

Victory at a cycle factory in Lahore

Tuesday 11 March 2008, by [TARIO Farooq](#) (Date first published: 11 March 2008).

Rustam Sahrab Cycle and Motor Cycle Factory Lahore is one of the oldest cycle factory in Pakistan. At present it, employees around 2000 permanent workers. Every three years there is a referendum at the factory among workers to determine the Collective bargaining Agent (CBA).

There are three trade unions registered at the factory. Muslim League Q, the former ruling party, supports one of them. It was the CBA during the last term. Another union is supported by religious fundamentalist Jamaat-I-Islami.

The administration of the factory tried to delay the scheduled referendum and went to the Labour Court. The three unions united to call for a referendum. The three were sure they would win the elections.

Labour Party Pakistan supported union was defeated in the referendum held in 2004 and it got nearly 500 votes at the time. The union is affiliated with National Trade Union Federation Pakistan. Moeen Nawaz Punno is president of the trade union. He is a member National Committee LPP and chairperson LPP in Lahore.

Today on 11 March 2008, the referendum was held in a peaceful and democratic manner at the factory. The workers had to determine which one of the three unions would represent them during the next three years.

LPP supported union won the elections with a sizeable majority. It got 689 votes, the PMLQ union got 570 and JI supported union got 500. 1759 workers caste their votes out of 2000, a high turn over, show the real enthusiasm among the workers.

After the results, the workers raised slogans against military dictatorship. "Long Live Labour Party Pakistan. Long live National Trade Union Federation, Long live worker unity, Workers of the world unite, Ones pain is every ones pain, workers united will never be defeated" were the main slogan raised after the announcement of the elections.

Hundreds of workers took the streets around the factory area in jubilations and chanted slogans. Sweets were distributed and the leaders were garlanded. I spoke to the workers in the end of the victory procession and told that it was here that LPP organized its first public rally last year in support of the advocate movements with hundreds in attendance. "You have won and the victory of the top judges is not far away," I told the crowd. I said that Musharaf has to go and the victory of this revolutionary trade union is a step towards that.

Moeen Nawaz Punno told the workers that we will try our best to implement on all the promises we have made to the workers and workers struggle will be our method of fighting back to the bosses attack. He said the workers united would never be defeated. Now I am not a president of just those workers who have voted me but of all those 2000 plus the temporary workers at the factory. My comrades and I will work for all those workers without any discrimination.

All the main leadership elected today at the cycle factory is members of Labour Party Pakistan. Labour Education Foundation has run adult literacy centers in the factory for long time. The Trade

Union Resource Center Lahore of Labour Education Foundation helped the union in printing and developing other material for the election.

The victory of LPP supported union has opened a welcome gate to other workers of the factories in the area. I heard that several others unions will be joining National trade Union federation and several workers leaders to become part of LPP.

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