



New Trade Union Initiative

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Revival of union movement in Kashmir

NTUI is aware that building unions and sustaining them to defend the interest of workers in a situation of political instability, long period of repression and armed conflict, is extremely difficult. Such situations pulverize people into terror, bring loss of hope, and undermine respect for human dignity and social cohesion.

It requires extreme courage, conviction of values and faith in human goodness to sustain trade union organisation and defend the political and economic interest of workers. The All Jammu & Kashmir Trade Union Center exemplifies all these and has made the trade union movement proud by its will to exist and fight. NTUI salutes all comrades who have faced long detentions, dismissals, terminations, reprisals and humiliations for their Kashmiri identity and did not let it break their will and determination to sustain a secular and democratic union movement. It is our commitment to bring this history into the open and make it a part of the human right and trade union discourse.

Unions grow in a democratic and secular society

We believe that trade unions can develop, labour rights can be ensured and the future of working people opened up only in a situation where the:

- Regime of repression is eliminated
- Political settlement of issues will allow the Kashmiri society to return to peace and civil life
- Democratic and secular framework is established to enable working people to express and organise themselves to shape their life, society and economy.

NTUI is committed to building these conditions in Kashmir

NTUI demands clear policy and sincere negotiations on Kashmir

The aspirations and demands of the people require political settlement that is guided by well established and widely accepted international principles and practice. It will require dialogue with all sections of people and political viewpoints and negotiation, both multilaterally and bilaterally, with all political forces of significance, in a manner that ensure self respect and mutuality of negotiating partners.

NTUI demands that the Government undertake this process with sincerity and purpose that address the core political issue of democratic aspirations of the people of Kashmir. The historical legacy of the issue has made it the core issue of contention, and even war, between India and Pakistan. For people of South Asia, this has become a major factor

impeding the development of regional democratic framework and institutions to contend against globalisation and make it region of growth and co-prosperity. It is a geo-political realism to expect and assume that the settlement of Kashmir issue will require the support and sanction of Government of India and Pakistan.

Unions becoming the voice of Kashmiri people

The NTUI welcomes the opening up of discussion between India and Pakistan and the exchange of ideas and concepts beyond the traditional rigid positions. Still, the political will is inadequate to go for a breakthrough. NTUI believes that it is historic responsibility of the trade union movement in India and Pakistan to publicly debate the issues and create a political constituency for a solution. This is our true solidarity with the working people of Kashmir.

For us, it is a step towards rebuilding the trade union movement in a region with the world's largest section of working poor. The political and diplomatic resolution will bring peace in the subcontinent. But more than that, it will pave the way for unity of South Asian peoples and nations to struggle against imperialist globalisation.

NTUI calls upon all unions and democratic people to build a campaign for political settlement of Kashmir issue and support its affiliate, All Jammu and Kashmir Trade Union Center, in its struggle for workers right, for a democracy and secularism and for political settlement of Kashmir.

Ashim Roy
General Secretary, NTUI