

The rottenness of the regimes of the Indian Subcontinent has been exposed for the whole world to see. Rather than spend money on decent roads and buildings that can withstand earthquakes (such as those in Japan and California), and rather than provide hospitals and healthcare that could adequately deal with the daily needs of the people let alone a disaster, the rulers of the subcontinent have preferred to sink money into their swelling armies in a dangerous game of brinkmanship and bigotry.

Therefore, the PTUDC has launched its own campaign of relief. PTUDC representatives from the whole of Pakistan have sent a delegation to Kashmir, to ascertain the level of the problem and the needs of the people. They are sending whatever aid they can muster to help the workers and trade unionists of Kashmir. The PTUDC has set up two emergency centers to coordinate these efforts, which will be functioning around the clock. A delegation of 5 members of Parliament including Manzoor Ahmed, President of the PTUDC, and several trade union leaders have launched a countrywide campaign to help the victims of this disaster.

This will require considerable resources, which the PTUDC does not possess. We are therefore calling on every member of the international labor movement to give as generously as possible to this special appeal. Every cent will be put to good use. We ask you not to wait but to begin a serious campaign for raising funds immediately.

**An injury to one is injury to all!
We thank you for your support and solidarity.**

LABOR DONATED

Program of the PTUDC

- 1) **Defense of our trade unions from the physical attacks of the employers. Defend our right to organize!**
- 2) **Stop the privatization and plunder of state industries. Renationalize those privatized firms under workers' control.**
- 3) **For a minimum living wage for all, linked to the cost of living.**
- 4) **The abolition of child labor. For free education and health.**

YES! I want to help support the efforts of the PTUDC to relieve victims of the earthquake that struck Northern Pakistan and India. Please find enclosed my donation of:

- \$5 \$10 \$20 \$50 \$100
 \$500 \$1,000 Other _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Please make check or money order payable to PTUDC and send to:
 PTUDC, PO Box 1331
 Fargo, ND, 58107

Pakistan Trade Union Defense Campaign



Earthquake Relief Fund



www.ptudc.org

The Pakistan Trade Union Defense Campaign was been initiated by the Punjab Labor Federation, which is one of the biggest trade union federations in Pakistan. This step was taken after the murder of its president, Arif Shah, on January 19th, 1995, at the hands of hired assassins. This criminal act was a reprisal by the employers, after a successful strike against privatization, for a minimum wage and for the abolition of contract and child labor. 20,000 workers attended Arif Shah's funeral. The PTUDC is also sponsored by the United Labor Federation, the Progressive Workers' Alliance, the National Railway Workers Union, the National Union of Postal Employees, and others.

The PTUDC has been at the forefront of all major trade union struggles in Pakistan since that time, including the recent successful, massive strike of the PTCL (Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited).

In the United States, the PTUDC was launched in 1998, in solidarity with the workers of Pakistan and the entire Indian Subcontinent. Since that time, we have worked to raise awareness of the struggle of the Pakistani trade union movement, and to build ties of solidarity between workers from the U.S. and the Indian Subcontinent.

Now tragedy has struck Northern Pakistan and India. Like the tsunami that devastated Southeast Asia less than a year ago, this natural disaster has left tens of thousands dead and millions homeless. The worst hit city was Muzzaferabad, the capital of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, where it is thought that some 11,000 people died. A Turkish search and rescue team has said that 80 percent of the region was destroyed

in the quake. Residents have said that they face food and petrol shortages. There is no water or electricity. People have been forced to get water from a nearby mountain stream and to eat local fruit, of which there is little. Hospitals have been destroyed and there are not enough doctors. It has been reported that surgeries and emergency medical care are being administered on soccer fields.

The reports coming in from the various regions affected reveal the complete destruction and collapse of infrastructure in Pakistan and Kashmir. Across wide areas there is no food, water, or electricity. Unknown numbers of people are sleeping out in the open in freezing temperatures. Frustrated by the lack of aid and assistance, people have begun their own searches for loved ones – which the government is now trying to stop, in order to prevent total chaos. Those who did not lose everything have been camped out on the streets, afraid to return home for fear of aftershocks.

The government of Pakistan has been forced to admit that it has been overwhelmed by the disaster and that it does not have the resources or infrastructure to deal with the humanitarian crisis. To be sure, natural disasters cannot be stopped, but preparations can certainly be made in advance. However, the government of Pervez Musharraf is unable to house, feed, or even clothe all of its citizens even in the best of times. The regime has other priorities.

Pakistan will spend an astonishing 277 billion Rupees on its military by the end of 2005. For the same period, Pakistan will spend just 11.7 billion Rupees on education and 4.128 billion Rupees on health. The piti-

ful amount of money that Pakistan spends on social services and infrastructure has left the country with little or no means to deal with the crisis and the massive amount of money spent on the military has not been able to provide enough soldiers, or helicopters to deliver aid.

The Indian military has between 500,000 and 700,000 troops in its section of Kashmir. Yet it has been reported that they are not helping in the aid effort, but are caring only for their own. Some 50 soldiers were killed when their barracks collapsed upon them. Military hospitals around Kashmir are giving priority to soldiers and their families over civilians.

The relief effort may be next to non-existent, but one thing is not – security in Kashmir. *Time* South Asia Bureau Chief Alex Perry has publicly said that despite the widespread damage and humanitarian needs, security was paramount in Indian-controlled Kashmir. He explained that, “There’s no doubt at all that it’s still a military zone,” adding that checkpoints were holding up the passage of aid to the region. The Indian government is officially concerned that militants might use the disaster as an opportunity to start pouring over the border from Pakistan. What they are really worried about is a stream of refugees coming over the border in search of food and shelter that they cannot provide, and the possibility of mass demonstrations against the government’s handling of the disaster. Another fear, is that the disastrous handling of the situation on the part of both the Pakistani and Indian governments, could unite the Pakistani and Indian workers in protest.