



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)
21st Congress
Samar Mukherjee Nagar
Visakhapatnam, April 14-19, 2015

Resolution

Against the Present Labour Reforms

The 21st Congress of CPI (M) strongly opposes the anti-worker policies being taken by the Modi Government in the name of labour law “reforms.” The labour law amendments that have been passed and those that are in the process of being brought on to the statute book are against the interests of the working people in the country. These amendments are meant to push large sections of workers out of the purview of labour legislation and to provide legitimacy to employers who are already flouting labour laws.

The Modi Government has promoted the retrograde labour law reforms of the Rajasthan Government as a model, directing other State Governments to make similar amendments. Major labour laws, including the Factories Act, Industrial Disputes Act, and Contract Labour Act, have been drastically amended in Rajasthan in order severely to curtail workers’ rights and protection to workers. Several State governments, including those of Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, have already amended these labour laws, and others, including Maharashtra, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh where there is a Congress government, have declared their intention to do so. These amendments are intended to allow the employers the right to hire and fire, and to exclude more than 70 per cent of the workers and enterprises now covered by labour laws from their coverage. The proposed Small Industries Bill, for instance, seeks to remove establishments employing less than 40 workers from the ambit of 14 important labour laws, including the Equal Remuneration Act and Maternity Benefit Act.

In the name of doing away with “Inspection Raj,” the Government is unleashing a “Jungle Raj” of predatory employers on the working people.

Important recommendations of tripartite bodies such as the Indian Labour Conference that benefit workers, for example, those that are concerned with minimum wages, contract labour, scheme workers, and so on, are being ignored by the Government. At the same time, measures demanded by employers are implemented unilaterally. Social security schemes such as the Employees Provident Fund (EPF), Employees Pension Scheme (EPS), and Employees State Insurance (ESI) will be dismantled if the proposed amendments to the EPF and ESI Acts are carried out. EPF money is being diverted to share markets and other channels. The minimum pension of Rs 1000 has also been disallowed.

These labour law amendments are being carried out under the pretext that they will generate employment through the “Make in India” campaign by improving the “ease of doing business.” The thrust of these campaigns is to present India as the “cheapest labour-cost destination.”

These policies are being introduced in a society in which around 93 per cent of the workforce is in the unorganised sector, that is, without any labour law protection, and in which existing labour laws are more often flouted than implemented in most enterprises to which they are applicable. The Government of India has not ratified the ILO conventions No 87 and No 98 on the rights of workers to organise and to collective bargaining. There is no law for the mandatory recognition of trade unions. India does not have a scientific minimum wage policy.

Growing Resistance by Workers

The 21st Congress of the CPI (M) congratulates the joint trade union movement for unitedly resisting these labour law amendments and fighting against the anti-worker and anti-people policies of successive governments at the Centre. It extends its whole-hearted support to their struggles to protect the livelihoods and working and living conditions of the workers.

The 21st Congress of the CPI(M) resolves to mobilise the working people and democratic sections in the country to fight the offensive against workers and calls upon them to support the struggles of the trade unions and workers against the anti-worker policies of the Government.
