



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

On the ^{12th} Foundation Day ^{OS} of the CITU, 1981

—B. T. Ranadive

The Twelfth Foundation Day of the CITU was celebrated at the CITU Central Office in New Delhi on 30 May. About 400 workers from various industrial area in and around Delhi attended the celebrations. The CITU President, B. T. Ranadive, hoisted the flag of the CITU, and addressed the meeting. After his speech, a West Bengal film 'Silent Condemnation' based on April 3 bandh and the deprecation of Congress (I) hoodlums was screened. This film was followed by the screening of the film 'Mother' based on famous novel of Maxim Gorky.

We are publishing below the full text of the speech of B. T. Ranadive.

COMRADES, we have gathered this evening to observe the foundation day of the CITU and it is with pride that we look on the work we have done since the start of our organisation. There is no doubt that the foundation of the CITU fulfilled a historic need of a trade union organisation, understanding the trade union movement as part of the class struggle in our country and deeply rooted in internationalism and committed to socialism. You will find that these three conditions were not fulfilled by the then existing trade union organisations. Those who talked about internationalism succumbed to class-collaboration, those who thundered against exploitation took a hostile attitude to internationalism and especially to the victorious socialist revolutions.

If the CITU has made rapid advance, it is because it remained loyal to these basic principles and was able to identify itself with the growing militancy of the working class and its aspirations, its sensitivity to exploitation and adverse changes in its condition. Other organisations failed to express this mood and fell behind. In the period since our foundation we conducted innumerable battles and prolonged strikes in which the workers showed their tenacity and determination to fight unitedly under our banner.

The CITU prestige and mass base rapidly increased, its prestige as a militant and fighting organisation increased, thanks to the courage and suffe-

rings and self-sacrifice of our workers, cadres and leaders. Repression has heavily hit our members, their houses have been raided, worker's wives have been outraged, workers have been jailed, beaten, shot down or murdered at the hands of goonda gangs, but the inflexible determination to resist never wavered either in defeat, victory or compromise.

CITU for Trade Union Unity

Comrades, while the CITU has made progress in many States it has also reached stagnation in some States, for which the CITU leadership in these States is entirely responsible. Among the States which have recently forged ahead I must mention Karnataka, the State Conference of which I recently attended. Haryana must get the place of pride not only for its advance but for the courage and consistency with which it has faced feudal barbaric repression of the State Government. Faridabad, Hansi, Sonapat - are the landmarks both of our courage and advance. Punjab is another State which demands full mention for its progress, once more in the teeth of repression. Our organisation not only reflected the militancy of the masses, it also represented the need as well as the growing urge among workers for unity. Knowing that the full strength of the working class cannot be brought into operation without united action of several organisations, the CITU has been striving for trade union unity.

At its Madras Conference it called for a Confederation of all Central Trade Unions and Federations to discuss trade union problems and take decisions by common agreement. As yet there has been no response from other organisations but if we popularise the idea among the workers there is bound to be quick response from the leaders. As you know we do not miss a single genuine step for trade union unity. The CITU took a prominent part in the formation and functioning of the U. C. T. U. whose convenor was George Fernandes. It advocated for united activities and consultations under the Congress rule. One fruit of this unity was that later, the anti-working class legislation—The Industrial Relations Bill—of the Janata Government was scuttled with the help of Janata trade union M.Ps standing by the United Trade Union Movement.

Landmark in our Struggle

The defeat of the Janata Party and the return of Congress (I) to power gave a temporary setback to the struggle for unity. During the last year and half very few achievements could be recorded. But this year the urge for unity is again coming to the forefront, faced by the repressive policy of the Government and its wage and income Policy as announced in the Sixth Five Year Plan document. The crushing of the Iaco strike, the LIC Act and the suppression of public sector workers' struggle have again roused the trade union movement to come together and the representatives of the trade union will meet in Bombay on June 4 to discuss the anti-labour policy of the Congress (I) Government and oppose it unitedly. This will be a big landmark in our struggle for trade union unity.

Comrades, we must clearly understand the meaning of the struggle for trade union unity. This unity has a purpose to defend the interests of the working class to defend the principles of trade union movement, to move the movement forward. If any organisation demands impossible conditions as price for unity, we have to reject such conditions and unity with such people. There are people who demand that we would not expose Congress (I) Government, should not attack its policies, as a price for joining hands with us. We have no use for such people who are not prepared to fight a Government pursuing anti-labour policy and conspiring to impose an authoritarian regime. There are people who demand that we should not raise the slogan, 'workers of the world unite'. These people are interested in disuniting the workers of the world and we have no use for them. The

struggle for unity is directed against the capitalist class and the Indira Government which protects them. The struggle for unity is directed to unite the democratic and socialist forces and defeat the authoritarian forces.

CITU Supports Reservation

Comrades, the question of working class unity is now no longer confined to bringing together different trade union organisations and their members. The Gujarat events have shown the assault on our unity was from a different direction. The Reservation issue divided the workers so much that one day 75,000 non-Harijan workers struck work to oppose reservation, next day 2 lakh 25 thousand Harijan workers struck to support reservation. What change has working class unity, when two sections of workers confront each other as two hostile camps ?

I do not wish to go into details. But it is of course wrong to oppose reservation of jobs for Harijans. Knowing that they are outcasts of society and even the workers observe caste distinctions, the CITU supports reservation. It considers that by neglecting the special demands of Harijans like social discrimination, fight against inferior status, by neglecting fight against the practice of untouchability, the trade union create difficulties in the way of full Harijan participation in trade union common struggles. At the same time the Harijan leaders who only harp on reservation and keep the mass of Harijans from the common struggles harm the interests of the Harijans as well as the common struggle. Our struggle for trade union unity cannot neglect this problem.

Comrades, having said good words about ourselves, let me point out some grave weaknesses. If you read constitution of our CITU you will find it does not confine itself to defending the day to day interests of the working class only. It has several other objectives. I will mention only one or two to show that we are extremely lax in relation to them.

Good Beginning

Among the aims objects it is stated: "The CITU promotes relations of solidarity with the peasants and agricultural workers in the fight for land, against usury and rent, and high taxation, and lend any help to the agrarian revolution, to support in full the struggle for the agricultural workers for higher wages and decent conditions. The CITU believes that no lasting improvement in the economic conditions of the working class is possible without a complete liquidation of the feudal land

relations, ending the land monopoly of the big landlords."

How far we have been conscious of this objective? How far have we done anything to discharge this responsibility? It must be admitted that there has hardly been any conscious united mass effort on our part to make the working class conscious of this responsibility which has to be discharged if the working class standard of living is to be raised.

This weakness has created a dangerous situation for the country, for the democratic forces. Recent events have shown that the apathy of the working class towards this question has pushed the peasant under the leadership of the landlords in some states. If the main mass of the peasantry and agricultural workers gets divided between the landlords and the ruling party what chance has democracy?

In West Bengal because of the left ministry led by CPI (M) and our distinguished Vice-President Jyoti Basu, the share croppers, the agricultural workers and others have rallied round the left and the vested interests are isolated. Tripura and Kerala ministries also follow the same path.

But the trade union movement as a whole, our CITU has yet to discharge its responsibility. It is a matter of satisfaction, however, that thousands of workers from Haryana, Delhi, Gaziabad, participated in the Kissan march of 26th March and hundreds joined as volunteers to help the peasants and agricultural workers who had come to the capital. This is a good but small beginning of the fraternity that we wish to bring about between the working class and the peasantry.

Fight for World Peace

Further among the aims and objects it is stated: "It promotes international solidarity and unity with the workers of other countries in the common fight for socialism, promotes fraternal relations and deep bonds of unity with workers and people of socialist countries."

"CITU fights for the maintenance of world peace against all imperialist plots for unleashing world war, against nuclear war and for the abolition of all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction."

"It fights for a foreign policy based on friendly relations with neighbouring countries, opposing war and supporting peace and national liberation movements."

Once again how far our trade unions and trade union leaders are aware of this responsibility and what they have been doing to carry the message to

the mass of workers? Again very little. Although I must admit that this May Day when I listened to the speeches of our comrades in Delhi and Gaziabad, I found they were seized of the responsibility and did educate the workers. It cannot be however said that all over India this is a constant part of our activity. The weakness will prove dangerous to the working class and the country when the forces of world imperialism are plotting a new war and have brought it to our doorstep; when the imperialists are supporting secessionist movements in our country and feverishly arming Pakistan to unleash a war between the two countries and when the Government of India is under constant pressure to change its foreign policy—pressures from the imperialists and parties like BJP.

The CITU can no longer neglect the fight for world peace, against war. It has to do everything to expose the danger from the U.S. to our country and warn the working class against plots for a nuclear war and rouse it to solidarity with the socialist camp and the international working class.

Properly Equipped Leadership

Comrades, these tasks demand a new type, a better type of leadership. A leadership steeped in day to day demands, reared only in the experience of struggle for these demands, a leadership expert only in the choice of exposure of the management of a particular factory or industry, but ignorant about the world affairs, about foreign policy and the danger of dictatorship to the country, will not be effective and will not hold the loyalty of the workers for a long time. For the workers also influenced by bourgeois propaganda about political affairs, foreign policy, socialist countries—they are told that there are two super powers etc. Unless our leaders from factories and trade unions are properly equipped to combat the bourgeois propaganda we will not achieve our objective. A large number of our leaders are ill-equipped to meet these responsibilities and the CITU must endeavour to rear a better type of leader. Let us look with confidence to the further and when we meet next year let us be in a position to say that we are meeting our international responsibilities fully and squarely. □

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A Plea For Immediate Legislative Amendment

—Arun Prokas Chatterjee

THE Supreme Court in a recent decision delivered on 11th February, 1981(1) has defined "Continuous service" in the Payment of Gratuity Act (Central Act 39 of 1972) in such a manner that permanent workmen would be deprived of gratuity, though that was not the intention of the Legislature.

The intention of the Legislature should have been apparent from the history of the legislation itself, but even though the Court referred to this history, a contrary inference seems to have been drawn. The original definition of "continuous service" in the Payment of Gratuity Bill was almost in identical terms with the definition in the Kerala and West Bengal Acts. It was defined as an uninterrupted service including service which was interrupted by sickness, accident, leave, strike which was not illegal or a lock-out or cessation of work not due to any default of the employee concerned. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee and the Select Committee presented its report to the Lok Sabha on 2nd May, 1972, proposing three vital changes in the definition of the expression "continuous service." The Committee, obviously, with a view to softening the rigour of the definition of *continuous service*, provided two explanations. By the first explanation, uninterrupted service could mean "actual employment" for 190 days if employed below the ground in a mine, or 240 days in any other case. By the second explanation an employee of a seasonal establishment shall be deemed to be in "continuous service" if he has *actually*

worked for not less than 75% of the number of days on which the establishment was in operation during the year.

Evidently, the intention of the Legislature was to extend the benefit to as large a number of workmen as possible.

Due to the interpretation which the Supreme Court has chosen to give to the words "actual employment" or "actually employed", the workmen are deprived of just those benefits which the Select Committee wanted to give to the workmen. Moreover, the interpretation by the Supreme Court makes the explanations otiose. It takes the Act back to the stage before the amendments proposed by the Select Committee.

This judgement of the Supreme Court flies in the face of the earlier judgement of the Supreme Court in *Messrs. Jeewanlal (1929) Ltd. V. its Workmen (2)*. In that case the Supreme Court said that it was difficult to hold that, merely because an employee was absent without obtaining leave, that by itself would not bring to an end the continuity of his service. It is true that, in that judgement, the Supreme Court also observed that even participation in an illegal strike might not by itself bring to an end the relationship of Master and Servant, though it might be a good cause for the termination of service provided of course the relevant provisions in the Standing Orders were complied with. It is true also that this interpretation of "continuity of service" was departed from by the Legislature which laid down that participation in illegal strike or

a lock-out or cessation of work due to any default of the employee would result in breach of service. It is noticeable, however, that the Legislature did not mould its definition to exclude the Supreme Court's definition of "continuous service" to include even absence without obtaining leave.

One of the aids to construction of Statutes is to find out what was the state of things before the Statute was enacted, because that should give an indication as to what the Statute intended to achieve. Before the Statute was enacted, the Supreme Court, as we have seen, laid down two propositions, namely,

(1) That an absence of an employee without leave would not by itself bring to an end the continuity of his service, and

(2) Participation in an illegal strike, which may even incur the punishment of dismissal might not by itself bring to an end the relationship of Master and Servant. Obviously, the Legislature did not appreciate the concept that participation in an illegal strike would not end the continuity of service. Accordingly, the Legislature re-defined the term "continuity of service."

But it is significant that the Legislature did not interfere with the first of the propositions above indicated. That should have led to an inference that *continuity of service* would not be affected by mere absence and should subsist as long as the relationship of Master and Servant continued. The words "actually employed" clearly mean, therefore, that service would remain uninterrupted.

and if the relationship of employment subsisted at least for 190 days in a Mine and 240 days in any other case except in a seasonal establishment.

After all, the Gratuity Act is a Social Welfare Legislation and, as the Supreme Court has itself observed, in construing a social welfare legislation, the Court should adopt a beneficent rule of construction. It is true again that the beneficent rule of construction applies where the language is ambiguous and not when the language is plain and clear. In the instant case, however, it cannot be said that the terms "actually employed" are unambiguous particularly when the legislature used the word "actually worked" in explanation II. There was scope for doubt as to whether the Legislature really intended that, in order to earn the benefit of *continuous service*, an employee must *actually work* in a Mine for 190 days or in any other establishment for 240 days. In the face of such ambiguity, the Supreme Court should have accepted the beneficent rule of construction which would have confirmed its concept of continuous service given in the case of *Jeewanlal (1929) Ltd. V. its Workmen* (Supra).

In any event the very fact that the Legislature uses the words "actually worked" in Explanation II and uses the words "actually employed" in Explanation I, shows that the Legislature intended different meanings for Explanation I and Explanation II. The words "actually employed" must necessarily mean, therefore, that continuity of service requires subsistence of relationship of employment, and not continuity of *actual work*.

The interest of *badli* employees is also jeopardised, because *badli* employees are obliged to attend the Mills every day and yet they would not qualify for gratuity because they have not actually worked for not less than 240 days in a year. The Supreme Court reiterates its decision in *Delhi Cloth and General Mills Co. v. The Workmen* (3) that the *badli* employees are nothing but substitutes and that they are like spare men who are *not* employed while waiting for a job. Needless to say, the Court has almost equated *badli* employees with spare parts of a machine. But, it is submitted with respect, the Court missed the difference. While spare parts of a machine do not lose their shine, if not used, *badli* employees have an unkind fate they are worn down and starved out while waiting in the Mills for a job.

In these circumstances, the legislation must come to the help of the workmen. Let even those who have been absent get gratuity if their employment has subsisted or continued for the required number of days in a year. Let the *badli*s also be not treated as spare cogs in a machine and be granted the dignity of human beings.

(1) *Lalappa Lingappa v. Laxmi Vishnu Textile Mills*, 1981 Lab. Ic 307.

(2) (1962) 1 SCR 717=A 1961 SC 1567

(3) A 1970 SC 919 = (1969) 2 SCR 307. □

Meeting of the Awards Committee

THE Committee for Shram Vir National Awards and National Safety Awards for the years 1978 and 1979 met on April 27-28, 1981. The CITU representative Narsingha Chakra-

barty attended the meeting. While examining the applications for Shram Vir National Awards it was seen that the management in many cases had not suitably rewarded the innovator. Hence the Committee decided to draw the attention of the managements on this aspect.

As far as the National Safety Awards are concerned, the last Committee had recommended that Safety Awards for lowest frequency rate should not be given if there were deaths of workmen for the period under consideration. The Government did not accept this recommendation and the CITU had persisted in the opposition. This time, by invoking the powers of the committee, no award was given in this scheme wherever there were incidence of death. It is hoped that this would have salutary effect on the managements.

Applications for these Awards for the year 1980 and 1981 have been called for and the last date of submission of applications has been fixed as 31 July. □

Babcock and Wilcox Workers on Continuous Strike

THE workers of Babcock and Wilcox Ltd. a subsidiary of A.V.B. Ltd. which is a largest multinational company manufacturing boilers, are on continuous strike from 12 May against the anti-labour policies of the management and its conspiracy against the left front government of West Bengal and in support of their demands.

In a bid to disrupt the normal functioning of the CITU affiliated Shramik Union, the management has broken the last settlement with the union due to expire in January 1982. As a resort, the Union had to go on indefinite strike in all its units in West Bengal. □

Government of India's Callousness Towards the ILO Conventions

A meeting of the Committee on ILO Conventions held in New Delhi on 8th of May considered the work regarding the implementation of the ILO Conventions and found that the Government of India was practically not taking any step towards progressively implementing these Conventions.

Workers' Load : Since the last Committee on Conventions which met in New Delhi on 15th October, 1980, there has been no programme to implement any of the Conventions. With regard to the ILO Convention regarding maximum permissible weight to be carried physically by one worker (Convention No. 127), a sub-committee appointed by the Government suggested that the maximum permissible weight in respect of food grains should be brought down from 100 Kg to 75 Kg. However, ILO Convention clearly stipulates that the maximum permissible weight should not be more than 55 Kg. In a study by the Director-General, Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes of leaders in Bombay docks indicates that their working heart rates during their active period was as high as 200 and 194. The technical advice of The All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health is that for Indians 35 Kg may be the upper limit of the load which could not cause cumulative fatigue or tax the workers unacceptably. In view of these findings, there was no justification for the Government to recommend 75 Kg as maximum permissible weight. The spokesman of the Government pointed out that this weight of 75 Kg was recommended by a Meeting of the Committee on Conventions in 1975.

The CITU representative in a meeting pointed out that he was not bound by the decision taken during the emergency period. The spokesman of the Government tried to state difficulties of getting gunny bags of the new size and storage space, etc. The Department of Food noted "The reduction in weight would lead to delay in loading and unloading operation, more fatigue to labour and additional cost towards gunny bags." After prolonged discussion the Government ultimately had to reconsider the question of fixing maximum permissible weight for worker at 75 Kg and agreed to review the proposal in the next meeting of the Committee on Conventions.

Seamen : In the last meeting, the representative of Ministry of Shipping and Transport agreed to give requisite information regarding employment of Seamen however they failed to do so in this meeting. The CITU representative criticised this attitude of the Ministry and demanded full information regarding employment of Seamen in various centres. It was also pointed out that the Government of India was not insisting on payment of wages fixed by the ILO for the Indian Seamen working in foreign going ships. The Government of India agreed to supply necessary details in the next meeting.

Freedom of Association : The representatives of the trade unions strongly criticised the failure of the Government to ratify the Convention No. 87 concerning freedom of association and protection of right to organise (1948) and Convention

No. 98 concerning right to organise and collective bargaining (1949). The trade union representatives criticised the restrictions imposed on the trade unions by the provisions in the Central Civil Service (Conduct) Rules 1964. The rules provide that any amendment of substantial character in the rules of the association of the Government employees shall be made only with the previous approval of the Government. It also imposed restriction on the association that it shall not start or publish any periodical, magazine bulletin without the previous approval of the Government. It further states that the Association shall not address any communication to any foreign authority except through the Government which shall have the right to withhold it. The Committee of Experts of the ILO have regarded these provisions as violative of the Convention. The CCS (Recognition of Service Association) Rules 1959 provides that the permission of the Government should be taken before the service association seeks affiliation with any other union, service association or federation and the association shall cease to be affiliated to a federation or confederation or service associations whose recognition under the rules is withdrawn by the Government. This also is violative of the ILO Convention on right to organise. The Government of India has noted in their observations, "It is clear that the existing law and practice in the country do not permit ratification of either Convention No. 87 or 98". Thus, instead of amending the existing rules within the country to meet the ILO requirements, Government of India is taking the

position that because of these existing rules, it is unable to ratify the ILO Convention!

Protection to Workmen : The ILO Convention No. 135 concerning workers' representatives in the undertaking (1971) provides certain protection to the workman while discharging his trade union duties. Though the Industrial Disputes Act has provided a category of protected workmen but it does not provide a guarantee of protection to worker on other pretext by the Management. The International Labour Organisation has confirmed the position that the law in India falls short of requirements of the Convention both in regard to the protection and facilities to be provided to the workers' representatives. According to them, while there is general and special protection against unjustified dismissals and also protection against unfavourable change in conditions of employment applicable to all types of workers' representatives, the latter protection exists only during the pendency of disputes proceedings. Thus neither the trade union nor the elected representatives would seem to be protected against acts prejudicial to them other than dismissals outside the period during which disputes' proceedings are taking place. Further, the facilities available to those employed in establishments employing less than 100 workmen, which are required under the law to constitute such committees. Though the Government of India has promised to make certain legislative proposals to overcome this lacuna in their legislation, it has expressed its opinion that it would not be feasible to ratify this Convention.

Protection of wages : Regarding the ILO Convention No 95 concerning protection of wages (1949) Government of India is not prepared to ratify even this Convention. "It would," the Government note says, "appear that all the persons who are employed in manual labour are covered by the Convention, whereas the national laws do not cover all such person." It further states, "While the principles underlying the Convention are acceptable and are being by and large followed in sectors covered by the legislation, India is still not in a position to ratify the Convention as its coverage is very wide". The trade union representatives criticised the Government machinery of the Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Wages Act and Contract Labour Regulation & Abolition Act which has failed to properly ensure implementation of the Act. The Government also has admitted that it has no machinery to implement the provision relating to minimum wages. It is the unorganised sector of industry where the wage of the workers are extremely poor and they deserve legal protection for a better living standard. However, the Government is refusing to give any protection to these workers. While criticising the wages of the organised sections of the working class whom the Government considers as high-wage-islands, the Government is refusing to take any firm step to improve the wages and working conditions of the unorganised workers. A ratification of the ILO Convention would have ensured a minimum wage standard for the entire working class of our country but by not

accepting this Convention, the Government of India is allowing malpractices prevalent in organised sector of our industries.

Child Labour : Regarding the ILO Convention concerning child labour, the Government of India is again using dilatory tactics. Except appointment of a committee on child labour, the Government has practically done nothing to improve the conditions of this most exploited section of our working class. India has become notorious because it employs the largest number of child labour in the whole world. The problem of child labour cannot be solved without improving the wage level of the workers and providing for free meals and clothing to poor students at primary level of education. What is surprising in this regard is that even the resolution moved by the representative of the Government of India in the ILO Conference in 1979 has not been implemented by Indian Government so far. The Government could not even give a report of the steps taken by them to implement the resolution moved by the representative of Government of India. It was agreed that a note on this subject will be submitted in the next meeting of the Convention's Committee. The net result of the Committee on Conventions is that the Government of India has not ratified a single ILO Convention in the meeting and only promises of steps to go in that direction are being given but no concrete steps are generally taken in that direction.

No Serious Concern : The present machinery of consultation with the trade union in the ILO Conventions is only formal and not meaningful with the result that a cursory review of the Convention is being made

from time to time without any concrete steps in the direction of their implementation.

The trade union movement has to take the whole question of ratification of the ILO Convention in right earnest. Unless these ratifications are made an issue of trade union agitation, sufficient pressure will not be brought on the Government of India to act expeditiously in the matter. Though the Government is submitting periodical reports to Parliament on the implementation of the ILO Conventions, the reports do not show serious concern of the Government in taking quick action in that regard.

The extent of mass pressure the trade union can build from below will determine the Government's action in implementing the ILO Conventions. □

CITU Congratulates the Working Class of Haryana

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU has issued the following statement on 21 May :

The CITU warmly congratulates the working class of Haryana who responded magnificently to the call of strike, on 20th May, 781 jointly given by the CITU, AITUC, BMS and HMS to press for the demand of Rs. 500/- as minimum wage and against repression. Not only the workers of small scale and unorganised sector but also many who have already achieved this minimum wage have enthusiastically participated in the strike as a mark of protest against the increasing repression on workers and refusal to grant proper wages to the workers. The united resistance of the working class is significant in the context of increasing attacks by goonda-

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	1981			State/Centre	1981		
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa			
Gudur	416	422	420	Barbil	391	386	385
Guntur	432	438	437	Sambalpur	414	420	430
Hyderabad	424	428	433	Punjab			
Assam				Amritsar	425	426	427
Digboi	416	420	421	Rajasthan			
Doom Dooma	346	349	342	Ajmer	437	450	444
Labac	338	336	342	Jaipur	452	464	456
Mariani	357	354	349	Tamil Nadu			
Rangapara	351	358	354	Coimbatore	431	445	459
Bihar				Coonoor	420	433	432
Jamshedpur	378	387	395	Madras	403	409	410
Jharia	386	391	393	Madurai	439	452	430
Kodarma	425	421	422	U.P.			
Monghyr	430	452	446	Kanpur	404	404	405
Noamundi	381	408	406	Saharanpur	422	424	424
Gujarat				Varanasi	480	483	490
Ahmedabad	385	389	393	West Bengal			
Bhavnagar	412	414	418	Asansol	422	432	429
Haryana				Calcutta	379	384	385
Yamunanagar	439	449	457	Darjeeling	341	334	344
J. & K.				Howrah	370	377	379
Srinagar	426	420	428	Jalpaiguri	331	337	338
Karnataka				Raniganj	406	406	404
Ammathi	428	445	451	Delhi	434	434	438
Bangalore	457	468	469	Other Centres*			
Chikamagalur	421	422	437	Berhampur ('49)	561	564	568
Kolar G.F.	425	438	445	Cuttack ('49)	523	531	523
Kerala				Jabalpur ('49)	549	558	557
Alleppey	421	432	432	Beawar ('51-52)	518	530	525
Alwaye	424	433	442	Tripura (1961)	374	380	382
Mundakayam	437	445	434	H.P. (1965)	310	312	313
Madhya Pradesh				Goa (1966)	305	359	311
Balaghat	432	433	438	Bhilai (1966)	284	287	290
Bhopal	420	430	434	Bhilwara ('66)	267	275	276
Gwalior	428	443	438	Chhindwara ('66)	229	236	240
Indore	442	454	458	Kothagudem ('66)	272	278	279
Maharashtra				Rourkela ('66)	291	292	292
Bombay	420	423	423	All India ('49)	500	508	420
Nagpur	404	411	425	-do- ('60)	411	418	510
Sholapur	435	440	444				

Figures in bracket

indicate base year.

hirelings of the management and the police against the struggles of the workers and also their women folk as was witnessed during the struggles in Faridabad, Hansi, Sonapat, Sirsa and other places.

The CITU demands that the Govt. of Haryana should stop

repressive policy and accept the demand of Rs. 500/- as minimum wages.

The CITU appeals to the workers of Haryana to preserve and strengthen their unity for winning their unity for winning their just demands. □

Retrograde Recommendations of Ramanujam Committee

THE Report of the Employees Provident Fund Review Committee has evoked strong protest among the trade unions and P.F. Employees because some of its recommendations will hit the basis of the P.F. organisations.

When the Government of India appointed the EPF Review Committee with G. Ramanujam, General Secretary, INTUC, as the Chairman, the CITU submitted a memorandum which contains several suggestions to improve the working of the organisation (See The Working Class, Vol 10, No. 1, September 1980).

Half Hearted

There can be no disagreement with some of the recommendations of the Committee such as extension of the advantage of the scheme to all the establishments having 10 or more employees, increase in the workers representations on the Board of Trustees from 6 to 10, making the penal provisions somewhat rigorous etc. However, these are half hearted and do not go a big way in improving the scheme.

While making some concessions to the workers in this manner, the Ramanujam Committee has basically given arbitrary powers to the employers which would not only nullify the impact of the improvements but would hand over the entire scheme to the employers.

This is done in the name of decentralisation of the scheme.

Making the Conditions Chaotic

According to the recommendations in all factories and

establishments where 100 or more employees are working the employers have been given the powers to keep the accounts of the workers and employers contributions and make the payments to the subscribers. The experience of the working of the scheme clearly shows that the employers have been defaulting crores of rupees worth amount and the Government has miserably failed to recover the dues from them. The establishment exempted from the purview of the Act have also defaulted huge amounts of workers and their own contributions. As noted by the Committee in over 90 thousand establishments covered by the EPF Act the total arrears amounted to Rs. 14.28 crores, while 3085 exempted establishments have alone defaulted Rs. 14.28 crores. It is clear that Ramanujam Committee wants to handle of the accounts by defaulters which would only make the conditions chaotic.

Favour to Employers

It is surprising to note that the Central T.U. Organisations did not demand that the employers should be given powers to handle workers money, yet Ramanujam Committee has chosen to give these recommendations which clearly shows that the Committee wanted to favour the employers. It also further points out how the INTUC leadership is willingly prepared to act as spokesmen of employers and the Cong. (I) Government is offering Chairmanship of such committees to INTUC leaders because of their willingness to serve as tools of the management and the authorities.

The Ramanujam Committee further recommended that the managements should pay only 0.09% the wages as inspection charges to the EPF organisation. This would mean reduction in the budget of the organisation by 75%. Hence, it would lead to drastic retrenchment of the EPF employees. Both federations of the employees Provident Fund Staff have expressed their strong opposition to the retrograde recommendations of Ramanujam Committee. It is necessary that the P.F. employees should launch a joint movement so that the Committees anti-working class measures can be defeated.

Reject the Recommendations

The T.U. movement should also unitedly raise a voice of protest against these harmful recommendations so that the Government is compelled to reject the recommendations.

The CITU has demanded that the Government should call a meeting of the Central Trade Union Organisations so that the matters are discussed with them. Meanwhile the CITU has stressed that the Government should not take a unilateral action in this regard. If, however, it chooses to do so it will have to face strong opposition from the T.U. movement of the general workers as well as of the P.F. employees. □

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May Day Celebrations in Moscow

—Nrisingha Chakrabarty

THE All Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) USSR have been inviting representatives of trade unions from all countries to take part in May Day celebrations in Moscow. The CITU was invited to take part for the first time in 1980 when Kamal Sarkar, Secretary attended the celebrations. This time the CITU nominated me mainly because an important conference on "The Working Class and the problems of anti-monopolist struggle" was to be held on May 4 and 5. Representatives from AITUC, INTUC and HMS also attended it.

May Day in a Socialist State is an occasion of festivity. The gay crowd waving flowers, marched into the "Red Square" as the clock chimed ten. The moving mass of free people continued hundred abreast, for over two hours. They were still coming when we left to attend a reception given by the AUCCTU.

On 3rd May, A.M. Sabbotin, Secretary AUCCTU met the representatives and apprised them about the massive programme of upliftment of the people undertaken by the Government of USSR in close co-operation of the AUCCTU. He stressed that as prices of the essential commodities had remained stable and the rent for progressive increase in wages, the living condition of workmen was continuously rising, especially because education, medical and child care had been free. Outlining the work of the trade unions in Socialist state, he said that instances of violation of labour laws or acts of favouritism are reported occassionally. But the Trade Unions investigate them and take appropriate

actions. On demand from trade unions 3,000 officials were fined 4,400 were subjected to disciplinary action and 200 dismissed last year for various offences.

Lastly he emphasised the sincere desire for peace which would enable the countries to improve the living conditions of the workers further.

The conference on "The Working Class and the problem of anti-monopolist struggle" was inaugurated by A.I. Shibayev, President AUCCTU. The first day was a plenary session when selected guests and academicians spoke. On 5th May, the conference was divided in three groups. The delegates from South Africa and Israil gave harrowing tales of oppression and the grim struggle which the working class is carrying on there. Within the limited time available, I pointed out how the monopolies both Indian and Foreign are garnering the national wealth which is being generated through various five year plans. It was pointed out that cheap but skilled labour of our country is being utilised in other developing countries through joint ventures.

It was pointed out that a drive for mechanisation and automation is on though the unemployment is growing very fast. Citing instances of bitter and long drawn struggles of Lipton, Calcutta Electric Supply, Grindlays Bank etc, it was pointed out that the determination of the fight against the monopolies is growing. The Federation of Medical Representatives and all India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Association have started building up sustained struggle against the Drug Multinationals, who are the worst offenders. The CITU

supported the idea of closer co-operation and exchange of information for a world wide struggle against the transnational corporations who have built up gigantic military-industrial complex in view of the mounting dangers of war.

After the conference we visited Kiev and took part in the victory celebrations on 9th May. We returned back on 14th May with the feeling that the people of Soviet Union genuinely desire peace. □

Commercial Representatives Meet

THE 13th Annual General Body meeting of the West Bengal Commercial Representatives Union (Formerly CTA) (CITU) was held at Calcutta on 25 and 26 April which was inaugurated by Md. Amin, the State Transport Minister. It adopted several resolutions. Jyotish Datta and S.R. Roy were elected President and General Secretary of the Union. □

Tamilnadu Electricity Workers' Conference

THE 4th State Conference of the Tamilnadu Electricity Workers was held on 10-12 April at Cuddalore, South Arcot District. V.P. Chintan hoisted the red flag. 200 delegates participated in the conference.

The General Secretary presented the report. It adopted several resolutions. It elected a new council with V.P. Chintan as President, and D. Jankiraman as General Secretary.

The open session was addressed by P. Ramamurti, MP, General Secretary, CITU, K. Ramani, V.P. Chintan and C. Govindarajan. □

Second Conf. of Sonepat Distt. CITU

THE second Conference of the Sonepat (Haryana) District Committee of CITU was held on first May at Sonepat. 90 delegates participated in it. A presidium of Jagat Singh, Ramjas and Suryanarayana Maurya conducted the deliberations.

The conference paid homage to the memory of Comrade B.K. Paliwal, Shiv Charan and Bhanu Ram.

The Haryana State CITU President Raghubir Singh Hooda inaugurated the conference. S.N. Solanki, General Secretary, presented the report which noted several struggles carried out by the district CITU and highlighted bitter repression faced by the workers in the area.

The conference elected a 31 member executive committee with Jagat Singh as President and S.N. Solanki as the General Secretary.

The open session was addressed by P. Ramamurti, MP, General Secretary, CITU, who stressed on the fighting unity of the workers. He called upon the workers to earnestly build the worker-peasant unity. Explaining the current political situation in the country, Ramamurti highlighted the imperialist war designs and called upon the workers to fight against war and for peace. □

Tamilnadu Engineering Workers Meet

TWENTY nine representatives of the engineering workers unions from Madras, Coimbatore, Trichy, North Arcot and Ramanand districts met at Madras on 10 May to decide upon the implementation of decisions taken at the All India Engineering Workers meeting

held in Howrah in March. K.M. Haribhatt presided over.

The State CITU President, K. Ramani, explained in detail the condition of workers in the industry. A programme was chalked out in support of the demands which include among others, the abolition of contract

system, regularisation of the services of temporary workers, implementation of factory rules etc.

K.M. Haribhatt, T.K. Rangarajan and U.K. Vellingiri will be the members of the All India Coordination Committee from the State. □

International Health Hazard Alert on 2 Nitro Propane Concerned Unions Must Note

THE International Occupational Safety and Health Hazard Alert System sponsored by the International Labour Organisation has issued an alert on the chemical 2-Nitro Propane as confirmed animal carcinogen and a suspect cause of cancer in human beings.

The chemical is commonly used as a solvent in various processes which include : Coating vinyl and epoxy paints and resins, nitro cellulose paints, chlorinated rubber paints, printing (Rorogravoure and flexographic inks), ship building and maintenance (Marine Coatings), furniture painting, plastic products, adhesives, highway maintenance (traffic markings), etc.

According to the toxicity information supplied by the ILO, the symptoms of acute exposure to the chemical are nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, anorexia, severe headache, etc. Liver and kidney systems may be affected from prolonged exposure. Symptoms of toxic hepatitis have been reported. The odour of the chemical is very faint and hence may be masked by other odours. The detectable odour concentration is already three times more than the permissible exposure limit. Therefore the odour of the chemical should not be depended upon.

To promote health and safety, the ILO's Alert System has listed several steps which include the following. Where possible, a substitute solvent not containing 2-NP should be used. The toxicity and safety aspects of substitute solvent should be duly considered. All employee likely to be exposed to 2-NP should be informed and educated about the health hazard, health aspects and preventive measures, etc.

The CITU has issued a circular to all its State Committee and the unions dealing with chemicals informing in detail about the chemical as informed by the ILO sponsored organisation and requested them to note the informations carefully, inform all concerned and adopt the safety measures as enumerated in the ILO document. □

Comrade Soong Ching Ling

THE Centre of Indian Trade Unions and 'The Working Class' express their deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of Comrade Soong Ching Ling, an outstanding revolutionary of the Great Chinese Revolution and of the People's Republic of China, on 29 May in Beijing.

Born in 1890, Comrade Soong, joined the democratic revolution in China along with China's great democratic leader, Dr. Sun Yat Sen. Comrade Soong and Dr. Sun were married in 1917 in Japan where they had gone into exile.

Comrade Soong played a significant role in bringing the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China in an alliance for the success of the national liberation struggle of China. The alliance successfully advanced the revolutionary movement in China. But after the death of Dr. Sun in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek broke the alliance, betrayed the revolution and unleashed white terror against the communists. Comrade Soong, whose younger sister

was married to Chiang, notwithstanding close family ties, worked hard in rallying to the alliance of the revolutionary forces of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China under the guidance of revolutionary ideals to which she remained loyal all her life.

Comrade Soong devoted her life in the cause of the Chinese people and Chinese revolution in various capacities. All over the world she was respected as a great patriot, democrat, internationalist and communist.

Comrade Soong was a very prominent leader of the Chinese people and was the Honorary Chairman of the People's Republic of China at the time of her death.

The CITU and 'The Working Class' while paying their revolutionary homage to the departed leader of the Chinese people and the People's Republic of China convey their heartfelt condolences to the All China Federation of Trade Unions and the working class and people of China. □

Comrade Bal Dandavate

THE Centre of Indian Trade Unions and 'The Working Class' express their deep sense of sorrow at the untimely passing away of Comrade Bal Dandavate, President, Hind Mazdoor Sabha, due to massive heart attack on 13 May.

Comrade Bal Dandavate was the moving spirit behind the idea of holding the National Convention Against Price Rise and Anti-Labour Policies in Bombay and was tirelessly working to make it a grand success. Comrade Dandavate played a notable role in building a united movement of the working class in the city of Bombay. His sudden untimely and sad demise is not only a great loss to the HMS but to the entire trade union movement in the country.

The CITU and 'The Working Class' while paying their homage to the departed leader convey their heartfelt condolences to Hind Mazdoor Sabha and bereaved members of his family. □

Kolar Goldfields

THE management of Bharat Gold Mines Ltd., a public sector undertaking is openly discriminating the workers organised under Bharat Gold Mines Employees Union (CITU), the only Union recognised, representing 12,000 workers, in the matter of minimum wages.

The minimum wage in this industry is merely Rs. 396.70 which is far less compared to sector-cum-industry level of minimum wages which range from Rs. 553.70 to Rs. 574.40. The management offered a paltry rise of Rs. 45 which has been

rejected by the Union. When all efforts of negotiated settlement failed the Union was forced to go on a day's strike on 30 May. □

Tripartite Meeting in Drug Industry

THE Union Ministry of Labour convened a tripartite meeting in the drug and pharmaceutical industry on 12 May in New Delhi.

On behalf of the Federation of Medical Representatives Associations of India (FMRAI), N.I. Joseph, President, J.S. Majumdar, General Secretary and P.K. Ganguly and George

Vergheese, Secretaries participated in it. The Government of India was represented by the Labour Minister and other officials. On behalf of the employers, the organisations like OPPI, PAMDAL, and IDMA attended it.

The FMRAI had submitted a charter of demands in 1978 and had demanded of the government to convene a tripartite meeting on the charter, which was given to the employers as well. The Federation along with the AICPEF launched a countrywide struggle to press the Government for such a meeting. □