

Workers connect...

One is Not Born a Woman, One becomes One - Simone de Beauvoir

"Women have time for everything, manage a great number of issues, and yet stay gentle, bright and charming." Vladimir Putin, Russian President on International Women's Day, 2017

"Today women participate strongly in the economy too. Nobody is more capable in pointing out changes in Supermarket prices than women." Michel Temer, Brazilian president on International Women's Day, 2017

"Nation is always empowered by its women. It is she who nurtures a citizen as a mother, as a sister in his childhood, and later in the life as a wife. These empowered citizens eventually make an empowered country." Narendra Modi on International Women's Day, 2017

The above statements from heads of government of 3 of the top 10 populous countries more or less sums up what women face every day. These are not impromptu statements by these heads of government but are carefully thought out official positions, well-cleaned by top civil servants, of each of these very large countries. The position expressed by these leaders is no different from most other heads of government across the world. The position also is reiterated at every level in society that a woman interacts in, be it at home, at work, on the streets, in public life, and even as citizens. The statements clearly lay out some key issues: (i) double burden on women is the norm and they must bear this without questioning it; (ii) being charming and gentle is how a woman should be; (iii) women's participation in economy is about shopping judiciously for maintaining the family; (iv) and finally, women are only needed to produce and nurture men who would be the first class citizens of a nation as mothers, sisters and wives, and hence are second class citizens. Believe it or not these statements are not from 100 years ago.

What do Women Want?

This is a question that most men ask and have

been asking for centuries. Women have also been articulating what they want for close to two centuries but things have not changed much.

In the 1830's women workers in UK raised the demand for **Equal Pay**. The first, in 1832, was articulated by women who worked in Robert Owen's 'labour exchange' in Grays Inn, London. Also in 1832 women card setters in Scholes and Highton demanded equal pay with men. In 1833 unionised women in the Women Power Loom Weavers Association in Glasgow struck work for equal pay.

In 1843, women textile workers in Massachusetts, USA, led by Sarah Bagley demanded a **Safe Workplace and a 10-hour work day**.

In the mid-19th century, women in several countries—most notably, the U.S. and Britain—formed organizations to fight for **Equal Political Right** – right to vote. But it was only in 1918 that Britain's Parliament passed the Eligibility of Women Act which allowed women to be elected to Parliament and ten years later, the Representation of the People Act granted women the right to vote. While in the US, women won the right to vote in 1920. New Zealand was the first country to allow women to vote (1893), while women in Saudi Arabia were granted the right to vote only in 2011.

The First World War (1914-1918) witnessed large scale recruitment of women in jobs vacated by the conscripted men. In 1915, a conference was called by the Women's War Workers Committee, which drew up a comprehensive list of demands including the **Rights to Training, Trade Union Membership and Pay Parity**. In 1918 an Equal Pay strike was organised by women tramway workers, starting in London and spreading to other towns in England, over the offer of an unequal **War Bonus**. The strike also spread to the London Underground. This was led by women and finally won by women.

In the years between the two world wars (1918-1939), during the great depression of the 1930s, male unemployment grew leading to a dominant trade union view to call for a marriage bar on women's employment along with negotiating higher wages in sectors dominated by men that widened the gender gap in wage. Both these strategies and the economic crisis pushed the demand for equal pay off the horizon. The struggle of women workers for equal pay and better conditions at work was thus not just with their employers but with their own – their fathers, their brothers, their partners, their sons, their comrades, with many of them back from the war. This made the struggle even more uphill.

The number of women who joined the workforce at the time of the Second World War (1939-1945) far outnumbered the earlier war period. Equal pay and the **Double Burden of Women** remained burning issues throughout the war, with local battles initiated by women.

In 1937 the Clerks Union of Australia organised a conference in Sydney on equal pay which was attended by delegates from 53 organisations, both unions and women's organisations. The conference established the Council of Action for Equal Pay (CAEP). The main unions involved in the CAEP were the Public Servants Association, the Clerks, Teachers Federation, Railways, Textiles, Rubber Workers, Postal Workers and Food Preservers, indicating the industries with a large female workforce. One of their first actions was to assist the Australian Council of Trade Unions' first quasi-equal pay claim to the Arbitration Court, when they tried to lift the female rate to 60 percent from the current 54 percent of the male wage.

By the end of the war the demand for equal pay lost momentum as the government and the trade unions sought to persuade women to return to their home-making role and to more traditional paid work such as domestic service. This triggered the next phase of feminist

movement moving the focus beyond issue of voting rights and property rights to women's **Right to Choice and Right to a Violence free society** alongside the persisting demands for equal pay, safe workplaces, and equal political rights.

The demands have not changed in almost two centuries. These have found support across the world and yet women still are expected to be caregivers at home, work for less, work under unsafe conditions, live in constant fear of being abused.

Listen to Us

The #MeToo campaign across the world divided us between those in favour and those against it. It was a strong statement by some of the



most advantaged working women across the world stepping out of their world of silence and speaking up about the sexual violence they faced and had to live with every day of their life. It moved the public discussion

to the violence at work that women face. Many women came forward. It empowered many women. Sexual violence is the most extreme manifestation of establishing control over women but there are more insidious ways to establish this and women across the world endure these every day to survive in this hostile world.

Post 1990s, restructuring of economies has meant cuts in social spending by government, increased role of the private sector, deregulation of markets including the labour market which now after two decades has translated to minimal public investment in health, education, public distribution, social infrastructure like crèches, old age care, social security. On the other side of the coin, the labour market restructuring has meant less number of protected jobs, flexible employment contracts, including contracts that allow home based work or work from home. What these two together mean is that women are once more being pushed back to care jobs or home

based jobs as the state is refusing to take responsibility. The double burden of women is being institutionalised and legitimised to keep women's work invisible, unregulated and controlled with so-called blurred employer-employee relations. This makes imagining a collective identity for these workers difficult, this makes organising them next to impossible.

Further, as we today look at our days ahead we find women being told what they should wear, how they should look, what they should eat, who they can marry, what time they should get home, where they should work. Any departure from this legitimises violence against her. Even progressive organisations are unwilling to disturb the equilibrium as it will affect them as much as others. It is time to change and make the change effective and visible.

Policy News

Government opens coal sector to private commercial firms

20 February 2018: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has decided to open auction of coal mines to private parties for commercial purpose. The government had brought Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 to start fresh allocations of coal blocks after the Supreme Court had cancelled allocation of 214 coal blocks in 2014 in the light of the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report claiming graft and inconsistencies.

Coal India, a government of India Public Sector Undertaking has been the lone commercial miner in the country for over four decades accounting for 84% of India's coal output. CCEA's move will allow the entry of international players like BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto and Glencore thereby paving the path for privatization of the coal blocks.

All central trade unions have opposed the decision apprehending that the move will gradually kill Coal India as private players will indulge in unethical mining, will not pay workers properly and there will be scant regard for environment. The trade unions have also opposed the process in which the decision was taken – it was arbitrary without any discussion with the trade unions in the sector.

Collective Bargaining

Andhra Pradesh: Contract electricity workers on indefinite strike demanding regularisation

25 February 2018: 24,000 contract workers employed by GENCO (Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation) and TRANSCO (Transmission Commission of Andhra Pradesh), have gone on an indefinite strike from 20 February 2018, under the banner of Andhra Pradesh Contract Electricity Employees Association demanding regularisation of service, abolition of contract employment and increase in pay from Rs.10,500 to Rs.18,500 per month.

Tamil Nadu: Electricity Board workers sign wage agreement

22 February 2018: Unions representing workers of the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) signed a wage agreement which will benefit 80,000 workers of TNEB, Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Ltd (TANGEDCO) and Tamil Nadu Transmission Corporation Ltd (TANTRANSCO).

The wage agreement provides for a 2.57% increase in the wages along with a dearness allowance (DA) of 125% to be merged with the basic pay.

The raised pay hike will be effective from 1 October 2017, and the pay and grade pay drawn by the employees as on 1 January 2016 will be taken for calculating the increase.

As per the wage revision, the lowest grade employees in the rank of field assistant would get an increase in the range of Rs. 3,175 and Rs. 7,775 per month and for the officer grade the increase will be in the range of Rs. 5,800 and Rs. 27,375 per month.

Karnataka: Union seeks intervention from Global brands in dispute over workers' rights

15 February 2018: Over 50 Contract workers were illegally terminated at the Avery Dennison plant in Bengaluru. Avery Dennison is a California-based supplier of labels, graphic tags to global brands like H&M, GAP and Inditex. The company has been refusing to regularize the contract workers who have been working in the company for several years.

The contract workers represented by the Garment and Textile Workers Union (GATWU)

are protesting against illegal dismissals and for the right of the contract workers to join a union of their choice. The Union has called upon over a hundred global garment brands to intervene to resolve the dispute with Avery Dennison in a rare move by workers that put a spotlight on the unmapped part of the supply chain. The workers tried to negotiate with the management in recent months, wore black bands in protest and some boycotted the canteen but the management did not respond to the workers' demands.

Government postpones 47th Indian Labour Conference indefinitely

21 February 2018: At short notice, without giving any reason, the 47th Indian Labour Conference (ILC), the highest tripartite forum of the country, scheduled for 26–27 February was indefinitely postponed by the government.

According to media reports, this was due to the threat by the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) to boycott the conference and the government's apprehension of potential embarrassment. The other central trade unions together have been demanding that the government invite the Congress party-affiliated Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) to the conference and protested the notification draft rules to allow the "fixed term employment" across all sectors that they allege would encourage contractualisation. These unions have called for an all-India general strike on 15 March to protest against the government's anti-labour policies in which the BMS will not participate.

Maharashtra: Win for Bajaj Auto workers in Pune

5 February 2018: On 2 February, the Vishwakalyan Kamgar Sangathana, the union representing workers of Bajaj Auto at their Akurdi and Chakan plants, reached a breakthrough in negotiations with management and ended the indefinite hunger strike launched four days earlier.

On 29 January, Bajaj Auto workers took action against management's delaying tactics over unfair terminations and wage revision, and went on a hunger strike. There was massive participation of Bajaj autoworkers in the Chakan and Akurdi plants, along with their families.

Following negotiations between the

workers and the management in the labour commissioner office on 2 February, management agreed to implement the wage rise at the Akurdi Plant retrospectively, and also agreed to collective bargaining with the union. Management also committed to reinstate six employees who were fired in 2016, as well as to start a discussion with the union about the eight workers who were sacked in 2013.

Legal News

Maharashtra: Mumbai Industrial Court stays induction of private buses in BEST, bars workers from striking

16 February 2018: The Mumbai Industrial Court has ordered a stay on Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport (BEST) administration's decision of wet-leasing 450 private buses in its fleet by 5 March 2018.

The Court which is already hearing a petition filed by Unions against proposed wet-leasing of buses has barred the unions of BEST workers from going on indefinite hunger strike against the proposed wet-leasing of private buses by BEST.

Haryana: High Court order brings ray of hope for HMT employees

6 February 2018: Following the closure of Hindustan Machine Tools' (HMT) Pinjore unit, producing tractors, hundreds of employees were rendered jobless. Of them, over 150 employees still had five to 27 years of service left. The Central government approved the closure of HMT's tractor unit in 2016 and ordered the disbursement of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) benefits.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court ruled on 24 January that HMT must consider the employees, rendered jobless due to the closure of its Pinjore unit, for recruitment in HMT's other units whenever vacancies are available.

Discrimination

Surrogate mothers can now get maternity benefits

12 February 2018: The Ministry of Women and Child Development has directed the government to ensure maternity leave up to 26 weeks (180 days) to women employees opting for surrogacy as a motherhood option.

The direction has been issued in the light of a 2015 Delhi High Court order, in which the bench ruled against Kendriya Vidyalaya management which was denying maternity benefits to a teacher on the ground that she was not the biological mother of the child.

Workplace Safety Watch

Sanitation: 2 sanitation workers Ravi Kumar (28) and Ramu (25) died of suffocation after they entered into a septic tank of **Hotel Yumlok, Bengaluru** on 13 February 2018. Both the workers were from Raichur and were employed on contract by the *Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)*.

Murugesan and Maari, employed at **Chem Ethic Solutions, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu** based cleaning company died of asphyxiation while cleaning the septic tank of the luxury Hudson Hotel on 14 February 2018. Ravi, an employee of the Hotel also lost his life while trying to save the sanitation workers.

7 contract sanitation workers, M Ramesh (32), G Govinda Swamy (35), B Ramachandra (23), A Reddappa (30), R Babu (30), Kesava (20) and B Venkata Rajulu (23) asphyxiated to death after inhaling toxic gases on 16 February 2018, while cleaning a waste tank at **Venkateswara Hatcheries** in Moram village of Palamaner mandal in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. **Venkateswara Hatcheries** are the producers of the **Venky's** products. Another worker, Sivakumar Reddy (43), was rescued by the locals. The workers did not have any safety equipment while they entered the tank.

Manufacturing: On 13 February 2018, an explosion in the **ONGC drillship, Sagar Bhushan**, killed 5 workers and injured 7 others at the **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)**. The explosion took place while the drillship was undergoing maintenance at the shipyard due to leakage of acetylene. The workers who lost life were senior fireman Unnikrishnan CS, fire watchman Jayan KB, safety assistant Gibin, and contract workers Ramsheed and Kannan MV.

A probe conducted by a four-member team of officers of the Department of Factories and Boilers found serious lapses on the part of **Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL)** in ensuring safety measures that resulted in the explosion on **Sagar Bhushan**, the **ONGC drill ship** on 13 February 2018. The Factories and Boilers team

found that provisions of the Factories Act, 1948 were violated on the day of the accident. The Act mandates that a safety officer must examine the work area and certify that it is safe. No such procedure was followed by **ONGC** or **CSL** on the day of the accident which resulted in death of five workers and left many injured.

7 workers, B. Srinivas (36), K Simhachalam (32), Kumara Swamy (39) and Haren Khalkar (40), Sanjeeth Kumar (19) and Shyam Chauran Behra (30) were severely injured when a fire broke out at **Seutic Pharma Private Limited**, a pharma chemical factory in the industrial area of **Jeedimetla, Hyderabad** on 23 February 2018 due to a reactor explosion at the plant.

3 workers died and 8 got severely injured in a fire that broke out after due to blast at the fertilizer plant of **GSL Crop Science Private Limited** in Nandesari industrial area on the outskirts of Vadodara on 21 January 2018.

1 worker, Sanjay Sharma (32) died and 11 others survived injuries, after inhaling toxic gases leaking from a pipeline at the **Century Rayon Limited factory in Shahad, near Kalyan, Mumbai** on 15 February 2018, while the pipeline was undergoing repairs.

Construction: Mehendi Rasool Siddiqui (45) a contract worker from Jharkhand employed by **Larsen & Toubro**, slipped and fell off an under-construction bridge leading to his death on 9 February 2018 while working at the site of the **Statue of Unity in Narmada district, Gujarat**.

Mining: Guru Charan Behera (25) was crushed to death at a stone quarry near Nuagad village under Dharmasala block in Jajpur district, Orissa.

Andhra Pradesh: Two Managers arrested on charge of sexual harassment of migrant tribal garment worker in SEZ

20 February 2018: The rural police of VishaKhatpatnam arrested the general manager Dileep Pinto (55) and a senior executive officer Malla Shyam Sundar (30) on charge of raping a 28-year-old migrant ST woman worker from Jharkhand at the Shore To Shore, a packaging company in Brandix India Apparel City, in Atchutapuram SEZ. Both were arrested and booked under Section 376 (rape) of the IPC and provisions of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

According to the police, the woman had joined the firm as an operator and she was promoted to a senior executive in the administration department. But soon after she was removed from the duties on the grounds of poor performance in December 2017.

Himachal Pradesh Cabinet decides to raise maternity leave for contractual workers

5 February 2018: Himachal Pradesh Cabinet decided to raise the maternity leave of women employees who work on contractual basis from 135 to 180 days bringing them at par with the benefits availed by regular women employees.

Health and Safety

Karnataka: High Court issues notice to state Government on worker deaths due to manual scavenging

23 February 2018: A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav of the High Court of Karnataka issued notice to the State Government on the failure of effective enforcement of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 while hearing a Public Interest Litigation on deaths of manual scavengers in the state filed by the High Court Legal Services Committee.

The petitioners have demanded that the State file a report on deaths due to manual scavenging since 2008 and actions taken on these incidents.

In and Around

Union Budget 2018-19 tabled in Parliament

1 February 2018: On 1 February 2018, Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley presented the 2018-19 union budget. The highlights of the budget are as follows:

Tax

- No changes in personal income tax slabs. All senior citizens will now be able to claim benefit of a deduction of ₹50,000 for any medical insurance.
- For critical illnesses, the deduction has been increased to ₹1,00,000.

Social Spend

- **Power:** Free power connections to 4 crore

homes under Saubhagya Yojana.

- **Cooking Gas:** Eight crore free gas connections for poor women through Ujjwala Yojana.
- **Housing:** Under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana, 51 lakh houses will be constructed exclusively in rural areas. In urban areas, the assistance has been sanctioned to construct 37 lakh houses.
- **Health:** New flagship National Health Protection Scheme, providing a health insurance cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year announced.

Women

- The only major announcement for women is the reduction of their PF contribution to 8% for first three years of their employment against existing rate of 12% or 10% with no change in employers' contribution. This would mean more take-home wages for new women employees at the cost of their social security.
- No change in honorariums for Anganwadi, ASHA, MDM workers.
- Nirbhaya Fund allocation not increased.

Agriculture

- ₹2,000-crore fund for development of agri markets.
- Govt. to implement minimum support price for all crops; It is hiked to 1.5 times of production costs.
- The five-year tax holiday for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) with turnover of Rs 100 crore.
- Govt. to contribute 12% of wages of new employees for all sector.

Disinvestment

- Disinvestment target for this year set at ₹80,000 crore.

News around the World

Bangladesh: Unions of garment workers call for increased minimum wage

28 February 2018: The current minimum wage for garment workers in Bangladesh is 5330 taka (US\$68) which was set in 2013. The IndustriALL

affiliates in the garment sector, organized a series of actions including a joint press conference on 25 February and a human chain march on 28 February demanding an increase of the minimum wage to 16,000 taka (US\$192) per month, along with other demands. The unions submitted a charter of demands to the newly constituted minimum wage board on 28 February.

The unions are also demanding rationalization of job grades from seven to five along with a promotion formula. Furthermore, the unions are demanding a 10 per cent annual increment and to restrict the training period for apprentices to a maximum of 3 months and their stipend be fixed at 10,000 taka (US\$120) from 4,180 taka (US\$50).

In most factories in Bangladesh, the rate of payment for piece rated workers is often decided only after they complete a certain amount of work, which often leads to disputes. The unions are demanding that a rate be fixed for piece rate work.

Japan: Government abandons contentious labour reform after caught using flawed data

28 February 2018: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was forced to abandon the proposed labour law reform aimed at boosting productivity after admitting data used to support the change was flawed.

The change would have expanded a system of “discretionary labour” where employees are regarded as having worked a certain number of hours and paid a fixed wage regardless of how long they actually work. The flawed data related primarily to this proposal.

Also included in the proposed reforms is a legal cap on overtime of 100 hours per month – an effort to end phenomenon of “karoshi” – or death from overwork. Critics on one side of the debate have said that cap would effectively condone a level of overtime that is harmful to workers’ health. On the other side, some economists say setting the cap reduces management flexibility.

South Africa: Casual workers will be regularised if employed for more than 3 months

22 February 2018: The Constitutional Court of South Africa has upheld the 10 July 2017 order

of the Labour Appeal Court which had ruled that temporary and casual workers be made permanent with same pay and benefits as permanent workers if employed for more than 3 months.

National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) had filed a case demanding equal rights and pay for casual workers and abolishment of the precarious working conditions prevalent in labour broking companies and secured a favourable order at the Labour Appeals Court against which Assign Services, a leading labour broking company had approached the Apex Court.

Germany: Deutsche Post DHL offers wage rise, Union puts it to vote

22 February 2018: Deutsche Post offered its 130,000 employees a wage hike but according to the union, Ver.di, the offer was below their expectations and its members would vote on it.

The offer includes a wage increase of 3 percent from 1 October, followed by 2.1 percent increase a year later. It also includes a one-time payment of 250 euros (\$305) in April and the option for employees to take more time off or get more money.

The union had been seeking a 6 percent wage increase or more time off. The offer came after a series of walkouts by the union members across the country.

Argentina: Thousands protest in Buenos Aires against austerity measures

21 February 2018: There was a massive turnout on the streets of Buenos Aires on the day of the national strike called by the trade unions. The strike was called in opposition to the series of austerity measures pushed by President Mauricio Macri allegedly to fight inflation and turn around a flagging economy.

Germany: Metal and automotive sector workers win 28 hour working week

6 February 2018: IG Metall, the union representing the metal and electrical workers in Germany signed a 2 year collective agreement, winning a working week of 28 hours. The collective deal covers around 900,000 metal and engineering workers in the south-western state of Baden-Württemberg and came after 6 rounds of strenuous talks and a series of three

24-hour strikes.

Standards: ISO 45001 Globally Aligns Workplace Safety Efforts

1 February 2018: Supply chain pressures for safer workplaces have driven the adoption of a new global occupational health and safety management systems standard.

The ISO 45001 standard is the first global standard for occupational health and safety management systems. The International Organization for Standardization developed the standard and approved it in January by about 93% of the ISO membership. It is scheduled for publication on 12 March.

The standard will provide a framework for occupational health and safety goals, facilitating the identification of workplace safety risks and solutions and metrics for measuring the success of safety initiatives to reduce the large number of workplace fatalities across the globe.

Canada: Government appoints Ombudsman for Responsible Enterprise

1 February 2018: The Canadian government has created an independent watchdog to enforce responsible conduct of Canadian companies operating abroad.

The role of the Ombudsperson for responsible enterprise will be to work towards resolving conflicts between local communities and Canadian companies operating abroad. The position will focus on several sectors including mining, oil and gas and the garment sector. It will also have the power to independently investigate and make recommendations in cases involving human rights complaints.

Corporate Watch

Gig Economy: Workers are Employees or Not

The excessive intrusion of technology in the world of work is changing employer-employee relationships world over. To strip workers of their rightful wages and social security benefits, mobile application based internet companies are labeling them as independent contractors or service provider partners. While the labour courts have, in several cases, ruled in the favour of workers, the gig economy lobby is rigorously fighting back. Multinational companies like Uber, Deliveroo etc., are filing appeals in Apex Courts against unfavourable

orders by the Appeals Courts which have held them responsible as employers in Brazil and UK.

Netherland has initiated an investigation against the bogus self-employment contracts in the gig economy - The Dutch government has launched an enquiry into the strategy of employing workers on bogus self-employment contracts despite working full time for companies like Uber or Deliveroo in the gig economy. The investigation comes after several weeks of strike action by Deliveroo workers against the company's move to replace all employees on legitimate contracts with "self-employed" workers.

While a US court has held Grubhub drivers to be independent contractors – In a significant judgment, on the status of recognition of gig economy workers as workers, U.S. Magistrate judge in San Francisco, held that drivers for GrubHub Inc. are independent contractors and not employees on 8 February 2018. The case against GrubHub was brought by Raef Lawson, a part-time worker, working as a food-delivery driver for who was blocked from Grubhub's smartphone app in 2016 for not making deliveries while he was signed on. Lawson claimed the company violated California labor laws by not reimbursing his expenses, paying him less than minimum wage and failing to pay overtime. In its defense Grubhub had argued that workers were not central to its business since it is a software development company and not a food delivery service.

According to the order the company's complete lack of control over how the worker performed deliveries meant he they were independent contractors and thus did not qualify for the protections of employees under California law.

The decision would impact the gig economy workers by influencing a series of lawsuits which are being fought across the country in which Uber, Lyft, and other companies are trying to establish the workers as independent contractors and systematically depriving them of their rights and escaping from paying millions of dollars towards wages and social security benefits.