



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST)

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Press Release

Fight back the anti-working class amendments to Labour Laws by the NDA government! *Vikas* model of Modi is *Vinash* for the people of India and *Vistar* for the imperialists and compradors!

26-09-2014

The Modi led NDA government has once again bared its anti-working class stance with the recent amendments to the labor laws. In the first week of September, 2014 it brought amendments to The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947; The Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970; The Factories Act, 1948; The Apprentices Act, 1961, and Trade Unions Act. Narendra Singh Tomar, the Central labor minister announced these without batting an eyelid as if he is a minister responsible for the welfare of the factory owners and not the laborers. These amendments were done with the single purpose of super-exploitation of the workers, to increase the super profits of the imperialist and Indian corporations that are pouncing like vultures for the blood and flesh of our working people.

These amendments now make existing rights for overtime extra wages redundant and would allow the factory owners to make the workers work for 12 hours instead of the eight-hour workday. They make night shifts for women legal. They now allow those factory owners employing up to 300 workers to retrench workers or shut down the factory without going through any procedures, according to their will. The Industrial Disputes Act would now favor the factory owners more in all labor related disputes. Now the Contract Labour Act would apply to firms employing more than 50 persons instead of 20 which means that units employing less than 50 contract workers would not get even the meagre protective provisions in the Act. Till now the principal employer was responsible for any violation of the law in case of contract workers though they are employed through a contractor. The amendments are letting off the hook now.

Now workers would be able to form a trade union only if they have 30% of the workers with them whereas previously seven workers could move an application for registering a union and could form one even if 15% of them came together. This is being done in the name of reducing the burden of dealing with multiple unions but it is nothing but a blatant attempt to prevent the workers from organising for their rights and allowing the capitalists to exploit, oppress and suppress them as they please. What kind of a democracy is this if the workers cannot even properly exercise their right to form a union? Given the fact that revisionist, bourgeois trade unions that are mostly hand in glove with the managements and work against the interests of the workers, have entrenched themselves dominantly among the working class, it would now become extremely difficult for the working class to free themselves from their shackles and form their own independent unions.

To be precise, these amendments have with a stroke of pen turned several illegalities regarding working conditions in factories legal, making a mockery of all the hard won rights of the workers of centuries old struggles, which are in a sense also a legacy to the struggles dating back to the slave rebellions against complete exploitation of human labor. The eight-

hour workday, not making women work in night shifts and regulation of overtime and compensation for overtime work were all won through decades of class struggle between the capitalists and the workers. The above amendments would seriously affect the physical and mental health of the workers, would lead to industrial accidents and have serious social impact too. In a context where women working in BPOs are being targeted for sexual attacks when they commute to their work places at night and several researches have established that the health of women is seriously and irreparably affected due to night shifts, this kind of legality to making women work in the night shifts would not only affect their physical and mental health, create gynecological problems but also put them at much risk at the workplace and on their way to work. On the whole this kind of work pressure would lead to workers ageing early and the capitalists would then mercilessly throw them out and employ new workers who would go through the same cycle of exploitation and get thrown out eventually.

Much blood has been shed to win these rights, in workers' struggles world over and in revolutions that aimed to end labor exploitation and oppression of all the toiling masses including the proletariat. These rights were won as a cumulative effect of both of these kinds of struggles as the whole. And now the NDA government is bent on turning the clock of history back by bringing in these amendments. In fact, it is following the path treaded by all the previous governments in power since the New Economic Policies were introduced in 1991 and LPG policies gained momentum, in bringing in these anti-working class measures with the prodding of the imperialists. In fact, Indira Gandhi tried to bring such changes in labour laws in 1982 itself but had to withdraw due to severe opposition to these. The UPA government has several such anti-working class measures in its account including some equally atrocious amendments to labor laws. All those measures not been possible for the coalition governments would now be made possible through the 'majority' government that claims to have the 'mandate' of the people. Did the people give them the 'mandate' to deny them their very fundamental rights?

In its 100 day rule the Modi led NDA government would go down in history for its record of bringing forth one or more anti-people measures during each day of its rule, this slew of anti-labor amendments being the latest. Modi & Co is playing the archetypal comprador by opening hitherto unopened sectors and partially opened sectors to full entry of FDI. Already SEZs are functioning like countries within a country with their own set of anti-worker measures and not bound by the Indian Constitution. Not just the Centre, almost every State government has a dubious record of brutally crushing the struggles of workers and employees when they resorted to strikes or agitations for their just demands. The crushing of striking State government employees in Tamilnadu and the repression on workers in Gurgaon of Haryana are just stark examples. In fact, it was the BJP government in Rajasthan that cleared a Cabinet proposal to amend three key labour laws on 5th July itself. In face of severe opposition it retracted saying they were 'mere proposals.' The judiciary is doing its part in pushing the globalisation agenda by passing anti-labor judgments including the infamous judgment banning strikes. The corporate media is providing deceptive arguments to support such anti-worker policies saying they would 'provide employment', 'create jobs' 'increase share of manufacturing in GDP' etc.

With unemployment and under-employment reaching higher proportions in the context of the worldwide economic crisis and inflation soaring, the real wages of the workers are increasingly getting depressed. The people are increasingly finding themselves in the classic capitalist quagmire where the ones who manage to get work are made to work for extremely long hours under horrible working conditions and outside the factory gates the starving workers mill around without getting even one hour of work to feed themselves or their families. This huge reserve army of the unemployed is further pushing down the wages

of the workers due to cut-throat competition for work. Coupled with the latest anti-labor amendments, the situation would become grimmer for the working people in our country.

Though the ruling classes juggle with figures of growth rate citing increasing investment of speculative capital in the stock market and try to pass it off as an indication for the development of the country, they very well know that real wealth comes from the labour of the workers. They know very well that only by exploiting the labourers to their last drop of blood, can they fill their coffers to the brim and wallow in luxuries. Now the need of the hour is for the working class to realise this fact more clearly and organise and wage a bitter class struggle against their exploiters and the comprador politicians who lick their boots.

There has been a spurt in working class struggles all over the world particularly in the context of the worldwide economic crisis. Even the US and Europe have witnessed movements like Occupy Wall Street, not to mention the huge demonstrations and agitations all over Europe against layoffs, cutting down of welfare and the loss of savings due to bank crashes. The working class in India is also erupting in struggles for better working conditions and workers' rights like the right to form unions or even to hold meetings or *dharnas*. The workers and employees have not taken such amendments to labour laws lying down. There have been vehement militant and peaceful protests including a Bharat bandh by all the trade unions against such a previous attempt by the UPA government. Mainstream trade unions have also criticised the above amendments to labour laws. The need of the hour is for all the trade unions and employees associations to come together to fight back this ruling class offensive on the entire working people.

CC, CPI (Maoist) calls upon the workers of our country to unitedly rise against the latest anti-working class amendments brought forth by the Modi led NDA government and bring it to its knees through their militant struggles and protests. It appeals to all democratic and progressive organisations and individuals to stand by the workers in their struggles and lend their voice against the super-exploitation of workers by the comprador rulers of our country to feed the imperialist beast.

Unmask the *Vikas* model of Modi government which is country selling, treacherous and anti-people. It is nothing but a model of the imperialists aiming at exploiting, oppressing and repressing the toiling masses of our country. Let us unite and fight back this treacherous and pseudo *Vikas* model and build independent, self-reliant, people oriented development model.



(Abhay)

Spokesperson,

Central Committee, CPI (Maoist)