

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

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B. T. RANADIVE
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172, Lenin Sarani,
Calcutta-13.
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PRESS COMMUNIQUE.

CITU OFFICE-BEARERS MEETING

A meeting of the office-bearers of the CITU was held in Calcutta on 22nd September 1971. Com. B.T. Ranadive, President CITU, presided over the meeting. The following is the press communique issued after the meeting.

"The CITU strongly protests against the arbitrary dismissal of the 13 prominent leaders of the West Bengal State Government employees which is an outrageous act of the Government to attack the right of association of the State Government employees. This deliberately provocative attack has been made in the context of the situation here when all attention of the people and the Govt. alike was needed for rendering help to the struggle of Bangla Desh.

"The unprecedented action of the Governor of West Bengal constitutes an effort to sidetrack people's attention from their democratic struggle. It is illuminating that the same Government did not take any action against police officials who were found colluding with goonda gangs in their rampage of murder and loot in the Cossipore area a few days back.

The meeting congratulates the State Government employees in West Bengal for their solidarity and unity and their firm determination to fight the attack. It congratulates the trade unions, employees organisations, the students and women's organisations on the demonstration of their fraternal solidarity to the fighting State Government employees.

The meeting notes with satisfaction that all the Central trade union organisations have condemned this arbitrary action of the Government and demands its immediate withdrawal. The CITU is confident that in ~~the~~ case the Government refuses to retrace its steps the entire working class and the democratic forces in West Bengal will rally for a mighty Bundh and further struggle in support of the State Government employees. It hopes that the present reservations and vacillations shown by some central organisations will be overcome in the interest of common struggle.

The meeting warns the Government of West Bengal against further repressive measures. It has no doubt that the workers and employees in other states will rally round in the defence of the West Bengal State Government employees and exert their full strength to defeat this attack on the right to organise.

The meeting strongly protests against the refusal of the employers to concede the just demand of 8½ per cent minimum bonus and failure of the Government to enforce the demand. The proceedings of the informal consultations in Bombay shows that the Government has once again yielded to the pressure of the employers. Though the demand of 8½ per cent was unanimously raised by all the Central T.U. organisations and an assurance was given by the Government in Parliament that the Government itself would bring a measure to meet the workers demand it appears that the Government is going back from the commitment in the name of arriving at consensus.

It is accepted by the Government and the Courts that bonus is a deferred wage intended to partially fill the gap between the existing wages and the living wage. However, under present conditions of continuous rise in prices $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent minimum bonus will hardly compensate for the continuous erosion of the real wage that has taken place during the last year. The meeting therefore rejects all proposals to impose a lower level of bonus and calls upon the working class to wage a united struggle against the attempts to impose a lower quantum of bonus.

The meeting is confident that the united front presented by the Central T.U. organisations on the question will be further developed into common action to enforce the demand. It notes with satisfaction that in several centres, unions belonging to different Central Organisation have already taken decision for joint actions in case of refusal of their demands. The decision of CITU, AITUC, HMP and Smt. Indira Group unions in Coimbatore to go on strike on bonus is worth emulating in other centres.

The CITU calls upon the working class to unitedly build a powerful campaign all over the country on the following demands relating to Bonus question:

1. Minimum $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent bonus ;
2. Guaranteed minimum bonus to employees of all categories of workers including those employed in departmentally run Government undertakings ;
3. Withdraw the maximum limit on bonus ;
4. Payment of bonus to workers employed in factories taken over by the Government as relief measure ;

The meeting notes with regret the apathy shown by some Central T.U. organisations in connection with the implementation of the decision taken by the National T.U. Committee of India for Solidarity with Bangladesh. This has been one of the reasons for the postponement of the Convention that was scheduled to be held on 12th September last in Calcutta. It has resulted in failure to mobilise the full strength of the working class in support of the glorious struggle of the Bangla Desh people. The meeting calls upon all organisations to immediately take steps to implement the decision of the National T.U. Committee of India for Solidarity with Bangla Desh and further proposes series of joint conventions in leading industrial centres in India in support of Bangla Desh.

The meeting has discussed the questions of rectification of Consumer Price Index Numbers, wage and income policy of the Government and Employees Family Pension Scheme. It appreciates the role of the CITU unions in campaigning against the scheme which has forced the other T.U. Centres like AITUC and INTUC to change their earlier stand of supporting the Scheme.

The meeting notes the lack of follow up action after the New Delhi meeting of the trade union Centres and National Federations held in May last and decides to take up the issue with the other participants in the Conference.

The meeting decides to hold a meeting of the Working Committee of the CITU either in the end of October or in the first week of November in Calcutta.

(M. K. Pandhe)
Secretary

The Editor,

for favour of publication