters

With three methane explosions in three different mines in the last six months in Turkey, Fikret Sazak, an expert from a miner's trade union, draws attention to the lack of proper precautions and strong workers' union in the country. Unionizing in mines would mean continuous security inspections, Sazak adds. Three methane explosions have occurred in three mines within the last six months, and all three workplaces had no trade union, Fikret Sazak says.

Recent deadly accidents in Turkey's coal mines are a direct result of a lack of proper precautions and strong workers' union, according to an expert in the field. Three methane explosions have occurred in three different mines in the last six months, while all three workplaces had no trade union, Fikret Sazak, an expert from the Maden-Is trade union, which organizes among mining sector workers, said in an interview published in Monday's edition of the Milliyet. At least 28 workers were killed in an explosion last Monday in the Karadon mine in the Black Sea province of Zonguldak. In February, an explosion occurred in a mine in the Dursunbey district of the western province of Balikesir, killing 14 workers while in December 2009, 17 workers died in another explosion

in the Mustafakemalpaşa district of the western province of Bursa.

Trade union representatives at a mine are experts on work safety and health, Sazak said, adding that it is only a trade union that can reach all corners of the mines and each and every worker. "An organized worker warns his representative when he feels something is going wrong. And the union, depending on its power of organization, can get the engineer responsible for on-the-job safety and the employer to stop the work," he said.

Inspections should be independent

There are engineers in every mine responsible for safety and health at work, Sazak said, adding that such engineers are tasked with inspecting the mine conditions and halting work and evacuating the miners if they note any danger. "They make their contracts with the company, and the company gives them their wages. [The engineers] will tell the company that there is a risk, but the company will say there is no risk. Maybe there is a risk that the company cannot see, but as the company gives the wage, its word will be counted," he said.

Subcontracting system

Sazak also emphasized the role subcontract-

Contd. on next page



WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

The role of the ITUC towards Colombia

Just two days after the murder of Hernán Ordoñez Dorado, trade union leader of ASEINPEC, and three days after the criminal attack against comrade John Jairo Marulanda Zapata, trade union leader of Sintramienergética in Segovia, the ILO has withdrawn Colombia from the list of the 25 countries where more violations of "human rights" are committed. SHAME, this is a serious mistake.

This decision is unacceptable for a country where during the last twelve months 29 union leaders have been murdered. Just in the last eight years of the Uribe government the number of assassinations of trade union leaders is approaching 600. This is a decision orchestrated behind the backs of workers in order to offer more time to the Colombian regime rather than condemn it. This terrible situation leads us to wonder once again about the real role of international organizations.

The WFTU reiterated its position through its representative at the Standards Committee that Colombia cannot be removed from the ILO list under no circumstances, as the assassinations continue. The WFTU strongly rejects the decision of the exclusion of Colombia from the list to be considered by the Standards Committee of the ILO and calls for the immediate cancella-

tion of the withdrawal of Colombia.

The withdrawal of Colombia from the list of countries that violate trade union rights took place with the consent of the ITUC, the employers group and the government of Colombia. Again, the leadership of the ITUC becomes an accomplice. Actually it is supporting the government of Colombia, it is offering them more time to act. Also the leaders of the main trade unions in Colombia affiliated to the ITUC have their share of responsibility and they are now trying to justify themselves, they are creating excuses.

All delegates of workers participating in this committee have been able to clearly see that there were secret negotiations between the government of Colombia, the employers and the unions affiliated to the ITUC, with a main role played by a trade unionist member of the Governing Body. The working people of Colombia and their class-oriented trade unions as well as the struggling people of Colombia have a rich history and great experience and therefore they know exactly who their true friends and true comrades are, and who are the ones pretending.

THE SECRETARIAT

Contd. from pre. page

ing firms have played in accidents. "If you pay attention, accidents occur at places that are run by subcontractor firms." Last week's explosion in Zonguldak was in the gallery of the subcontracted Yapitek company, which was opening galleries inside the mine.

"Trade unions in developed countries can organize in subcontracting firms as well. Second, subcontracting firms are under inspections and are bound by relevant laws as well in those countries". The subcontracting system in the mining sector first began

in support jobs such as food services and transportation before spreading, Sazak said. "If you can open a gallery in a mine you can go and have the coal as well."

Miners do not live long

Miners are generally isolated people, Sazak said. "They are introverted. Moreover, despite religiosity among miners, they drink alcohol but not to have fun. They drink to forget. Miners are the workers who get the minimum return on their social insurance premiums because they die so early," he said

16th WFTU CONGRESS
The New Dates : APRIL 18-21, 2011.

GFTU Letter exposes the "Conspiracy against DPRK"

Pyongyang, June 2, 2010

Comrade H. Mahadevan
Dy. General Secretary, WFTU &
Incharge Asia-Pacific Region

Dear Comrade

We would like to pay our regards to you who are actively working to safeguard the genuine rights of the working people. We send you the following calling for your support to justice and we would also be grateful if you could kindly make public the following in the oncoming "Flashes from WFTU" of Asia-Pacific Region.

The south Korean authorities, denying the June 15 north – south joint declaration and constantly kicking up a racket of confrontation with DPRK in collaboration with the U.S, are frantically trying to plot to harm and suffocate DPR Korea by fabricating an ultra-large stratagem with the case of the sinking of a warship clinging on the maneuver of sanction impairing the dignity of DPRK.

As already known, there occurred a case of tragedy with south Korean navy warship "Cheonan" sinking down under the water near Paekryong Islet on 26th of March in south Korea with unknown reason. The National Defence Commission of the DPRK held a press conference at the People's Palace of Culture on 28th of May denouncing the Lee Myung Bak group of traitors of south Korea for having recently kicked off a racket of confrontation with the DPRK after groundlessly linking the case of the sinking of warship Cheonan with it. Present there were Korean and foreign reporters, representatives and military attaches of foreign embassies and representatives of international organizations in DPRK.

Maj. General of the Korean People's Army Pak Rim Su, director of the Policy Department of the NDC, spoke at the press conference. Referring to the fact that the situation created after the case of warship "Cheonan" cooked up by the group of traitors is so grave that a war may break out any time, he stressed that any accidental clash that may break out in the waters of the West Sea of Korea or in areas along the Demilitarized Zone will lead to an all-out war.

The South Korean puppet authorities persistently refused the field inspection, unilaterally insisting on the forged 'results of investigation' out of guilty conscience. The case of the warship sinking is a fabrication and charade orchestrated by the south Korean puppet authorities from A to Z.

First, we can say this because the scientific investigation and objective investigation touted by the south

Korean authorities were nonsensical. To begin with, the team for investigation was formed in such a way that it could not make a scientific and objective investigation, and this is clear from the fact that the south Korean military supervised the investigation. It is as clear as noon-day that in what direction its results were worked out because the investigation was supervised by those who should be tied for being chief culprits of the case.

The "international joint investigation team" was also made up of those countries which were not in a position to conduct an objective investigation. The United States was included in it.

The U.S. is in the hostile relationship with DPRK as it is still technically at war with it, and countries including Britain, Australia and Canada which joined the team are also those countries which participated in the Korean war by toeing the U.S. line and are now cooperating with the south Korean Authorities. Clear is which party the members of the team from those countries would side with and what conclusion they would make.

The same is the case with the 'civilian and military joint investigation team'. It raked up its brain to link 'the material evidence' produced with the DPRK after supporting the story about the 'the north's involvement? the south Korean authorities spread before the results of investigation were announced. It was reported that civilians involved in the investigation team were hindered in their movements, leading a prison life aboard the warship 'Tokdo' of the south Korean navy, because they had been strictly isolated from the outside since the start of investigation. They were barred from taking part in the major investigation.

No wonder, some were expelled from the investigation team for the mere reason that they made assertions contrary to the stand of the Ministry of Defense and even they were prosecuted for them.

The course in which the results of investigation changed several times and they were fabricated to gradually focus on the story about a torpedo attack of the north goes to prove that the investigation was unscientific and nonobjective. The time and place the sinking occurred changed several times. At first, it was stated that the case took place at 21:45 and then it was corrected as 21:16, changing the time several times.

The south side said that the warship was sunken near Paekrong Islet with lots of rocks, but later corrected that the place was changed into other place without rocks. It

cannot be construed otherwise than intentional changes to draw a conclusion that the case was not an accident caused when the warship ran against rocks.

The captain of the warship 'Cheonan' who can be called irrefutable eyewitness said at first that there was not outside provocation at all. But, finally he said there was outside provocation. The puppet military said at first that there was no ground whatsoever to say it was an attack from the north. But, finally it changed its stand by saying that 'the warship was sunken by a torpedo attack of the north.

It claimed there was no eyewitness who saw the column of water rising during the warship explosion, even among survivors of the warship. But later, it made a guard on Paekroyong Islet far away from the waters where the ship sank state that he saw the white column of water 100m high in the pitch-dark. This was also a dastardly farce orchestrated by the group of traitors to link the case with the DPRK.

The DPRK, therefore, categorically turns down and totally refutes the results of investigation announced by the south side.

Senior Colonel of the KPA Ri Son Gwon, official of the Policy Department of the NDC, with the help of a visual aid analyzed pieces of evidence produced by the south side one by one. He cited facts to scientifically prove that they were nothing but a sheer fabrication. Pak said there is the need to think over which side of both the north and the south got benefit from such case of warship sinking.

The entire army and all the people of the DPRK are all out to bring about great innovations and leap forward in building a thriving nation in 2010, the historic year. Is there any reason for the DPRK to attack such south Korean patrol ship because it is channeling all its efforts into attaining the above-said gigantic goal?

The policy of the present south Korean government is, in a word, to totally deny the policy of reconciliation, unity, cooperation and exchange which was followed in the past. Furthermore, it is aimed to totally scrap the historic June 15 joint declaration and the October 4 declaration, the programme for implementing it.

The South Korean authorities needed the case of the warship sinking by a torpedo attack of the north? in a bid to spread among the south Korean people the conception that the DPRK is the 'principal enemy', not fellow countrymen.

Under the existing agreement reached between the United States and South Korea, the right to command wartime operations is to be transferred to south Korea in

2010. If this happens, the U.S. forces will be deprived of any justification to stay in south Korea. This would deal a telling blow at the south Korean authorities as they regard the south Korea-U.S. alliance almighty as the core of their foreign policy.

For this reason, the south Korean authorities cooked up the fiction that the warship was sunken by an armed attack of the DPRK in a bid to hype such 'security uneasiness' that a war may break out on the Korean peninsula any time. The case was also needed to rally the conservative forces in south Korea.

So, they floated the story that the warship was sunken by a torpedo attack of the north in a bid to stir up confrontation with the DPRK and rally the conservative forces. The above-said case was also required to win in the forthcoming elections to local self-governing bodies.

The puppet authorities egged the military warmongers on to groundlessly link the case with the DPRK in an effort to strain the situation and stoke the confrontation with it for the purpose of creating a phase favorable for winning in the elections. The group of traitors can prolong their remaining days only when it fakes up the conclusion that the warship was caused by the attack of the DPRK.

The DPRK has so far bolstered up its nuclear deterrent under the banner of Songun for the purpose of coping with such present acute situation. Its powerful physical means including nuclear weapons are not to be on display or to be stockpiled. Now is the time for the DPRK to demonstrate the mettle of its revolutionary armed forces. How the situation will develop entirely depends on the attitude of the group of traitors.

Upon the authorization of the National Defence Commission of the DPRK, Pak once again notified the participants of the important steps taken by the KPA. And he solemnly clarified the principled stand of the army and people of the DPRK to strongly retaliate against the frantic actions of the group of traitor to do harm to the dignified DPRK.

We have firm belief that you who value justice would denounce the maneuvers of the south Korean authorities who are kicking up a provocative racket of confrontation against DPRK with bloodshed eyes by fabrication and charade, and actively send support and solidarity to our people and workers in their struggle to achieve national reunification as early as possible with united efforts of whole nation under the banner of June 15 north-south joint declaration.

Central Committee
General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea

From Bhopal Union Carbide to Exxon to BP

P. Sainath*

Over 20,000 killed. Over half a million victims maimed, disabled or otherwise affected. Compensation of around Rs. 12,414 per victim on average on the 1989 value of the rupee. \$ 470 million total. And that divided between 574,367 victims.) Over a quarter of a century's wait. To see seven former officials of Union Carbide Corporation's Indian subsidiary sentenced to two years in prison and fined \$2100. Not a single person from the far more responsible parent US company punished.

Yet, the notion that the main injustice to Bhopal is a failure to extradite then UCC chief Warren Anderson from America is mildly ridiculous. Trying to evade the lessons the 1984 Bhopal Gas disaster threw up on the tyranny of giant corporations is completely so. Well over two decades after its MIC gas slaughtered 20,000 (mostly very poor) human beings, Bhopal still pays the price of Carbide's criminality. (Evident from the long-term impact on the health of the gas-affected. And from the poisoned soil and water around the former Carbide plant.) While the Indian government's appalling Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Bill, if adopted, would give legal cover to such conduct across the country.

Bhopal marked the horrific beginning of a new era. One that signalled the collapse of restraint on corporate power. The ongoing BP spill in the Mexican Gulf -- with estimates ranging from 30,000 to 80,000 barrels per day -- tops off a quarter of a century where corporations could (and have) done anything in the pursuit of profit, at any human cost. Barack Obama's 'hard words' on BP are mostly pre-November poll-rants. BP can take a lot of comfort from two US Supreme Court judgements in the past two years.

The first of these came in 2008. That was in the case of the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989 -- till then the biggest recorded (or admitted to) oil spill in history. Simply put, BP's blowout is recreating an Exxon Valdez every eight days or so. And has been doing that since late April. In the Exxon case, a jury in 1994 imposed penalties of \$ 5 billion on the company. In 2006, points out Sharon Smith in an incisive piece in counterpunch.org, "an appeals court halved the

punitive claim to \$2.5 billion." And in June 2008, "the Supreme Court reduced that amount by 80 percent, to roughly \$500 million—an average of \$15,000 per plaintiff." Exxon CEO Lee Raymond who fiercely fought the damages, retired with a \$400 million package all for himself. While Exxon Valdez's victims, points out Smith, ended up with roughly the same amount -- only, it was shared amongst 33,000 of them. That is about 10 per cent of the original award and roughly \$15,000 per victim

In September the same year, Wall Street's kleptocrats famously tanked the world economy. Their actions cost millions in America and elsewhere their jobs and livelihoods. Yet, US CEOs took home billions in bonuses that very year. Even the New York Times felt the need to say in a lead editorial at the time: "Just weeks after the Treasury Department gave nine of the nation's top banks \$125 billion in taxpayer dollars to save them from unprecedented calamity, bank executives are salting money away in billionaire bonus pools to reward themselves for their performance." (In that election year, Big Oil also drummed up support for offshore drilling with this cheery slogan: 'Drill, Baby, Drill.' What'll it be now? 'Spill, Baby, Spill?')

This year, barely three months before BP turned the Gulf of Mexico into a sludge pond, the US Supreme Court further strengthened corporate power with its ruling in the Citizens United Vs. Federal Election Commission case. As Ralph Nader put it: " With this decision, corporations can now directly pour vast amounts of corporate money... into the electoral swamp already flooded with ...(corporate) dollars ...corporations can (now) reward or intimidate people running for office at the local, state, and national levels."

Mason Gaffney makes the point in the CounterPunch newsletter that "The ideas behind this are that a corporation is a 'legal person,' with all the rights (if not all the duties) of a human being; that, as such, it has a right of free speech; and that donating money is a form of speech." So chin up, BP, there's still hope. Remember how many who make it to Congress and Senate get there on Big Oil's big bucks.

While on the BP spill, spare a thought for the vic-

tims of such disasters who are not American or white-skinned. As Foreign Policy in Focus columnist Conn Hallinan points out: "Nigerian government figures show there have been more than 9000 spills between 1970 and 2000, and there are currently 2,000 official spill sites." But then, what are African lives worth?

Seven years after Bhopal, Larry Summers, then chief economist at the world bank, wrote his infamous memo. This said, among other things: "Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging MORE migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [Less Developed Countries]?" Summers suggested that "the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that." Summers was to later say that he was joking, being sarcastic, and so on. Few buy that pathetic plea. Still, he went on to become President of Harvard and is now President Obama's chief economic adviser. And his memo's logic holds in the real world. It is exactly what has happened since Bhopal.

The ruling UPA's response to the Bhopal sentences shows the government's ethics to be as despicable as they were in 1984. To mourn Bhopal and ready the nuclear liability bill is a hypocrisy hard to match. Bhopal was a post-facto sell-out. With this bill, the government sells out in advance. But is it only governments that have something to hide from Bhopal 1984? Even at the time, newspapers gladly carried planted stories suggesting "sabotage by Carbide's workers" had caused the disaster. Four years later, a UCC funded 'study' claimed to prove that the disaster was caused by a disgruntled worker at the plant. Carbide also ensured it could not be sued in US courts. In December 1985, some of India's great legal luminaries, including Nani Palkhivala, helped persuade US courts there that Indian courts were the appropriate forum to deal with the case. (With results that we now live with.) That spared Carbide the relatively much higher damages that US courts might have imposed.

Barely ten years later, Enron emerged the symbol of the new era of liberalization. Top academics, 'experts,' and columnists worked hard to tell us what nice guys the Enron mob were. All this, after much initial criticism of the Enron deal. The change of heart was possibly a transplant funded by tens of millions of dollars set up by that company to "educate" Indian opinion-makers, law-makers etc.

Advertising too, flowed freely. One famous newspaper started out very critical of Enron, only to switch to being one of its cheerleaders. Many others, too did the same. I guess that kind of fund buys a lot of education. For Maharashtra and India, it bought disaster. The once profit-making state electricity board piled up millions in losses. The state in turn slashed money from welfare projects and services. Enron, fraud that it was, collapsed in the US, some of its top guns turning fugitives from the law. The mess remains with us. The one chance of evading disaster vanished when the Supreme Court threw out a petition against the Enron deal brought by Abhay Mehta and that was that.

Meanwhile, Obama's rhetoric seems to have hurt British sentiments. The truth is that the United States has helped, even subsidised BP in the past. In what Alexander Cockburn calls "the biggest bailout in history," the CIA staged a now infamous coup in Iran in 1953 to get rid of Mohammed Mossadegh's government.

The Iranian Parliament had by unanimous vote nationalised the exploitative Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Mossadegh was toppled. Installed in his place was "Shah Reza Pahlevi, the creature of the West's oil companies, with full tyrannical powers. The AIOC got back 40 per cent of its old concession and became an internationally owned consortium, renamed -- British Petroleum." The lists of corporate-sponsored coups in the third world would fill volumes.

All that Union Carbide did and got away with in Bhopal is shocking. But not, alas, surprising. In the quarter of a century since then, corporate power has only grown. Bhopals happen when societies privilege corporations over communities, and private profit over public interest. Curb corporate power, Indian or American, or it will rip you apart.

Remember too, that important thing Bhopal victims say over and over again: "we should see that this can never happen again." However, we seem to be ensuring quite the opposite. The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Bill in its present form ensures that US corporations causing any nuclear accidents on Indian soil will get away with minimal damages. A compensation now seen as a crime in Bhopal could be a legal norm in the future. Welcome back, Larry Summers.

(*P. Sainath is the rural affairs editor of The Hindu, (India) where this piece appears)