

JOINT NATIONAL CONVENTION OF WORKERS IN CPSU'S KALAKSHETRA, BEL, BENGALURU.

Date 29-01-2017

DECLARATION

The Joint National Convention of CPSU workers held on 29th January 2017 at Bengaluru is attended by Central Trade Union leaders and representatives of trade unions from CPSUs affiliated to Central Trade unions as well as the independent ones from all over the country. The convention congratulates the workers for the resounding historical successes of the 2nd September 2016 strike. Continuously growing unity among the working people at the gross root level centering round the strike has been witnessed. This unity among the working people need to be further widened and strengthened through struggles against the anti-worker, anti-people policies of the NDA Government.

Multiple Attacks: Privatisation, Closure and Liquidation of CPSUs

The convention notes with serious concern that the NDA Government has been sharpening its onslaught on Central Public Sector Undertakings aimed at eventual elimination of CPSUs through multipronged steps like outright privatization, winding-up, closure, liquidation. As stated by the Finance Minister, the next Union budget will be presented on 1st February 2017. Here we may recall that the 2016-17 Union budget had targeted to sell off CPSUs equity to collect Rs.56,500 crore and the actual realization so far is Rs.23,528.73 crore through strategic sales and disinvestment routes. Add to this figure is Rs.11,224,.06 crore collected by the Government through 'buy back' route.

It is extremely shocking and deeply condemnable that the Modi Government has launched mad drive through dubious commercial routes to sell more CPSU equities and increase the total collection of fund by further selling of CPSU equities within the remaining days of the current financial year. By the time we all return to our workplace from this convention more onslaught on public sector through forthcoming budget exercise is obviously apprehended.

An ill conceived instrument called Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) has been pressed into aggressive play by the Government with the shortsighted intention of quick sell off bypassing important commercial and administrative procedures brazenly sacrificing the interest of the CPSUs concerned. As per media report the Government has targeted to collect Rs.6,000.00 crore under this category of equity selling and the bids worth Rs13,726.00 crore are under processing. The present CPSE ETF is a basket of 10 maharatna/navratna strategic CPSUs: ONGC, GAIL, Coal India Ltd, REC, Oil India Ltd, Indian Oil Corp. Ltd, Power Finance Corp. Ltd, Container Corp. of India Ltd, Bharat Electronics Ltd and Engineers India Ltd. It is revealing and appalling that Reliance Mutual Fund Managers has been appointed by the Modi Government to provide consultancy and execute the 'project privatization' of the strategic CPSUs of the nation.

The Dangerous Recommendations & the Roadmap

A retrograde roadmap drawn for liquidation of CPSUs has come into public recently. Promoted and funded by the Government, an agency called National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) has submitted a paper to the NDA Government drawing therein a dangerous blueprint for elimination of India's CPSUs. It has suggested, *"The way forward is more aggressive privatization – especially for the 17 Navratnas, the 73 miniratnas and the other 140 smaller PSUs which are not even in the ratna category. Only then will be PM's words that "the business of government is no business" have some meaning."* The NIPFP has recommended adoption of *"a 10 – year plan to divest at least 50% PSU assets ... An adhoc expediency based on yearly targets is not going to work".(page 21)* Relevant to recall that the NITI Aayog has already submitted a list of 74 CPSUs (including many 'ratna' category) to the PMO recommending privatization,

Now adopting the disastrous path prescribed by the NIPFP, the Modi Cabinet has already put their stamp of approval for sale of 20 CPSUs and closure of many so called sick CPSUs, The Government has decided to conclusively privatise BEML connected with defence production. Already 46% of equity of this CPSU has been sold out and now further 25% strategic sale means BEML shall be handed over to private corporate – indigenous or foreign. Another core sector maharatna CPSU under serious attack is SAIL. Strategic sale of Salem, Durgapur, and Bhadravati steel plants has been decided by the Government. 67 discovered oil fields of ONGC and Oil India are being processed for privatization. Shocking is the decision of the Government to disinvest 25% shares in all the five public sector General Insurance Companies to private hands including foreign companies, and in that direction the Government has decided to list those companies in the stock exchanges. The objectives declared by the Finance Minister reveal their motive to push those profit making general insurance companies to gradual privatization. Moreover the NDA Government has also decided to windup IDPL, RDPL and to privatize Hindustan Antibiotics and Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Limited.

As a result of the destructive decision of the NDA government to dissolve the BIFR and AIFR, the winding up and liquidation of thousands of operational sick industrial enterprises including the units pending with BIFR/AIFR and throwing lakhs of workers on the street are shockingly inevitable. The obnoxious policy perspective of the Government is exposed from the fact that in one hand all the legal and the logical mechanisms for revival of sick enterprises is dismantled and on the other destructive directives have been issued to the Administrative Ministries to 'scrutinize' the so call commercial health of the enterprises under their control on stipulated regularity and liberally declare the public enterprise sick, obviously to be followed by closure and liquidation.

Linking with the disastrous developments noted above, it is necessary to recall the devastating decision of the Government allowing 100% FDI in strategic and sensitive sectors like Defence, Coal, Petroleum, Mining, Power Sector, Telecom, Civil Aviation, Satellites, Construction, Insurance, Pension Funds, PSU Banking, Railway operations and maintenance, Multi brand retail, pharmaceuticals. This suicidal step of the Modi Government is bound to destroy the effective control our nation on most of the strategic and core sectors of the national economy. This will adversely affect CPSUs operating in the concern fields such as Defence PSUs providing remarkable services to defence forces. Ironically the Prime Minister has proudly proclaimed that India has now become one of 'the most open economies in the world and strongly committed to continue such policies in the name of 'reforms'.

Accelerating Attack of Contractorisation

Given the alarming acceleration of the extremely exploitative phenomenon of contractorisation and inhuman plight of contract workers despite being employed in the most organized public sector industries, it is high time that at least public sector trade union movement, as a whole as well as sector-wise, irrespective of affiliations, must unite and come on the street to launch short term and long term struggle with immediate and ultimate twin objectives.

Contract work force has already attained extra ordinary numerical and strategic strength in PSUs as a whole. This situation calls for more close cooperation between regular and contract workers. Despite huge contribution of contract workers in the production, productivity and profitability of the PSUs concerned they, (the contract workers) are victims of despicable exploitation in the matter of terms and conditions of employment including wages and benefits, social security and safety. **In the light of the recent Supreme Court Judgment entire trade union movement of the country must take up the matter with all seriousness for implementation of equal pay for equal work in a massive way.**

The Forthcoming Wage Negotiations in CPSUs

The 3rd Pay Revision Committee (3rd PRC) for executive cadre employees of CPSUs chaired by Justice Satish Chandra has submitted their report unprecedentedly to the Prime Minister's Office. A studied silence is continuing over the recommendations of the committee. This can be called 'lull before storm'. It is gathered that Government has appointed a Committee of Secretaries to study the 3rd PRC report. Information gathered

from different sources including those who had been invited for interaction with 3rd PRC suggest that many challenges for CPSU employees (including workers) shall emerge from the recommendations of the 3rd PRC.

In the meantime trade unions have started submitting Charter of Demands (CoD) for negotiating the next Pay Revision to be effective from 1st January 2017. This time a departure has occurred from the long standing practice of conducting joint workshop under the initiative of CPSTU to work out broad frame work for preparing the CoD. However, it is necessary that certain important issues, a few of which are noted below, must be included in the CoD and taken due care during the negotiations with the respective managements.

Opposition to the onslaught of privatization of CPSUs through different routes and demand to protect public sector should be essentially mentioned in the CoD.

The burning issues of contract workers must be incorporated in the CoD in line with our understanding noted above. Trade Unions in many CPSUs have achieved appreciable relief for contract workers. It is ideal that in Coal India a separate chapter on increased wage and some other benefits to contract workers has been negotiated at the Wage Negotiations Forum and incorporated in the last final settlement of the coal industry.

The managements and the Officers Associations of the respective CPSUs in their memorandum submitted to the 3rd PRC have pressed for the tenure of pay revision to be between three and five years. There is no reason why trade unions should not take similar stand. In fact in Coal India negotiations on the premise of five year settlement has already started with right earnest.

Mainly excepting some petroleum PSUs, the concept of PRP for workmen has been rejected by the trade unions in CPSUs. Viewing PRP beneficial for workers is shortsighted. The norms of payment and stipulated performance parameters are anti-workers in content and character.

The ever increasing disparity between executives and workers in the matters of pay, perks and other benefits and facilities is a matter of serious concern. Rational relativity demand should be raised.

Hugely increasing number of executives and sharply decreasing number of workmen in CPSUs must be stopped and normal executive and workmen ratio must be restored by recruiting workmen in appropriate number..

Occupational Health, Operational Safety and Social Security benefits must be emphasized in the CoD and in course of the negotiations.

Demonetisation

The convention notes that although the Modi Government took the recent demonetization steps under the guise of curbing black money and fighting terrorism, actually the net result has been unimaginable miseries for the mass of the people through crop loss for the farmers, wage loss and job-loss for the workers, livelihood-loss for the self-employed and small traders. Number of workers driven out of work has been huge. Majority of the workers working in MSME were thrown out of the jobs due to cash crunch. Daily wage earners were deprived of any employment due to shortfall of money circulation. Even after two months has elapsed there is no sign of restoration of normalcy. Still several industries have not started their operations. Working people are leaving towns and crowding in villages and facing severe economic miseries.

Standing on long queue in the banks and post offices some died due to exhaustion; some died due to lack of medical treatment; some students committed suicide frustrated at not being able to pay their fees. Even ten bank employees succumbed to death due to pressure of overwork till midnight for weeks together to deliver the people in long queue and thereafter closing the accounts. Total death toll has already crossed 120. The convention congratulated the people for observing the protest day throughout the country on 28th January 2017 at the call of the Central Trade Unions and National Federations.

The Call of the Convention

Given the facts, figures and formulations presented above, the workers and trade unions in CPSUs cannot and must not remain silent spectator to the public sector destruction drive of the Modi Government as captured above. Further there is no doubt that the deep rooted anti-public sector policy of the Government shall have reflection in the forthcoming LTS negotiations.

The convention notes that industry-wise and location centric propaganda, agitation and action programmes are organised against disinvestment and privatization jointly by CPSU workers throughout the country. JAF Bengaluru has unleashed a renewed phase of united struggles. Many activities have been carried out in the recent months. Even yesterday JAF organised a demonstration by several thousand workers of various CPSUs in Bengaluru. No sooner privatization decision was declared; SAIL workers at different locations of SAIL launched protest programmes including strike action at Salêm Steel plant. On 20th January 2017 there was a massive joint national convention of SAIL workers at Bhilai Steel Plant. The instances of such encouraging activities are many.

The conclusion of the convention is that a long phase of campaign, propaganda and agitation must be launched immediately vehemently opposing all kinds of disinvestment of CPSU equities, no strategic sale/disinvestment, a firm no to partial and/or complete privatization of any CPSU, no dissolution of BIFR and AIFR and exhaustive and effective steps to revive sick CPUS in complete public sector ownership. Reiterate unfettered right to collective bargaining, particularly in view of the forthcoming LTS negotiations. The convention decides the following programmes:


Joint Industry/Sector/PSU specific covention/seminar/meetings at Local, Regional and National level within 28th February 2017.


Distribution of leaflet, postering, Gate meetings, Dharna before main gate of the respective establishments, slogan shouting during recess hour and end of duty hour to be completed by 20th March 2017.

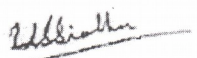
Observe All India Protest Day on 30th March 2017 by wearing Blaackbadge at work, dharna slogan shouting etc according to local practice and convenience.

National Seminar in New Delhi during the second half of the coming budget session of Parliament (date to be decided later).

At the same time the convention also appeals to public sector workers to prepare for a nationwide strike. (date to be decided and declared at appropriate time).

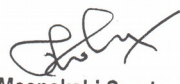

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