

Dr. Charles Amjad Ali Speaks at KPC Library Committee

“Trade union movement at decline in Pakistan”: Dr. Charles

KARACHI, March 24: Less than one percent labour is organized under trade unions and there is a need for strong labour movement in Pakistan, said an American scholar Dr. Charles Amjad Ali here Friday.

Speaking as guest speaker at a fortnightly meeting of Library Committee of Karachi Press Club, Dr.



Charles Amjad Ali, who heads two international chairs in leading universities said that for a strong democracy, strong trade unions are essential. He is also one of the founders of Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and

Research (PILER).

He pointed out that Pakistan had witnessed a strong trade union movement in 1970s, which labour fought many successful movements. Dr. Charles is currently working on a book on labour history of Pakistan along with PILER’s Executive Director Karamat Ali.

“Martial laws in Pakistan have weakened the labour movement,” said Dr. Charles adding that founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a great trade unionist. As a President of All India Postal Staff Union Quaid Azam was instrumental in passage of Indian Trade Union Act 1926, which was adopted by Pakistan after the partition in 1947.

But first Military dictator General Ayub Khan abolished Trade Union Act in 1959 and after a gap of 10 years, he introduced Industrial Relations Act 1969, which was dealing both registration of trade unions and industrial disputes.

He said General Ziaul Haq also weakened the trade unions by restricting the functioning of them. He played a divide and rule policy due to which trade union movement was divided. Privatization of the state units in early 1990s further eroded the trade unions power in Pakistan, he added.

He said the generalized system of preferences (GSP) plus scheme, provided by European Union to Pakistani exporters for duty free exports has provided an opportunity for consolidation of trade unions in Pakistan. Pakistan has to take measures to implement 27 international conventions to continue availing this GSP Plus facility. Eight core labour conventions of International Labour Organisation (ILO) are also part of 27 conventions.

Mujahid Brelvi of Library Committee of KPC, journalists, trade unions and students attended the meeting.

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