

Abolish contract system of employment

This meeting of the National Executive Committee of National Union of Journalists (India) held in Ujjain from July 30 to 31 having considered the recent situation post Majithia Wage Board Recommendations expresses grave concern over the continued delay in notification of these recommendations along with the voted provisions of the report. It is inexplicable why the Union Labour Ministry has been delaying the notification even after the Union Cabinet had discussed this report and endorsed it. The Ministry has been lax in fulfilling its obligation under the Working Journalists Act at every stage in the long months leading to the submission of the report and the subsequent processing of it for the Cabinet's consideration. A glaring instance of the Union Labour Ministry's casual attitude to its statutory obligation came to light when in the last hearing of a management petition before the Supreme Court the government admitted that it had not supplied the copy of the report to the petitioner even though the copies had already been submitted to the court registrar. This event had a substantial impact on the court's subsequent direction in which the managements have succeeded to block any progress in the notification despite the court issuing no stay order in the matter.

This meeting is apprehensive that there could be collusion between sections in the Ministry and the employers in causing this delay on one pretext or another. It finds that the Union Labour Minister has failed to exercise any

RESOLUTION

leadership role in getting justice to the working journalists and other newspaper employees even though seven months have passed since the recommendations reached his office on the last day of 2010.

In this context this meeting notes with satisfaction that the Confederation of Newspaper Employees Federation which includes the NUJ (I) has been aggressively pursuing the issue of notification. The Confederation organised countrywide agitation on June 28 and also took the issue to the Prime Minister who gave an assurance to the newspaper employees to do his duty in the matter. This meeting also congratulates the NUJ (I) leadership for the active participation in the nationwide campaign of the Confederation and its General Secretary Shri M.S. Yadav in keeping our demand at the forefront of the government and all political parties who came forth with their public pledge to support it.

This meeting is also happy that the NUJ (I) made tremendous contribution to the Wage Board and congratulates its representative in the Majithia board Dr. N. K. Trikha, a former president of the uUnion as well as the Wage Board committee led by Sri Rajendra Prabhu, another former president of NUJ (I) and veteran of several Wage Boards, for playing a leadership role in giving the critical inputs and guiding the board to its conclusion despite all the constraints and hurdles on its path and threat the

board faced of ending its deliberations without giving its recommendations. The harassment and non-cooperation that the newspaper managements placed in the working of the board loudly proclaim the falsehood behind their claim that they do respect the need for giving fair wages to their employees.

This meeting condemns the subsequent campaign the managements and their representative organization, the INS, has been carrying on against the recommendations propagating a string of half truths and falsehoods and issuing threats to block government action as required under the Working Journalists Act and at the same time blocking our replies to this propaganda from getting published. We find it a breach of journalistic ethics, fair play and being anti-democratic. The NUJ (I) should raise this at all public and parliamentary fora as a violation of fair newspaper practices.

This meeting also notes with regret that the very newspaper managements, most of whom failed to provide their financial data to the board when it demanded this are now raising the false cry that the recommendations if implemented would sink the industry. Their further claim that most journalists have opted out of the Working Journalists Act is another half truth worse than a lie as the employees have been forced with ultimatum to either sign on the dotted line of illegal and inhuman contracts or face dismissal. In many cases the employees have been denied the right to have even