



Flashes FROM WFTU

Price Rs. 5/-

FEB, 2012

(Vol. V, Issue-X)

New Delhi

Presidential Council Meeting of WFTU

H. Mahadevan

**WFTU forges ahead conducting continuous activities in 2011
.... affiliating new organisations from different continents
....chalking out programmes for 2012 and beyond.**



Inauguration of WFTU Africa Office in Johannesburg Com. Valentine Pachó and Com. H. Mahadevan at the entrance

The 6th presidential Council meeting of the WFTU held at Johannesburg, South Africa on 9-10, February 2012 was a very important event in the new course of the organisation's as well as the trade union movement in South Africa. This was not just an annual affair but qualitatively a rich event, paving way for the further growth and consolidation of the world working class movement.

The four nationwide federations of South Africa, NEHAWU, NUMSA, POPCRU, CEPWWAWU which hosted this historic meeting organised the event in a most memorable manner, which exhibited their enormous



Com. George Mavrikos, General Secretary presenting the Report

enthusiasm and commitment to Socialism and class based trade unionism. COSATU President Com. Dlamini who participated in the inaugural as well as the conclude sessions spoke very highly about the WFTU's role in the struggle against apartheid and national liberation of South Africa. He was confident that the ensuing conference of COSATU scheduled to be held in September 2012 will decide about the future, much closer relationship between COSATU and WFTU.

The evening before the commencement of the Presidential council meeting, on the 8th Feb., a gala opening ceremony was organized. That was to honour the surviving martyrs of the South African trade

**PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS
ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL OFFICE NEW DELHI**

union movement of the earlier decades and their families, recalling their valiant and valuable services, most of them with the WFTU, encomium paid to highlight their struggles and sacrifices. The participants were emotionally surcharged. Those who are still alive spoke of their experiences, commitments and convictions under WFTU, recalling the glorious chapters of the rich history of their class based organisation.

The president of the South African Republic Mr. Zuma was to inaugurate the meeting in the opening gala, but due to his last minute departure to Cape Town for the 'State of the Nation' preparation, sent with apologies his video-link greetings. It contained a lot of historic informations and good wishes to WFTU. The leaders and cadres present from South African trade unions in their traditional way sang and danced with revolutionary chants.

On the 9th, PC meeting began its work, under the Presidium consisting of Coms. H. Mahadevan (India), Pambis (Cyprus), Abdul Rehman (Syria), Marsella (Venezuela), Presidents of NEHAWAU & CEPPWAWU, Inbrahim Gowdar (Sudan), with the presentation of the main intervention by Coms. George Mavrikos, General Secretary. On the 10th Feb. the Presidium was replaced with Coms. Valentine Pachon (Peru) and members from Brazil, Lebanon, France, Cuba and Nepal.

The Speakers in the Presidential Council on the 9th & 10th February 2012 included Comrades Coms. H. Mahadevan, Swadesh Devroye- Secretariat members WFTU, India; A.K. Padmanabhan – CITU, India; C.H. Venkatachalam, TUI-Finance, India; Debanjan Chakraborty–TUI (Construction), India; Mauhuza Khanam FISE, Bangladesh; Wajedul Islam Khan – BTUC-Bangladesh; Vladimir R Tupaz, TUPAS, Philippines; Tran Van Ly, VGCL, Vietnam; Premal Kumar Khannel – CONEP, Nepal; Choe Han Chun GFTUK, DPR Korea amongst others, from the Asia-Pacific Region.

The Report of the GS traced the events following the ATHENS PACT adopted in the 16th Congress, deepening capitalist crisis, intra-militarist conflicts, the struggle of the working class becoming more intensive giving more hope, adoption of more barbaric, anti-labour measures, regressive taxation, cut in salaries and pensions, job losses, attack on trade union freedoms, privatization and selling of public wealth amongst others. He emphasized the need for International solidarity, besides struggle by the unions and class oriented country wide struggle that are taking place in several parts of the world, the organizational improvement, the functioning of the

regional offices and TUIs and the necessity for correcting the deficiency in some of them, the difficult financial situation and urged for payment of affiliation fees/contribution of solidarity fund.

An elaborate Action Plan for 2012 was also placed as a part of the Report of the GS. The important amongst the Action Plan, as was concluded by the presidential council after 40 members from different countries, sectors and TUIs spoke on the report, include the following:

- * **3rd Oct. 2012 – Day of International Action**
- * 23rd & 24th March 2012 – Joint Forum of TUIBIFU Banks with NUBE, Malaysia on Labour Rights, Democratic Freedom
- * 23rd Feb. International Action Day in Europe of TUI Public Services.
- * 8th March – International Conference of Solidarity with Palestine people
- * **29-30 April – Second International Conference of working youth in Havana, Cuba**
- * April 2012 – Brussels, Belgium – Seminar on the development in North Africa, Mediterranean & Middle East.
- * **1st May 2012 – May Day with several Programmes, Banners, Posters etc.**
- * June 2012- WFTU's effective intervention in the ILC, Youth global Employment and ILO related international initiatives.
- * Working Women Conference in India, Formation of WFTU Secretariat on Women.
- * Trade Union Education for Asia-Pacific in Vietnam with VGCL.
- * International TU Forum in Beijing along with ACFTU, ICATU, OATUU
- * **Regional Meetings**
- * 20-21, Feb. 2012 Athens European Region.
- * Jan. 2012, Sudan Khartoum African members meeting.
- * 11th Feb. – Inauguration of African Regional Office in Johannesburg
- * 28th April – Cuba, Latin America and Caribbean Region.
- * July 2012 – Meeting of affiliates in North America
- * July 2012 – Colombo, Asia-Pacific Regional meeting
- * **TUIs**
- * Formation of the new TUI for retired people/pensioners with HQ in Spain
- * TUI Energy Congress

Contd. on page 10

Speech of the General Secretary of the WFTU, George Mavrikos on February 9th, 2012

Dear comrades,

We are meeting ten months after the historic congress of our organisation which strengthened the WFTU. Ten months after the 16th World Trade Union Congress where the WFTU showed that it's alive and strong, that it represents the international class-oriented trade union movement and it is able to organize open and democratic congresses. Ten months after that, the decisions that we took - 'The Athens Pact' is not only a question of present interest but also proves the right analyses that we made for today's politico-economic situation and that we are ready to organize the struggle in a better way.

We meet in South Africa, in the country with a rich history of struggles and we express our respect and our appreciation to this country and its people. We express our thanks to the leaderships of NUMSA, NEHAWU, CEPWAWU and POPCRU for their hospitality, their reception and the cover of such Meeting with the participation of high level trade unionist leaders from 28 countries of the five continents. We thank all those who have helped us to be here today.

Today, there are three basic facts in workers' reality and life.

First of all - a deepening capitalist crisis together with an effort of the bourgeoisie to lose the minimum possible in the crisis by transferring a big burden to the working class and the popular layers.

The crisis started in the USA, embraced all Europe and it is expanding throughout the World. The crisis sharpened the inter-capitalist rivalries between the Euro and the Dollar, between Germany and France and among their allies. The crisis is used and salaries, pensions and social rights are cut while privatizations are generalized. The situation is also difficult in most African countries for ordinary people. Colonialism ended but capitalism continues. Colonialists left and come right back through transnational corporations, cartels, monopolies, through neoconservatives and social democrat governments. Africa is very rich in resources but it has very poor workers. This is confirmed by the UN data published in December 2010 on average life expectancy:

- Angola 47 years; - Chad 49 years; - Lesotho 47 years; - Mozambique 49 years; - Rwanda 49 years; - Nigeria 49 years;

In total 16 African countries have average life expectancy under 50.

Throughout the world the great problem for the working class, for youth and working women is UNEMPLOYMENT. The capitalists, under conditions of deep economic crisis, are trying to divide a job among 2-3 part-time employees.

Unemployment, however, cannot be faced with such anti-labor policies. It will grow continuously. On the basis of the recent data published by the ILO, there are already one billion unemployed poor workers in the World. 900 million workers live with "income" lower than 2 Euros per day.

- In Spain there are 5.3 million unemployed workers, 3 million in France, one million in Greece. The total real number of unemployed workers in the European Union exceeds 24 million; the majority of them women and young workers.

So the immediate task for the unions is to support unemployed workers to survive, to make sure that they have food, electricity, medicines, clean water; that they have economic and social support from the government and public institutions. At the same time we need to uncover the causes of unemployment. To make the working class understand that a final solution within capitalism cannot be given. To understand that the struggle against unemployment is a main basic front for the WFTU.

Second, a main characteristic of this period is the tension of intra-imperialist rivalries and their expression through the tough aggressiveness of NATO, the EU and their allies. In the last period there is a strong imperialist aggression especially against those peoples who are resisting the plans of the USA, NATO and their allies.

In Syria the foreign imperialist aggression continues. Arab countries that have kings and reactionary regimes are used to promote the plans of the imperialists. In Libya the conflicts continue. While in the Persian Gulf the imperialists, the European Union have imposed an embargo on Iran with the excuse

of its nuclear program. The USA and the European Union slander socialist Cuba with the pretext of the death of a criminal in prison; Israel continues its attacks on the Gaza Strip against the Palestinian People. The Government of Turkey threatens Cyprus and it uses the "Muslim brothers". In fact, Turkish governments are the most firm allies of the USA and Israel in the region.

The position of the WFTU is firm. The people are the only responsible to decide freely and democratically for the present and future. The WFTU is against the plans of imperialists and against imperialist wars and it organizes campaigns for internationalism and solidarity with those people suffering from the imperialists.

The WFTU affiliates and friends in Nigeria and in Africa need to be in struggling readiness because the USA, the transnational corporations and the international capital have plans for the division of the wealthy Nigeria in two or more States.

The third characteristic, we have the struggle of the working class and the popular layers that gets more intense and gives more hope and perspective to the peoples and the workers. The latter fight back and their struggle intensify every day.

The example of the great strike in Nigeria with many deaths, the many months of struggle of SME in Mexico, the strike of many days of the heroic steel workers in Greece, the strike of workers in Kazakhstan, the workers in the banana plantations in Panama, the struggle of workers in the Panama Canal, in Portugal, in India, in Thailand, in Italy, in Poland, in Bulgaria, in Belgium, in the metal sector and transnational corporations in South Africa, in the food sector in Colombia, in the mining sector in Peru, in the public sector in England, the youth in Chile, the protest in Wall Street... all these examples prove that big sections of workers in all continents resist the anti-labour policies applied by both neoliberal and social democrat governments. Today, under conditions of deep capitalist crisis, under conditions of decay of the capitalist system, the struggles of workers, of poor peasants, of the youth are the optimistic hope and the only way to generalize the counterattack of workers against the system of capitalist exploitation.

Nowadays, under such conditions, the expression of internationalist solidarity is more

than necessary. On one hand, the struggle of each trade union organization in its country being class-oriented, confronting the employers with acute forms of struggle and keeping pace with other popular layers are a great contribution to the internationalist duty. On the other hand, the expression of solidarity with the struggle of our comrades in other countries should get stronger. This solidarity should be a subject discussed at factories, at workplaces where workers will be informed, encouraged and will understand that they are not alone in the struggle, that working class unity at international level can bring positive results. Inside transnational corporations and strategic branches. Everywhere.

Our efforts should be at such a scale that the various arguments used by governments and the mass media to slander the working class struggles cannot be applied. Another essential aspect of internationalism and workers solidarity is the sharing of experience, the use and transmission of this experience for struggles to become more active, to be better organized and to get better results for the working class. We all have the duty to continuously reinforce the internationalist character of the WFTU.

What kind of trade unions we want?

We as the leadership of today's FSM claim that, under the conditions we live in, the international working class and the people need an international trade union organization which will basically have the following main characteristics and those are the characteristics that we would like and we try to have the WFTU:

1. Class orientation and revolutionary thinking, which will emphasize that we're talking about an organization of workers that firmly fights against capital and against imperialism. Trade unions that are independent from governments and capitalists.
2. Democratic and open dealings with simple people; reforms at all levels, supporting leaders who will come from the basis of society, who will be honest, will respect criticism and self-criticism, and also discipline, leaders who will fight bureaucracy and corruption.
3. The kind of unity that will unite all workers, irrespective of sex, color or religion; it will unite workers, poor farmers and the youth in order to include

them all in the fight against capital and the monopolist companies; it will unite them in the struggle and teach them not to step back or give up.

4. Its international character, workers' solidarity, cooperation and support (both ethical and economic) for each country's working class, for each branch that fights for its freedom, for its trade union and democratic rights, for its life and rights.

5. The use of all kinds of class struggle, from the simplest to the most complex; launching ideas and goals that will demand satisfaction of the present-day needs of all workers, and will at the same time lead to a class struggle to end the exploitation of man by man.

6. The use of international organizations to implement the ideas of the workers; coordinating the actions of different movements that are fighting for the same goals.

7. Education for the working class, especially so that the workers will love the history of their nation, the traditions, the culture and the history of the international working class movement; providing an education to make the workers cleverer as a class, to believe in the values of the class struggle, and to know the class struggle.

The WFTU has made many positive steps, but the sector with most difficulties is finances. The basic economic support that the WFTU receives comes only from seven WFTU affiliates and friends. Without the assistance of our friends the situation would be worse. We want to highlight and to thank also the organizations that every year send us their small but constant contribution. Our organizations from El Salvador, from Colombia, Guyana, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh send small amounts of 300 or 500 Euros showing that they support our joint efforts. They send letters saying that we stand together in our struggle. These are small amounts with a very big symbolism! The problem though still remains and it is a big problem. The needs are also big. We underline the fact that the WFTU does not receive any money from governments nor from employers.

Dear comrades,

For the year 2012, the International Action Day the WFTU we suggest to be Wednesday October 3, 2012. The success of the previous initiatives and the conditions that we live in put us in front of an additional duty for the success of the day - the organization of initiatives by all our mem-

bers and friends in their countries in the framework of the Action Day.

We recommend the International Day of Action to promote the needs and the demands of workers for everyone to have food, housing, clean water, free and public health care system and education system, free medicines. We should reveal by data the millions of children dying from hunger and thirst, the millions of people who are starving, who have no medicines while their countries are rich and their natural resources have been plundered by multinationals and monopolies. An international effort should be made to reveal and condemn the reasons for this social phenomenon. The trade unions that are members of the WFTU as well as its friends should lead these actions at every workplace, in all sectors, in all countries, in order that specific initiatives to take place. Information should be gathered, protests to be organized, events to be held as 'courts' at the expense of multinational companies speculating on water, medicines, food, books and others. We should demand solutions to be given with no delay. The material gathered after the initiative and the actions to be deposited to the UN, ILO, FAO, and UNESCO by big delegations of our affiliates and friends.

About the prices in foodstuff, about the cartel in supply and distribution of food and seeds: to attempt in coordination with colleagues from Italy and Europe to organize a dynamic protest in the offices of FAO in Rome Italy.

The 2012 Action Plan that all of you received is very rich in activities and they are all important, all necessary. The objective of the activities is to strengthen through the trade union movement: In the documents you have received there is a monthly detailed action plan for this year. Here we will discuss free and democratically for two days and we are convinced that the final action plan that will become after your proposals, observations and criticisms will be even richer, more current.

Comrades, after the 16th World Trade Union Congress we are more optimistic. We all got optimism, encouragement and strength. The new Presidential Council and the new Secretariat, together with the leaderships of the TUIs and the Regional Offices, have the capability and the strength to respond to our new and difficult but necessary duties.

(Actions decided by PC is given separately)

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST EVER STRIKE, INDIA, 28th FEBRUARY 2012



On February 28th 2012 over 100,000,000 Indian workers will come out on strike. Workers from many unions and sectors are trying to gain improvements in areas such as, pay, pensions, and employment rights.

The strike has been called because workers have said 'enough is enough', after two years of the government refusing to negotiate with unions on any issue. Indian's are sick of the rich getting richer, record economic growth, whilst 400 million people have not got a pot to piss in.

On February 28th 2012, an estimated one hundred million Indian workers will all walk out of work for twenty four hours in what is likely to be the biggest strike in world history.

Over a dozen of India's largest trade unions have called for and signed up to the strike. The strike will affect many sectors, including public sector banks, ports and docks, railways, insurance, road transport, energy workers, miners, and aviation workers.

"Recent months have seen a mounting wave of militant worker struggles in India, strikes for union recognition in India's expanding auto sector, including a ten-day occupation of a Hyundai plant, a wild-cat strike by Air India personnel, and walkouts by telecom workers and coal miners against the central government's privatization plans."

The different unions have a variety of different demands, they include gaining the same rights and protection for temporary and contract workers that permanent workers have, raising and extending the minimum wage, resisting the attacks on trade unions, stopping price rises, the creation of a national social security fund, increase in pensions, and combating corruption.

Despite seeing growth of around 9% each year, more than four hundred million Indians live in absolute poverty. Only a handful of countries enjoy similar growth, yet Indian workers have not even been flicked so much as a crumb from the bosses table.

Working and living conditions are equal to, and actually worse than some African countries that are not experiencing the same economic growth.

Indian workers are starting to switch on to the fact that the 'system' only serves the wealthy and the bosses. The last few years has seen a dramatic rise in the number of millionaires and billionaires, yet jobs are lost, wages cut, and unions rights pushed back. India's richest fifty five people have 1/6th of all the country's wealth.

[SOURCE : WORKING CLASS SELF ORGANISATION
BLOG- LIB COM. ORG]

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS **Athens, February 14, 2012**

Dear comrades,

The WFTU is organizing the **2nd International Conference of Working Youth in Havana, Cuba on April 29-30, 2012**. Confirm now your participation by e-mail: info@wftucentral.org, youth@wftucentral.org Every participant will cover his/her own plane ticket. All participants will take part at the great May Day demonstration with the WFTU flags. **Confirm your participation** as soon as possible.

THE SECRETARIAT

WFTU LETTER TO INDIAN PRIME MINISTER

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

Athens, February 24, 2012

To: Dr. Manmohan Singh
Hon. Prime Minister,
Government of India, New Delhi, India
Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

We address you this communication from the World Federation of Trade Unions, the premier International Trade Union organization representing workers in 120 countries from all the continents. Needless to add that we also represent about 10 million workers in India encompassing major Central Trade Unions like AITUC and CITU as well as TUCC, AICCTU, AIUTUC etc. besides number of workers in various sectors and industries.

We are concerned to write to you because we observe that the various economic policies being pursued by Indian Government are adversely impacting the living conditions and livelihood of the common masses of workers. We are aware that India is a fast emerging economy in the world and its more than 400 million workers are a great human asset in shaping the country as a strong and vibrant economy.

But it is distressing and disappointing that the workers are being denied of their legitimate and justified share out of the prosperity and progress. On the other hand workers are confronted with problems of huge job losses, retrenchments and lay-offs, underpayment of wages, elongated working hours, denial of basic trade union rights, violation of labour statutes, outsourcing and contractualising regular jobs, denial of social security benefits, denial of maternity benefits for women workers, exploitation of unorganized workers, increased peril to jobs and job security, etc. In short workers are being treated unfairly and without equity and justice.

It is also a matter of intrigue that while India is a founder member of ILO, Resolutions like Conventions 87 and 48 relating to right of association and organizing trade unions, etc. are yet to be ratified by the Indian Government.

Further, in the anxiety to pursue the policies of globalization and liberalization, the welfare of workers is being ignored. Labour is said to be an equal partner in development and progress but ostensibly, the scales are not held evenly.

It is in this situation, after repeatedly drawing the attention of the Government to correct the situation and having failed to get any positive outcome, the entire trade union movement and workers class of India has risen as one man to register their stout opposition to these policies through a General Strike on 28, February, 2012.

The fact that all the Central Trade Unions have come together and jointly given the call for the strike action itself is a pointer to the deteriorating conditions of the labour class in India and the concern of the trade unions to espouse their cause. It is expected that nearly 100 million workers will be joining this protest action to press their 10 point charter of demands.

From the World Federation of Trade Unions, we express our full support to the working class of India and total solidarity with the trade unions who have given the call for the strike. We urge upon the Government of India to appreciate the genuine concerns of the trade unions and take all steps to protect the interests of the workers and address the demands of the traded unions.

Thanking you,
Yours sincerely



GEORGE MAVRIKOS
GENERAL SECRETARY

ALL WORKERS MILITANT FRONT (W.F.T.U. affiliate)

February 9th, Rally of PAME



**WORKERS AND THE PEOPLE OF GREECE CONTINUE THE PATH OF HONOUR
AND DECENCY, THE PATH OF STRUGGLE. 48 HOUR GENERAL STRIKE ON
FEBRUARY 10-11**



FIBEN NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEPAL

Political Rights with Trade Union Rights

Our Concern is

- ***Viable financial institutions***
- ***Efficient management***
- ***Deciplined trade unions***
- ***Self-governing economic policies***

Bank, Insurance and Finance Unions- Nepal (Bifu-Nepal)- Renamed FIBEN

Resloutions passed by 4th National Convention of Bifu-Nepal held on 17th and 18th Feb. 2012 at ADBL, Central Training Institute, Bode, Bhaktapur.

1) National Convention concluded that assurance limited only speech and paper decisions of main political parties. Realising this fact people of Nepal and international societies are not confident to make new constitution and logical end of peace process within the stipulated time of constituent Assembly. In this way the major political parties are detoriating their image day by day. We strongly demand to draft Federal Democratic Republic constitution and end the peace process in a logical way withing the stipulated time.

2) Nepalese trade unions are playing vital role for the establishment, enhancement and promotion of democracy, peace, press freedom, human rights in the political history of Nepal. Evaluating higher level contribution and dedication of trade union role in the critical position of the country, ensure political right with trade union right to the trade unions and make consitutional provision to represent at least 10 percent seat in the federal as well as state lagislature parliaments..

3) Agricultural Development Bank, Nepal is fully government owned bank but now it has only 51 percent share of Nepal Government. Government of Nepal has already decided to sell its own 30 percent share to the strategic partner and starting the process gradually in this direction. We strongly condemn the decision of Nepal Government to privatise this bank and we also demand to the Government to ensure at least 51 share of Government in this bank.

4) Now other Government bank, Rastriya Banijya Bank has nearly 9 billions negative network. As per the Nepal Rastra Bank directives it should have at least 2 billions paid of capital, now it has only 117crores paid of capital. Our convention strongly

demand to formulate capital restructuring plan and implement it immediately.

5) Government of Nepal approved the capital restructuring plan of Nepal Bank Ltd. We strongly demand to implement its capital restructuring action plan immediately.

6) 5 Regional Level Rural Development Banks are in the phase of critical financial position. Implement essence and spirit of the recommendation of task force formed by Nepal Rastra Bank and we demand to the Nepal Rastra Bank and Government of Nepal to play vital role to make it central level rural bank assuring job security, social security, opportunities of career development of the staff and make arrangement to enlarge its service in remaining remote districts to deliver micro finance service to the extremely poor people in these areas.

7) Government of Nepal is trying to privatise Nepal Bank Ltd, Rastriya Banijya Bank and Agricultural Development in the name of financial sector reform. We strongly criticize step taken by the Government and demand to operate these bank as the state owned banks.

8) Our convention draws attention to the concerning body toward making separate regulatory body of finance company and we demand to stop Government forceful lending from Karmachari sanchayakosh.

9) We also demand to establish separate regulatory body for monitoring, supervising and evaluating the growing micro finance companies to improve their financial position and make them transparent functioning and responsible institutions. In the time of handover in the development bank, there should be provision to address the staff of DEPROSC Nepal in the earning capital and liability. We demand with the management of DEPROSC Nepal to do so accordingly.

10) There is partiality, lack of good governance, weak performance in the bank, insurance and finance institutions. In the name of open competition to select the CEOs mainly in the government owned banks, CEOs are appointing in the pressure of party leader and government denying the norms and standard set for the appointing CEOs. No efficient, experienced and capable leader in the banks. We strongly demand to set the criteria for the appointment of CEOs

and appoint the CEOs as per the set standard to improve the financial performances of the banks.

11) There is strong pressure from the powerful foreign countries and multinationals finance company to formulate the economic policies for the country. So that we strongly demand to formulate self-governing policies relevant to Nepal.

12) we demand trade union right to the workers in various sector as per the mandate given by re-instate house of representatives up to joint secretary of Nepal Government. We demand to make legal provision as per the mandate given by house of representative in all professional sectors.

13) Make arrangement to approve the ILO Convention 87 to ensure the right to organise and freedom of association.

14) Drafting new 6 labor laws are in the final stage. Prepare laws relating to labor market as per the set international as well national standard and pass these laws from legislature parliament without delay.

15) Now Nepalese average life expectancy is 66 years but service time is limited up to the age of 58 and service period is 30 years. It is impracticable practice of tenure of working people. So make legal arrangement to serve up to year of 60 in all professional sector.

16) Distribute bonus to all staff of all banks that is earning profit in the certain Fiscal year as per the bonus act 2030. We strongly criticise the step taken by Nepal Government in the name of circular of Commission of Abuse of Authority and Investigation which is against the spirit of Bonus Act 2030.

17) Make legal arrangement to represent in the respective board of institution from authorised trade union.

18) 4th National Convention of Banks, Insurance and Finance Unions (BIFU-Nepal) (Renamed of Federation of Inter Bank Employees' Nepal, FIBEN)) strongly condemn the dismissal of vice president bro. Abdul Jamil bin Jalauddin and treasurer bro. Chen ka Fatt of NUBE, Malaysia from Maybank of Malaysia against the spirit of international labor practice and collective bargaining. We extend our solidarity to the movement launched by NUBE, Malaysia and strongly demand to reinstate the discharged two trade union leader to their respective post.

19) Finally we approve the resolution relating to the vote of thanks to the Chief guest Com. Madhav Kumar Nepal, Senior leader of CPN (UML) Distinguished foreign guests Bro MR Shah- General Secretary of ARObifu, Mahesh Mishra- Vice President of AIBEA, DD Rustagi- Joint Secretary- AIBEA, Anoop Mathur- Central Committee member- AIBEA and CH Venkatachalam- General Secretary- TUIBIFU, J. Solomon- Vice President of ARObifu, Lai, Wan, Chih- Treasure of ARObifu, Taiwan, Su, Yi- Chih- Deputy General Secretary of Taiwan Federation Financials Union for their greeting message for the grand success of our convention. We also extend vote of thanks to the GS, Dty GS of CONEP and other guests from the different federations. We also express vote of thank for Convention hall to ADBL Training Institute and other delegates, participants, observers and organising committee.

Contd. from page 2

- * TUI (Teachers) FISE- Congresses in each continent to be organized
- * TUI Transport Congress in Portugal
- * Seminars in Co-operation with ILO
- * 2 in each continent
- * **Joint meeting of WFTU leadership with heads of Regional offices & Sectoral TUIs – last week of April 2012**
- * **Further Initiatives**
- * Competitiveness for Energy & Oil - International meeting in Athens.
- * Health Consequences in Mine workers - initiative in Chile
- * Child labour – Child Criminality
- * Continuation of Struggle for the liberation of the 5 Cubans

- * International Days – activities on HIV/AIDS, Earth, Immigration etc.
- * To create a labour- trade union News Agency to spread labour and trade union News from all across the world to the entire world.
- * **The Presidential Council of WFTU congratulated Indian Working class for jointly launching All India Strike on the 28th Feb. 2012**
- * **The PC emphasized the decision that all affiliates must pay the annual fees, (the better unions more than their affiliation dues,) to the WFTU central office without fail. None should remain missing from payment of fees.**
- * The next meeting of the Presidential Council will be held in Lima, Peru in 2012.

Cypriot Workers Solidarity with the Greek Steel workers strike of "Halyvourgiki"

On Friday evening 27th January Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot workers in a musical concert expressed their support and solidarity with the 400 Greek steel workers who have been on strike for three months. PEO and the Turkish Cypriot trade unions DEV-IS, KTAMS, KTOS, KTOEOS and BES, which are affiliated members of the WFTU, organised the show of solidarity and support to the Greek steel workers. The concert took place at the conference hall of PEO.

"We are here tonight to support the strikers of the Greek Steelworks "Halyvourgiki" and to express in this way our class solidarity with a struggle of honour and dignity, against the imposition of humiliating working conditions and the attempt to abolish the Collective Agreement," said the General Secretary of PEO Pambis Kyritsis in his address. "Workers are experiencing the harsh consequences of the global crisis of the capitalist system. Capital and its representatives have intensified their attacks on the labour movement and workers gains. They feel that circumstances are in their favour, that they now have the upper hand and are trying to use the crisis to attack and abolish working people's rights and conquests which were won by the labour movement through hard and long struggles."

Greece is perhaps the most striking example in Europe. Only the working people, the ones who are not responsible for the crisis, are paying the price for the harsh consequences of the anti-peoples measures being promoted by the IMF and the Troika in the name of allegedly tidying up finances.

The "Halyvourgiki" case of the steel workers struggle in Greece is a clear example of the aggression against workers rights and the organized labour movement. Our Greek colleagues with the support of the class-based forces, especially of the All Workers Militant Front (PAME) have for over 3 months chosen the path of dignity, struggle and resistance. This heroic struggle of 400 of our Greek colleagues, which has become the cause of the entire working class, demonstrates again the great value of solidarity among workers, both of moral solidarity and sympathy and in terms of practical and material support.

It is precisely this need for moral and material solidarity that prompted PEO to co-organize this solidarity concert together with the Turkish Cypriot trade unions who are affiliated members of WFTU: DEV-IS, KTAMS, KTOS, KTOEOS and BES. It is this solidarity that makes the power of the working class formidable and multiplies its power against the employer's arbitrariness.

By expressing our class solidarity with the "Halyvourgiki" Greek Steel workers of Aspropyrgos we call on Cypriot workers too to be vigilant and rally their class forces for our own struggles underway and which it seems will be intensifying and growing."

Voluntary contribution

The General Secretary of PEO did not fail to mention that the event is entirely the result of voluntary action since all the artists have volunteered to participate selflessly without any costs, wishing in this way to contribute to the support and strengthening of the Greek strikers struggle. The President of the Steel Workers Branch Union George Syfonios made an emotional address to the working people attending the solidarity concert.

"The attack waged by capital knows no boundaries. Capitalism attacks mercilessly where it finds unorganized workers." "We have been on strike as one fist since October 3. We will not go back to work for 500 Euros. We demand the reinstatement of our colleagues who were fired and that they should be employed with fixed schedules and contracts. We are on strike because we refused to work five hours per day, five days per week with a 40% reduction in our salaries."

We are standing upright, because we are already victorious. The employers themselves confessed that they did not expect such resistance, they did not expect us to hold on, and they expected that we would have grown tired... We have proved that we have unstoppable power. With guard duties we are guarding our strike. Tens and hundreds of trade unionists, students, pensioners from Greece and people from all over the world are expressing their solidarity with our struggle, but morally and practically. We express our thanks to everyone."

George Syfonios made a special reference to the solidarity of PEO and the Turkish Cypriot organizations. He stressed that he is deeply moved by the solidarity expressed by PEO and the Turkish Cypriot organizations towards the struggle of the Greek steel workers.

"We express to our brother workers our thanks for your steady and moving response. You should know that our own victory is a victory for the whole of the working class. We will always be by your side to support you as you are now in solidarity with us and supporting us." "We are here to express our solidarity with the struggle of the honoured struggle of our brother workers in "Halyvourgiki" in Greece, with the struggle which has already being going on for 3 months against the abolition of the collective agreement by the employers," said the President of DEV-IS Mehmet Seyis in his own address. "From here, we join our voices and strengthen our solidarity with our class brothers who are struggling against this relentless attack". "We are in a period in which global capital is increasing exploitation with dictates through the IMF, the World Bank and the neoliberal policies and curbing workers human rights."

Speaking about the international situation, the President of DEV-IS said that, "The capitalists and representatives of neo-liberalism are seeking to exploit the crisis in order to promote their own interests and to put the burden of their crisis onto the backs of workers."

Hunger, unemployment and migration are spreading like an epidemic. To change this situation we the workers must mobilize. Our brothers, the Steel workers in Greece have lit the flame of the struggle. And we must together strengthen our international unity, struggle and solidarity. We salute the honourable resistance of the Greek workers in "Halyvourgiki". Their struggle is the struggle of all workers."

The response of Cypriot workers to the voluntary purchase of solidarity coupons was moving. Thousands of coupons were sold during both the concert, but also at the workplaces. So far a big amount of money have been collected which will be given to the strike fund for the needs of the 400 Greek workers of Halyvourgiki.

SOLIDARITY MESSAGE FROM BASQUE TRADE UNION LAB TO INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

LAB Basque trade union shows its solidarity to Indian Trade Unions and working class in their struggle for proper working conditions.

The labour and working condition are getting worse and from LAB we think it is unacceptable. Organising workers and is the only way to go forward in the defence of the rights and liberties for the workers. How ever, organising is not enough and we have to struggle. **Beacause of that we support you and we support the general strike you are carrying out the 28th of February demanding:**

- Concrete measures to contain the price rise.
- Linkage of job-security with concession/incentive package to the entrepreneurs,
- Strict enforcement of labour laws without exception or exemption and stringent punishments for violation thereof,
- Universal Social Security for unorganised sector workers and creation of a National Social Security Fund with adequate funds in line with the recommendations of NCEUS and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour,
- Stoppage of disinvestment in central and state PSUs,
- No contractualisation/outsourcing of regular jobs and payment of wages and benefits to existing contract workers at par with regular employees of the industry,
- Amendment of Minimum Wage Act and fixation of statutory minimum wage at not less than Rs 10000/- p.m.,
- Bonus, Provident Fund and Assured Pension to all without ceiling,
- Compulsory registration of Trade Unions within 45 days.

So from LAB we want to send you the solidarity of the Basque working class, the whole of our trade union.

Long live to the workers' struggles!

International Department of Basque trade union LAB

In the Basque Coutry, February 15th, 2012

Investment terror

Since the 1990s developing nations have been on a treaty spree, signing a vast number of bilateral and regional investment treaties to attract funds for development. But as the figure of investment treaties has shot up so have the claims for damages from investor companies, which are seeking billions of dollars in compensation on account of regulatory laws. Poor countries are finding that footloose investments are cutting access to water, damaging public health and the environment, and endangering ethnic communities. As transnational firms challenge regulatory laws, countries are forced to retract, and pay damages. Rich states have become equally vulnerable.

Latha Jishnu sifts through case studies and speaks to international lawyers, academics, researchers and development experts to uncover the hidden dangers of investment treaties. The most chilling feature is the role of a cabal of claims attorneys who are making colossal profit at the cost of nations, and sustainable life

The New Year may not have started cheerily for the claims brigade. An international arbitration panel awarded US oil giant Exxon Mobil Corp just \$908 million in compensation for Venezuela's nationalisation of its assets in 2007, less than 10 per cent of what the behemoth had reportedly sought. It was presumed that Venezuela's feisty president Hugo Chavez, known for his America-baiting, would be celebrating.

Not really. The compensation awarded to Exxon by the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is against a claim on PDVSA, the national oil company of Venezuela. In other words, a company-to-company arbitration that is routine in the course of business. What is probably worrying Chavez is another suit filed by Exxon against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela at the World Bank-affiliated International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) on the same issue of expropriation. The damages sought, according to reports in the Venezuelan press, are close to \$40 billion. This claim has been filed under a bilateral investment treaty (BIT) signed between the Netherlands and Venezuela. Exxon is taking advantage of this treaty because the oil giant has a subsidiary in the Netherlands which gives it locus standi to invoke this particular BIT. There is no treaty with the US. For Venezuela, this could prove costly since the compensation awarded by the ICSID will be determined by the terms of the treaty. Invariably, violations under such BITs

are larger in scope and could include additional compensation. Monetary damages, however, are not the biggest cost imposed on host nations, although in the case of poor countries these could be crippling. The more severe consequences are on the environment and other sectors of public policy dealing with health.

Germany has been sued by investors for phasing out its nuclear plants and for insisting on strict environmental rules for coal-fired projects (Source: Janericloebe) (Photo: Steffen Papenbroock)

Look at what happened to Germany not too long ago. In 2007, protests against Swedish company Vattenfall's proposal to build a massive thermal power project at Moorburg in the Greater Hamburg area reached a crescendo. The popular view was that Hamburg did not need such a large plant (2 x 820 MW units) fuelled by hard coal since it would further endanger the environment. The protest was also about keeping the River Elbe clean. When Hamburg gave Vattenfall final approval in September 2008, it imposed strict restrictions to minimise the project's impact on the Elbe. It is these stipulations that prompted Vattenfall in 2009 to claim compensation from Germany at the ICSID under the terms of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). The treaty is a pact signed by 51 nations and the European Union and it provides the same protection for investors that BITs do.

The Vattenfall claim, like the majority of the arbitration suits filed under BITs and regional trade agreements (RTAs) such as North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), are never made public. Nor are the terms of the settlement revealed by either party. However, a report in Spiegel Online of July 15, 2009, describes Vattenfall's request for arbitration as "an explosive document" and says it shows "just how helplessly and hesitantly city officials can react in their implementation of environmental restrictions."

In March 2011, Vattenfall was awarded around • 1.4 billion (US \$1.8 billion as per current rate) it had sought as damages from the German government, claiming that environmental restrictions would make the project uneconomical. Shockingly, the ICSID settlement freed the Swedish energy giant from the earlier environmental conditions, including the requirement to build and operate a discharge cooler. Canada and the US have well established model treaties which they pretty much impose on others. They negotiate them under pressure from their industries and

big law firms Nathalie Bernasconi-Osterwalder Lawyer at the International Institute for Sustainable Development Nathalie Bernasconi-Osterwalder, senior international lawyer who heads the investment programme at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), points out, "The conditions stipulated in the water permit are necessary under European Law, and are consistent with the rules imposed on industry along the Elbe River." What is troubling is that Hamburg had told the arbitration panel that it was striving to meet the EU's Water Framework Directive, which requires all member-states to ensure specified water quality in rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater by 2015. Clearly, that did not cut any ice with the panel.

Bernasconi-Osterwalder has written extensively on arbitration cases. She says it was only in the late 1990s that "foreign investors began to increasingly and aggressively sue host states under these treaties. Often, investors use investment treaties in ways that can catch the host state by surprise, as in the dispute initiated by Vattenfall against Germany."

It is significant that a foreign investor could force even a developed country like Germany to toe its line. Gus Van Harten, associate professor, Osgoode Hall Law School of Toronto-based York University, underscores the fundamental threat that investment treaties pose to "democratic choice and responsive regulation in all countries".

The academic, who has campaigned vigorously for alternatives to the current BITs, says: "It is true that developing countries have been by far the main targets. This reflects the structure of BITs, their origins as treaties designed to provide extremely generous protections for foreign investors, usually transnational corporations (TNCs), where the corporate nationals of one country (originally a former European colonial power and, from the 1980s, the US) owned far more assets in the other treaty signatory (the developing country). However, it is important to understand that the treaties are used by companies and the wealthy to discipline all countries and government."

India, despite the 80 BITs it has signed—14 are yet to be ratified—is sitting pretty. Its only recorded brush with such arbitration has been the infamous Dabhol Power Company case initiated by the partner firms of Enron, the original promoter, which used the India-Mauritius treaty to win a huge claim. None of the details of what is widely reported to have been a \$1 billion settlement, have been made public. More recently, Australian mining company White Industries Australia filed a case against India under the BIT of the two countries, according to IAREporter.

This follows complaints by the company that the Indian courts had not enforced a 2002 foreign arbitration award against its Indian joint-venture partner, Coal India Ltd. Officials claim they are unaware of the case but IAREporter says it is being heard under United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) rules.

Why are BITs so toxic? These are bilateral agreements intended to promote and protect investments in each other's territories by companies based in either country. According to United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD), which promoted the concept, BITs are treaties that usually give foreign investors guarantees of fair and equitable treatment, and compensation in the event of expropriation or damage to the investment. But most are loosely worded treaties open to varying interpretations by arbitrators and creatively by investors. Unlike the multilateral trade and investment framework of the World Trade Organization, it permits investor-companies and their shareholders to sue sovereign states (see 'Lethal treaties').

These pacts allow foreign firms to attack the host country's public interest laws and skirt their court systems as happened with India in the Dabhol case. But what is extraordinary is that tribunals, composed of three-member professional arbitrators, decide cases in camera, closed to public participation and input. Even acceptance of written submissions by public interest groups becomes a ponderous legal exercise. The tribunals can, and do, award unlimited compensation to corporations if they find policies or government decisions undermine not only their current profits but also anticipated future profits. Taxpayers seldom know how much the government has shelled out to settle claims.

Cases for compensation are becoming legion. According to UNCTAD, the number of known cases coming for arbitration has risen from 50 at the beginning of this century to over 350 now. UNCTAD makes it clear that this is the number of known arbitration suits since most litigants insist on secrecy.

Hardly any country with resources worth exploiting has escaped the trauma of being taken to international arbitration in a system that favours rich nations and a small group of claim-chasing attorneys (see 'Cabal of claim chasers'). All of this has weakened the capacity of sovereign states to regulate their environment, public health and address livelihood concerns. In the case of developing countries in particular, it has weakened the ability to introduce policies that promote food security, poverty reduction, equity and human rights.

The ability of nations to protect the last named objec-

tive was severely tested when a group of shareholders of a company challenged, at ICSID, South Africa's Black Economic Empowerment legislation because of its impact on their mining assets. These individuals used the South Africa-Italy BIT to seek a rollback of the law that required mining companies to divest a portion of their assets to increase indigenous ownership to 26 per cent. This legislation is aimed at redressing the past racial discrimination arising from apartheid which has left Black people or the "historically disadvantaged South Africans" at the bottom of the economic heap. It was also intended to address the exploitative labour practices, forced land deprivations and discriminatory ownership policies that had previously characterised the country's mining sector.

Although this policy was accepted by other investors, the litigants, including a Luxembourg-based company that had sued under South Africa-Belgium-Luxembourg BITs, argued it amounted to expropriation. And they had their way. The shareholders withdrew their claims after South Africa granted them additional mineral rights.

"What is even more worrying," says Sanya Reid Smith, a lawyer who analyses Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) for Third World Network, "is that some governments have been stopped from regulating by the mere threat of a case being filed. For instance, through a letter from the investor." TWN is an independent global network of organisations and individuals involved in issues relating to development.

An analysis by the Washington-based non-profit Public Citizen finds all US FTAs, except the one with Australia, empower foreign investors to sue national governments in foreign tribunals. "The 'investor-state' enforcement mechanism elevates private firms and investors to the same status as sovereign governments, effectively privatising the right to enforce public treaties' expansive new investor rights. There is no such private enforcement for labour rights or environmental standards," it emphasises.

Public Citizen, which describes itself "as leading the charge against undemocratic trade agreements that advance the interests of mega-corporations at the expense of citizens worldwide", calculates that over \$350 million has already been paid out in compensation to corporations under such cases. These include attacks on natural resource policies, environmental protection and health and safety measures. In fact, of the \$9.1 billion in pending claims, all relate to environmental, public health and transportation policy—not traditional trade issues. For the more egregious of these cases, see 'Going up in smoke in Uruguay, Australia' and 'Filthy underbelly of gold in El Salvador' in the following pages.

There is a twist in the Vattenfall-Germany case. Months

after it won the coal case, the Swedish TNC launched another case on nuclear power, this time for the government's decision to phase out old nuclear power plants in the wake of the Fukushima disaster. The decision was approved by the Bundestag after a countrywide clamour by the people, but that is not stopping Vattenfall from claiming massive compensation, reportedly in billions of euros. Domestic companies that are also hit by this decision cannot do so. They only have limited constitutional remedies.

The irony is that Germany has been most active in promoting BITs, the majority with the poorest of nations. Its tally of treaties is an extraordinary 136, of which just six have to be ratified. Is it a case of the biter bit?

No more, say some nations

OF the 400 known investment disputes filed so far, most (33 per cent) are against Latin American nations. Argentina, having been sued 51 times, is the favourite target of foreign investors. Most cases are due to the reforms programme it was forced to implement after its 2001 financial crisis. Awards against it have already crossed \$912 million.

At the other extreme is Brazil, with not a single case against it for the simple reason that predatory investors cannot use any bilateral investment treaty (BIT) to sue it. Thanks to the precautionary approach of its parliament, none of the 14 BITs signed by different governments have been ratified. Says Gus Van Harten, investment law expert and academic: "These were signed by the executive in the 1990s, but the legislature refused to ratify them. This was all the more insightful of Brazil given that the decision was taken before the flood of corporate lawsuits against developing countries started in the 2000s."

Agrees Sanya Reid Smith of Third World Network who points out that Brazilian lawmakers showed rare judgement because of concerns about their ability to regulate. "Brazil still gets plenty of investment since FDI is determined by other factors such as market size and natural resources." Other nations, hit unexpectedly by investor claims, are becoming wiser. One is South Africa. In 2009, it undertook a thorough review in the wake of arbitral proceedings against the country. "Prior to 1994, South Africa had no history of negotiating BITs and the risks posed by such treaties were not fully appreciated at that time," says an official paper that has drawn up new guidelines.

Another is Australia. In April 2011, the Julia Gillard government said BITs or regional pacts should not include matters that would raise costs or affect established social policies without a comprehensive review of the implications. Change appears to be on the way.

[Source : Down to Earth]

SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE

Palestinian Flag to fly at UNESCO



Palestinian Authority Chief Mahmoud Abbas will be present at the flag-raising ceremony in the French capital Paris on Tuesday. A spokesperson for Abbas said he will also meet with French President Nicolas Sarkozy during his visit.

In October, Palestinians won the UNESCO seat in a Paris vote with 107 countries out of 173 voting in favor and 14 against the bid. Fifty-two abstained from vote. The membership came despite massive lobbying efforts by the Israeli regime and the United States, which cut off its annual share of UNESCO funding in response. Palestine will become the 195th member state of UNESCO and the measure is seen as a step towards the recognition of Palestinian statehood.

GAZA-- The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) have killed 19 Palestinian children and wounded 200 others during attacks on the Gaza Strip in the course of



Israeli forces killed 19 Palestinian children in Gaza in 2011

2011, medical sources said on Saturday. Spokesman for the ambulance and emergency department, said in a statement that the youngest of those killed was two-year-old Malek Shaat followed by three-year-old Islam Quraqai. He said that one third of the wounded in IOF attacks on Gaza in 2011 were children, noting that one of them, ten-year-old Yousef Al-Za'lan, was still in intensive care after the Israeli raid on Friday in which his father and younger brother were killed. He charged the IOF with deliberately targeting civilians especially children, adding that the IOF shelling of residential neighborhoods in Gaza at a late night hour has its serious psychological impact on children. He asked all human rights groups and those concerned with children welfare to urgently intervene and pressure Israel into halting its crimes against children in Gaza and to secure a safe life for them.



Israeli policemen beat up 8-year-old Jerusalemite child, igniting clashes

JERUSALEM -- Palestinians in Bab El-Amud neighborhood in occupied Jerusalem were infuriated to witness Israeli policemen savagely assaulting an 8-year-old child, and threw stones at them. Eyewitnesses said that the police forces closed off the entire suburb and the Old City in the wake of the clashes that erupted between them and the angry inhabitants. They said that special forces and undercover agents chased the young men who were throwing stones at the soldiers and arrested a number of them after five policemen were reportedly hurt in the clashes.

Israeli forces prepare to fire teargas canisters at Palestinian demonstrators in the West Bank. (File



Israeli forces attack protestors in WB

photo) Israeli forces have fired tear gas on a demonstration held by Palestinians in the West Bank to protest Tel Aviv's ongoing aggression towards the occupied territories.

On Sunday, a demonstration was held in the village of Nabi Saleh, where a funeral was underway for 28-year-old Mustafa Tamimi who had been killed by Israeli soldiers on Friday. Tamimi was killed during a demonstration against Israel's separation wall built in the West Bank. He was hit in the face by a tear gas canister. Israeli troops have fired the canisters, which emit acrid smoke, directly at demonstrators, causing severe injuries and death. The demonstrators in Nabi Saleh condemned Tamimi's death and called for the removal of the Israeli barrier.

The International Court of Justice at The Hague has described the Israeli barrier illegal. According to Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, over the past eight years, 20 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in villages across the West Bank during anti-Israel demonstrations. An Israeli soldier arrests a man near the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

WEST BANK - (WAFA) – Israeli forces Sunday arrested six Palestinian from the southern West Bank city of Bethlehem and the northern West Bank city of Nablus, according to security sources. Sources said that Israeli soldiers stormed al-Dheisheh, a refugee camp south of Bethlehem, raided and searched Palestinian residents' houses and arrested four Palestinians, including three youths. Soldiers also arrested two Palestinian youths, 18, 24, in Awarta, a town east



Israeli Soldiers Arrest Six Palestinians in West Bank

of Nablus after raiding and searching several Palestinians houses there.

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- A man and his daughter were injured early Sunday after an Israeli airstrike hit the Gaza Strip overnight. Palestinian medical sources said ambulances evacuated Imad Aqel and his daughter from the Zaitoun neighborhood in Gaza City after their house was hit by the strike. A Ma'an correspondent said that at least two missiles hit the house. Aqel sustained moderate injuries while his daughter was seriously wounded, medics said.



Man, daughter injured in airstrike on Gaza City

Palestinian youths stand at the door of a house damaged by an Israeli air strike in Gaza City on early Friday.

GAZA, -- The Israeli occupation forces fired an artillery shell at a poultry and cattle farm to the north of the Gaza Strip on Saturday afternoon, local sources reported. They said that the blast

Contd. on next page

Wapda employees protest privatisation

Thousands of WAPDA workers from all over the country took out a protest rally on Tuesday in front of Parliament House under the aegis of All Pakistan Federation of United Trade Unions (APFUTU) and Pakistan Wapda Labour Union (PWLU), against privatisation and outsourcing of chief executives of the electricity companies.

The workers were carrying banners in support of their demands and raising slogans, like 'down with Independent Power Projects and Rental Power Houses,' causing price hike. The protesters called for generating electricity through hydel & coal-fired thermal power stations in the public sector to provide cheaper electricity to people and overcome serious load shedding.

They also demanded recovery of Rs one billion electricity dues from Karachi Electric Supply Company and government and semi-government agencies.Missing persons camp runs into 2nd week ISLAMABAD: A camp established by the relatives of missing persons here in front of the Parliament House has entered into second week, Geo News reported.

Contd. from pre. page

killed many cattle heads and chicken in the Beit Hanun farm, which was badly damaged in the shelling, but no human casualties were reported. Israeli raids on the besieged enclave killed five Palestinians and wounded more than 30 others since Thursday.



Israeli artillery fire targets cattle, poultry farm

Defence of Human Rights (DHR) on 15th February set up a camp here at D-Chowk for indefinite period to formally launch campaign for release of missing persons.

The Chairperson of the organization, Amna Masood Janjua said that heirs of missing persons who came here from different destinations of the country would never return empty handed.

"We will die here or return with our beloved ones," she said and added that the responsible elements behind this cruelty should be exposed.

Since then many political leaders and human rights activists have visited the camp showing their support the affectees.

.....NADRA Employees sindh protesting to get Permanent The contractual employees of National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) on Tuesday 21 Feb 2012 staged a protest against the government for not regularising them. They also demanded promotions for those who had been working with the authority for the past 10 years. Hundreds of people, representing the non-regularised workforce of Nadra, had come from all across the country to participate in the protest that took place in front of the National Press Club (NPC). The demonstration was held under the banner of All Pakistan Nadra Employees Association (EPNEA). Carrying placards with slogans such as "We demand permanent, We want permanent" inscribed on them, the protesters

rallied from NPC to the Parliament House stopping in front of the NADRA Headquarter. The protesters claimed that 14,000 people are currently working for Nadra on a contract basis, and despite repeated assurances by the prime minister the government has not regularised them. They stated that employees, who have been working in Nadra since it was established, in 2000, have still not been made permanent. Speaking on the occasion, President APNEA Muhammad Saleem said that the employees have been working on a contractual basis since many years. Expressing concern, he said the Nadra workforce is protecting the future of every citizen of this country by maintaining information about them, but their own future is not secure.

STATISTICS

Unemployment rate goes up in Europe & USA

London. Awara Press. January, 17th 2012. The euro area (EA16) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 10.3% in November 2011, unchanged compared with October. It was 8.8% in February 2009. The EU27 unemployment rate was 9.8% in November 2011, also unchanged compared with October. It was 9.6% in February 2009. For the euro area this is the highest rate since August 1998 and for the EU27 since the start of the series in January 2000.

Spanish unemployment shot up again in October to 5.0 million, according to OECD, nearly 23% of the workforce (48.0 % young persons, the highest in the euro area). The latest Spanish unemployment in register data show that continuing jobless claims October up by 134,000, biggest rise for that month since 2008.

Among the European Union Member States, the lowest unemployment rates were recorded in Austria (4.0%). Spain has the highest jobless rate in the eurozone (22.9%), according to Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Communities).

In November 2011, the youth unemployment rate (under-25s) was 21.7% in the euro area and 22.3% in the EU27. In November 2010 it was 21.0% and 20.6% respectively. In January 2009 it was 17.8% and 17.7% respectively. The lowest rate was observed in Germany (8.1%), Austria (8.3 %) and the Netherlands (8.6%), and the highest rates in Spain (49.6%).

In February 2010, the youth unemployment rate (under-25s) was 20.0% in the euro area and 20.6% in the EU27. In February 2009 it was 18.4% in both zones. The lowest rate was observed in the Netherlands (7.3%), and the highest rates in Latvia (41.3% in the fourth quarter of 2009) and Spain (40.7%).

In the USA, the unemployment rate was 8.6% in November 2011. It was 9.1% in September 2011 (9.7% in February 2010). In November 2011 the unemployment rate was 4.5% in Japan. It was 4.3% in August 2011 (4.9% in February 2010).

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS FEDERACIÓN SINDICAL MUNDIAL

23 February 2012 European Action Day for the protection of public services and workers' rights in Europe, organized by the TUI Public Services Europe of WFTU. The European class-oriented trade union forces organized several initiatives in many European cities. Below you can see some pictures we have received until now:

PORTUGAL



GREECE



ITALY



INTERNATIONALE

Arise, ye prisoners from starvation
Arise ye toilers of the earth
For reason thunders new creation
'Tis a better world in birth

Never more traditions' chains shall bind us
Arise ye toilers no more in thrall
The earth shall rise on new foundations
We are but naught we shall be all

Chorus

Then comrades come rally
And the last fight let us face
The Internationale
Unites the human race

SOLIDARITY FOREVER

Chorus

Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
For the Union makes us strong.

When the Union's inspiration through the workers'
blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath
the sun.
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble
strength of one
But the Union makes us strong.

Chorus

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy
parasite
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us
with his might?
Is there anything left to us but to organize and fight?
For the Union makes us strong.

Chorus

It is we who plowed the prairies; built the cities where
they trade;
Dug the mines and built the workshops; endless miles
of railroad laid.
Now we stand outcast and starving, 'midst the won-
ders we have made;
But the Union makes us strong.

Chorus

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and
ours alone.
We have laid the wide foundations; built it skyward
stone by stone.
It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to own,
While the Union makes us strong.

Chorus

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled
to earn,
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel
can turn.
We can break their haughty power, gain our free-
dom when we learn
That the Union makes us strong.

Chorus

In our hands is placed a power greater than their
hoarded gold;
Greater than the might of armies, magnified a thou-
sand- fold.
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of
the old.
For the Union makes us strong.

Chorus

Subscription Enrolment Form

Dear Brother,

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

Yours sincerely

Address ()

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

Order From:

WFTU Asia-Pacific Regional Office

4/7, 2nd Floor, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi- 110 002.

Tel: +91-11-23258683; +91-11-23258685

Fax: +91-11-23258684

E-mail: wftuasiapacific@vsnl.net