

Written by

Thursday, 16 May 2013 11:30 - Last Updated Friday, 17 May 2013 17:27

By:

**Comrade, Chester A. A.Humphrey,
President General,
Grenada Technical & Allied Workers' Union**

Comrade Chairman, Minister of Labour - The Hon. Elvin Nimrod, President of the GTUC - Comrade Madonna Harford, Executive Members of Affiliates, invited guests, other representatives, Comrades, Brothers and Sisters all.

I bring you fraternal and very warm greetings from the Management Committee, General Council and rank and file members of the militant Technical and Allied Workers' Union.

Fifty-five years ago when our Union was founded by a small band of militant class of workers representing the most advance contingent of the urban proletariat employed in the Electricity Services, Water, Public Works and Telephone they followed in the wake of the workers of Chicago who One Hundred and Twenty-seven (127) years ago, to date, won the victory for the eight hour working day.

Let us not forget the sacrifices in blood, sweat and tears made by our Comrade workers in those eon years ago. Let the names of Albert Parsons, Augustus Spies, George Angel, Adolph Fisher and Louis Lingg who were executed plus those who were killed in the Haymarket Massacre in Chicago plus the five (5) heroic workers killed in our own labour struggles in 1951 in the junction of La Tante, in this very Historic Parish of St. David during the heroic struggle of the great agro proletarian revolution which was crushed by the colonialist and the planters never be forgotten and forever live in our consciousness.

Today, more than ever we must draw on the experiences of these militant fighters of the working class; we must rely on the reserve and we must invoke the spirit of struggle; their spirit of militant defiance and their unwavering unity as we face the challenges of the current crisis of International monopoly capital.

In the spirit of Butler; in the spirit of Labour Leader Gairy; in the revolutionary spirit of Fedon and Maurice; in the spirit of Small, Cheddi, Fidel, Chavez, Nelson Mandela, Vincent Noel, Fitzy Bain, Derick Knight, Fitz Taylor, Jim Wardally, Michael Manley; Franz Fanon; Simon Bolivar, Jose Marti; Ho Chi Ming, Salvador Allende, Vladimir Illich Lenin, Henri Christophe, Mao and the host of other revolutionaries- we invoke their spirit of struggle and sacrifice in the pursuit of social justice and for a fair and better world.

JUSTICE FOR THE LOTTO 4

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Brothers and Sisters Comrades all, One year ago from the podium of our International Labour day celebrations, we brought to the consciousness of the workers a sordid series of events which unfolded at the National Lotteries Authority and the travesty of justice which was executed by a board of directors whose chairmanship was once a fellow traveler of our workers movement. In this sad episode of injustice for women and their children, the workers were unceremoniously dismissed simply because they dared to defend their dignity as women. Four independent inquiries and numerous letters included letters sent to former prime Minister Tillman Thomas were all muted by a self-imposed paralysis which genuflected on the altar of political opportunism and the naked unbridled use of power rather than doing what was right and restoring justice and fairness.

However, while justice may be delayed and thawed, it is never ever denied and the long night of injustice is eventually overtaken by the dawn of justice. And so it was in the case of the Lotto 4. I am happy to report that from the May Day rostrum in 2013 that there has been victory and justice for the Lotto 4 and their long night of misery, denial, unemployment as mothers and their uncertainty of food for their children has come to an end. The Technical and Allied Workers' Union is happy to report that the dismissed workers at the National Lotteries Authority have been fully reinstated.

I take the opportunity on this May Day rostrum to thank the Government of the Right Hon. Keith Mitchell, his Minister of Youth and Sports, the Hon. Emmaline Pierre and the new Chairman of the Board - Mr. Geoffrey Gilbert for their forthright roll in seeing that justice has been done and the despicable treatment suffered by the four women from the Lingham Samuel's Board has finally come to an end. The task ahead is to ensure that there is a legislative framework to protect the dignity of our women and to once and for all put an end to sexual harassment at the workplace.

Politics must not allow us to lose our principles; those who were once in the halls seeking justice for battered women, seeking protection for children were all mute. There were even some in the labour movement who twisted and turn rather than rather directly confront this injustice.

The Technical and Allied Workers' Union publicly thanked the Grenada National Organisation of Women and those guardian persons who joined us in the different pickets we had on this issue. TAWU reaffirms its commitment to the fight for dignity.

- Brothers and Sisters Comrades the Technical and Allied Workers' Union repeats its demand for amending 66 (1) of the Labour Relations Act.

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- TAWU repeats its demand for the setting up of the National School Bus Service with a universal bus fare.

- TAWU repeats its demand for the reinstatement for the universal access free school books programme.

- TAWU applauds the undertaking to repay small depositors who would have lost their savings in the failed Capital Bank and calls on the Government to extend the reimbursement to all those who have \$20,000.00 and under in the first instance.

- TAWU salutes the commitment to the National Health Insurance.

- TAWU welcomes the resuscitation of the Farm Roads Project and the soon to commence work by the CCC. We call for acceleration for of the recreation of jobs.

- TAWU appreciates the intended payment of 6% increase in pay to Public Officers which takes effect at the end of May 2013 - this would help in some measure to relieve the burden faced by State sector workers.

- TAWU CALLS on the Courts to be timelier in giving judgments in cases brought before it by workers and Unions. In this regard we appeal for the judgement in the case of TAWU Vs St. George's University in respect of the Night Differential! In addition to the case involving Independent Agencies in a matter of an application for recognition that has been pending for more than two years!

- TAWU welcomes the appointment of workers representatives to the Boards of Directorship of State and Para-State Enterprises.

- TAWU expresses acute disappointment and condemns the new LIAT management for withdrawing the 0.9 MILLION which was recommended as a possible settlement to the long running industrial dispute over the extended work hours issue.

COMRADES, BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL, WE CONVEY TO YOU OUR MOST PROFOUND AND HEARTFELT MAY DAY GREETINGS. WE KNOW THAT FOR MANY

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WORKERS THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPITE IN THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING THEM, YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES. WE CALL ON ALL WORKERS TO STRENGTHEN OUR UNITY AND TO BE MINDFUL OF THOSE OF US WHO HAVE BEEN UNEMPLOYED FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. WE CALL FOR GREATER UNITY WITHIN THE MOVEMENT AND FOR GREATER WORKER SOLIDARITY.