

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

THIRD CONFERENCE

**CITU FACES REPRESSION
AND GANGSTERISM**

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CITU FACES REPRESSION AND GANGSTERISM

Since the Second Conference of the CITU held at Ernakulam in April, 1973, over 30 leaders and activists of CITU unions have been murdered by Congress hoodlums, several CITU activists have been detained without trial under MISA and DIR and a large number of CITU unions have been forcibly occupied by the Congress rowdies. In hundreds of factories and offices normal trade union functioning is made impossible and a large number of workers are prevented from joining their duties and evicted from their home and hearth by these gangsters.

West Bengal

After the rigged elections in 1972, all sorts of repression and armed attacks by the armed thugs of the Congress and repressive machinery of the Govt. were let loose on the people of West Bengal. Aided and encouraged by the ruling Congress, police and the administration, these armed hoodlums committed murder and arson, assaulted leaders and activists of CITU and other left trade unions, terrorised the workers and forcibly captured unions.

In Calcutta, the workers and employees of Westinghouse Saxby Farmer, Calcutta State Transport, Bengal Enamel and in Kalyani, the women workers of Kalyani Spinning Mills, who were being prevented from joining duties, went to report for duty on the strength of High Court orders. But they were grievously assaulted inside and outside the mills and factories in the presence of management, top police officials and administrative officers. The High Court orders directing the Police and the Government to give protection to these workers were

callously disregarded, although the workers were employed in State Govt. undertakings. As a result these workers, who were forcibly prevented from going to work, lost their jobs,

Similarly, some workers of Carter Pooler & Co., a Defence Ministry undertaking, were forcibly evicted. When the President of the West Bengal CITU wrote to the Union Minister of State for Defence asking for protection for these workers, the Minister replied that the authorities were apprehensive that if any of the evicted workers turned up at the factory they will be beaten up by members of the Congress union. He also took the plea that the workers themselves did not insist on serving in that factory.

The callous attitude of the Government towards the workers was also seen when, in the State Labour Advisory Board meeting held on September 30, 1974, this matter was brought up. When the representatives of CITU and other left trade unions stated in the meeting that more than 300 CITU unions have been forced to suspend their functioning, about 4000 workers of different factories have been attacked by armed goondas and seriously injured, and over 5000 trade union leaders and activists have been evicted from their homes, the West Bengal Labour Minister said that he would take action. But nothing has been done in this respect uptill now.

In Durgapur, the semi-fascist terror was let loose with a planned ferocity and vindictiveness. From 1970 till date, 14 CITU activists have been murdered, CITU unions in the Steel Plant and Alloy Steel Plant cannot open their offices due to goonda attacks, CITU processions and meetings have been attacked and large number of workers have been assaulted. The local Police Station has been turned into a camp of Congress goondas and the murderers of CITU activists are found openly hobnobbing with police officials. Hundreds of contractors' labourers have been driven out and in their place anti-socials imported from outside have been installed in the plants. Rules were thrown to the wind to provide employment to these Congress hoodlums.

Murderous attacks on CITU activists in Durgapur by the Congress hoodlums still continue unabated. In March, 1973, Bimal Chowdhury a member of the Executive body of the Alloy Steel Plant unit of the Hindustan Steel Employees Union (CITU) was stabbed to death. On April 21, 1973 Biswanath Ghosh, a leading CITU worker of Durgapur project was murdered in broad day light. In May 1973, Bhabatarn Adhikary a worker of Alloy Steel Plant was stabbed to death. Another activist of CITU and employee of Steel Plant, Rameswar Saha, was also stabbed by the Youth Congress elements. In July, 1973 a CITU activist was murdered by the hooligans and another activist, L. N. Sankar, was dragged out of his quarter and beaten up. In October 1973 Sunil Acharya, an active worker was murdered in broad day light before his book shop. In November 1973, Ranjan Biswas, a leader of HSEU was shot dead and H. N. Chakrabarty, a Council Member of HSEU and B. C. Debnath, another member of HSEU, were assaulted. Com. Debnath was also kidnapped with the intention of murder by the Congress hoodlums. On May, 6, 1974, Ajit Dey, an employee of Alloy Steel and an active worker of HSEU was dragged out of his quarter and brutally murdered. Earlier, on February 21, 1973 four leaders of Hindustan Steel Employees Union were seriously injured when a military grenade was thrown at them by the Congress goondas. One of the leaders, Kanai Banerjee, a Council Member had to be hospitalised and operated upon.

In January last, the Hindustan Steel Employees Union, though recognised by the management, was not allowed to hold its annual Conference within the township. Permission was withdrawn by the Police at the eleventh hour and the Union had to make arrangements outside the township. Even then, three workers of HSEU engaged in the preparation for the conference were stabbed by the armed goondas.

In Ranigunge, CITU workers and leaders have to face the same type of attacks and repression. Since February 1973,

attacks on CITU workers, mass arrests and cold-blooded murders have been the order of the day. The workers of Bengal Paper Mill, Refractory and Ceramic factory of Burn & Co., J. K. Nagar Aluminium factory and other industrial units have been facing brutal Police terror and goonda attacks day in and day out. Repeated attacks have been mounted on the CITU workers and already 115 workers, including Com. Haradhan Roy, General Council member of CITU, and Bikash Chowdhury, General Secretary, Bengal Paper Mill Mazdoor Union (CITU) have been arrested. 15 houses of tribal workers have been burnt and the union office has been ransacked. Even the people of nearby villages, who are supporters of the CITU, are not spared. The CITU union office was forcibly occupied and a stooge INTUC union composed of gangster elements was installed.

Following the murder of Com. Kailash Hazam, a CITU leader of the area, the Congress gangsters aided by Police mounted a ferocious attack on the workers of Bengal Paper Mill. On November 26, 1973, eight workers were stabbed resulting in death of three of them. The police, instead of arresting the goondas, arrested and beat up the workers. Police and goondas raided the workers' quarters, beat up the inmates including the women and looted their belongings. Taking advantage of this the management declared a lock-out. Earlier, in June 1973, after the murder of Babulal Jadav, a worker of Bengal paper Mill, a similar raid was made by the police and goondas on the workers' quarters. Workers were also attacked inside the factories. When this failed to cow down the workers, the local police directly took up the offensive. Large-scale arrests of workers were resorted to and false cases started against them. 22 workers, including some union functionaries, were arrested under MISA. Many workers, including activists, were unable to report for duty or even come to the factory due to the threat of murder and arrest. The managements of Bengal Paper Mill, Burn and J. K. Aluminium

directly encouraged these attacks and employed a sizable number of anti-social elements to terrorise the workers inside the factories.

After the successful General Strike of July 27, 1973 these attacks were intensified. From then on, the police took direct offensive by arresting anybody found in the union offices, thereby making their functioning impossible. In October, 1973, following the murder of an anti-social at Ranigunge, Police arrested 200 workers and several union leaders, including Com. Haradhan Roy, and implicated them in the murder case. This was followed by attacks on workers' quarters, assaults and further arrests. On October 18, 1973 Monoranjan Chatterjee and four other activists were arrested from the Bengal Paper Mill Mazdoor Union office. Again on November 4, Sukumar Bez and Lakshminarayan Mukherjee were arrested from the union office, and four more workers were re-arrested on November 18 after being released on bail, two of them under MISA. On November 26, 1973 the goondas attacked the CITU workers inside the Bengal Paper Mill factory. Rabin Sen, Mansur Ali, Nikhil Bose, Rabaneswar Garai, Kalipada Gope, Biswanath Dutta and many other CITU workers were stabbed and seriously injured. Of them Rabin Sen, Masnur Ali and Nikhil Bose succumbed to their injuries in the hospital. The attack continued for the next two days. The house of Narayan Garai was completely burnt and 15 workers of the CITU union were arrested. In March, 1974, Milan Mukherjee, another employee of the Bengal Paper Mill and an active worker of CITU union was stabbed to death and seven other workers were seriously injured when they were attacked on their way to the factory.

The gangsters employed by the managements and Congress have also been on the rampage in the coal mine area in West Bengal. In December 1973, police arrested 70 wagon leaders of Lower Kendua Colliery in Ranigunge, when the workers were on continuous strike for their demands. In February, 1974,

when 4000 workeres of the Sripur Colliery were demonstrating before the office of the Coal Mines Authority under the leadership of the CITU union, the hirelings of the management launched an armed attack on the workers under the protection of the police. 150 workers were injured and the thugs also attacked the workers' quarters. Due to such attacks, thousands or workers of many other mines are being evicted from their work and homes.

During this period, the Tea garden workers of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal faced similar types of attack and repression. On April 2, 1973, a leader of CITU union in the Lingia Tea Estate in Darjeeling was attacked on his way home and severely assaulted. When the garden workers came out in protest, police arrested 70 of them including 5 women. Again, in 1973, two CITU activists of Chengmari Tea estate, Presing Tamong and Manuel Horo, were murdered in broad day light. Kharga Bahadur, a CITU leader, and Depak Rai, an activisit of Liza Hill Tea Estate were murdered by the Youth Congress elements in 1974.

The workers of Birla's Hind Motor factory at Uttarpara and Texmaco factory at Belghoria had to face repeated attacks. On June 17, 1973 the office of the Hind Motor Workers' Union (CITU) was ransackèd and the house of the Working President of the Union attacked by INTUC goondas. Earlier, in February of 1973, a brutal attack was launched on the workers with bombs etc. Far from protecting the workers, the Police resorted to firing on them and arrested 55 workers. In January 1973, Nemaï Chatterjee CITU worker of Texmaco was kidnaped on the Republic Day and hacked to death. In December of 1973, another worker was stabbed. Three more workers of Texmaco were knifed on December 16 and 17 of the same year. After the successful General Strike of November 17, 1973, Texmaco workers were brutally attacked for participating in the strike, and also for refusing to contribute to the Congress union fund. Again in December, 1974, the workers of

Texmaco were attacked and one of them stabbed, when they refused to pay forcible collections. On the day of the State-wide General Strike of July 27, 1973, armed goondas supported by the Police attacked many CITU union offices, including the offices of Dock Shramik Association and Port and Shore Mazdoor Union in Kidderpore. The next day, Rajen Kundu, a worker of Remington Rand factory at Howrah was murdered.

Since 1972, repeated attacks were also launched on the workers of Jay Engineering Works in Calcutta. In December, 1973, Trinath Lanka, a CITU worker of the factory was kidnapped and stabbed by the Congress anti-socials. On December 12, 1974 another CITU activist of the Jay Engineering Workers' Union was stabbed. In January, 1975 two more workers were mercilessly beaten up.

In January, 1973 Rickshaw workers of Calcutta, demonstrating under the leadership of CITU, were attacked by the police with tear gas and lathis. 20 workers were seriously injured. In June, 1973, workers of Kalyani Spinning Mills were assaulted by armed goondas on their way to the Mill. On December 12, 1973, when the workers of J. K. Steel Works, Rishra were demonstrating before the factory gate, police resorted to a brutal lathi charge and injured several workers. The attack on the workers of Lipton Mazdoor Union (CITU), by the armed goondas of NLCC, led by a Congress faction, is still continuing. The police have issued warrants against many union activists and the management have also suspended workers of the CITU union. On October 15, 1973, CITU leaders of Braithwaite & Co. in Kidderpore were attacked by goondas.

The attacks still continue. On November 2, 1974, Com. Shanti Ghatak, Member Working Committee of CITU was attacked by the goondas when he was going to attend a meeting. In January, 1975 CITU workers of Haldia Port were attacked when they were clearing cargo from a ship. During the Jute strike of January-February, 1975 the police disallowed a meeting of workers to be addressed by Com. Jyoti Basu and others, by

imposing Sec. 144 Cr. P. C., and welcoming arches erected by the CITU workers were destroyed by Congress goondas.

Kerala

After West Bengal, the ruling classes in Kerala have adopted the same semi-fascist methods to curb Trade Union movement in the State, particularly by the CITU.

On January 31, 1974, Com. M. N. Bhaskaran, a leading CITU worker of Mangalam Rubber Estate and President of the Workers' Union, was stabbed to death by the goondas. On March 18, 1974, two CITU activists—Com. Bashis and Chekappan—were brutally beaten up by the police. They were kicked and dragged along the road to the police van where the beating continued. The management of Gwalior Rayons suspended six workers, when the workers of the factory went on a day's strike on July 16, 1974. They called in the Police which resulted in repression on workers and finally declared a lock-out.

Com. C. Kannan, President of the State CITU, was dragged out and beaten up by the police in Cannanore in August, 1974. Com. O. V. Bharathan, Joint Secretary of the State CITU, was also assaulted by the Police on September 23, 1974. The same month, a member of Cannanore Dist. Committee of CITU was mercilessly beaten up by the Police.

Maharashtra

Attacks on trade union and democratic rights of workers in the State continue unabated. In January, 1974, workers of Blow Plast Ltd. in Bombay, who were on stay-in strike since November 1973, were brutally lathi-charged by the police. Even women workers were not spared. In January, 1974, workers of J. K. Chemicals at Thana had to face semi-fascist attack of Congress and INTUC goondas for nearly a month. Led by the CITU union, they were fighting for the

reinstatement of three retrenched workers. When these three workers were taken back, the minority INTUC union went on strike demanding their dismissal. Taking advantage of this, the management declared a lock-out. On March 10, 1974, gangsters in J. K. Chemicals raided the house of CITU leader, Brijnath Singh, and not finding him there they attacked another CITU activist, Tilakdhari, and brutally murdered him. His brother was also seriously injured. In April, 1975, Com. S. F. X. Pereira, one of the Secretaries of the State CITU and Com. Uasheer were arrested by the Police in connection with the strike by Calico Chemical workers. They were not even granted bail. During the railway strike several workers sympathetic to CITU were arrested and detained in jail. Police resorted to terror tactics to brow-beat the workers but failed miserably.

Rajasthan

Since the CITU is the most organised and militant T. U. centre in the State, it has attracted massive and brutal repression of the ruling classes. In June, 1974, Durgadas Shirali, General Secretary and P. Dhanda, Joint Secretary of the State CITU were arrested in connection with the State-wide strike of Engineering workers. In July, 1974, when the Textile workers of Beawar were on strike under the leadership of the CITU union, anti-socials set fire to the hunger-strikers' camp and attacked the union office at the behest of the Mill management and the police. Over 30 union leaders, including the union President and most of the members of the Executive Committee were brutally assaulted and the police arrested 25 workers and registered false cases against them. The management of Edward and Bakshir Mills also dismissed several workers.

During the successful State-wide General Strike of July 24, 1973 against the brutal repression launched by the State

Government, Com. Mohan Punamia, President of the State CITU was arrested while addressing a workers' rally at Jaipur. Several other trade union leaders were also arrested.

On August 11, 1974, three workers of Birla's SIMCO factory at Bharatpur—Ganpat Singh, Vijaya Singh and Kishanlal Verma, were killed in the Police firing when they were protesting against cut in wages according to the Government's wage freeze measures.

On March 2, 1974, when the workers of J. K. Synthetics in Kota were holding a meeting outside the factory, in connection with a one-day strike observed by them at the call of left parties, they were attacked by armed goondas. The workers resisted valiantly and the goondas fled, but the leader of the goondas who was injured during the scuffle later died. Instead of taking action against the goondas the management and the Government started a murder case against the workers. In January 1975, seven leading workers and important functionaries of the CITU union, including the General Secretary and several Working Committee members, were sentenced to life imprisonment by the Sessions Court. This is a planned onslaught designed to curb the growing influence of CITU in Rajasthan.

Orissa

In the face of growing isolation from the masses and the rising wave of working class struggles, the ruling classes in Orissa are increasingly relying on semi-facist methods on the West Bengal model. On September 11, 1973, a meeting of workers in support of the struggle of the Ferrochrome Project employees, was attacked by armed Congress goondas aided by the plant security force. They forcibly prevented the willing workers from joining the meeting, assaulted workers belonging to CITU union and forced them to resign from the CITU. They evicted many others from their quarters and

ransacked the office of the CITU union. Over 100 workers were seriously injured.

In December, 1974, the office of the Orissa State Committee of CITU at Cuttack was set on fire by anti-social elements with political motive. Some CITU workers who were sleeping inside, somehow escaped certain death. The furniture and records in the office were burnt to ashes causing considerable difficulty in carrying on trade union work.

Bihar

In April, 1973, Com. Surajnarayan Singh, M.L.A., well-known trade union leader and an active supporter of CITU was shot dead by the police near Ranchi, when he was on a hunger strike in support of the workers' struggle. In June 1973, when colliery workers led by Colliery Mazdoor Sabha (CITU) were demonstrating before the Custodians' office at Barora in protest against the murder of Surajanaryan Singh, police made a wild lathi charge and injured many of them. On October 3, 1974, Com. Chandi Prasad, Secretary, Bihar State CITU was arrested under MISA.

In April 1973, three workers of another Colliery were shot dead by armed goondas in broad day light. They came in jeeps and cars, tore down the CITU flag and started firing at the workers's quarters. Three workers died on the spot and 14 others were seriously injured.

Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union had to face several gangster attacks by the hirelings of the managements and the INTUC unions. Even after nationalisation the employment of anti-social elements continued and mass terrorism, eviction of workers from their localities and replacing them by armed goondas went on as usual. Com. A. K. Roy, Member General Council CITU was arrested along with other activists on several occasions and implicated in criminal cases.

Uttar Pradesh

As a part of the planned repression launched by the management of the Indian Explosives Ltd., Kanpur to cow down the workers led by I. E. L. Employees' Union (CITU), the CRP raided the factory on June 7, 1973 and arrested 70 workers including Arvind Kumar, General Secretary of the Union. The management also launched a large-scale attack on the workers in the form of suspensions, charge sheets etc. in connection with the historic 125-day old strike by the employees. In February, 1974 S. B. Bharadwaj, a CITU leader, was arrested.

Following the successful 85-day strike by the workers of J. K. Mills, Kanpur the management summarily dismissed all members of the Executive Committee of the Panchayat Union on April 13, 1974. Dismissal orders were also issued on 2500 other workers of the mill. The Police mounted a brutal repression on the workers and arrested two CITU leaders, Com. Bhardwaj and Balbir Singh, under DIR when 500 workers of 12 Engineering concerns of Ghaziabad observed a successful one-day strike on November 12, 1974 at the call of the CITU.

Madhya Pradesh

In April 1973, a number of CITU activists of Banki and Surakachar collieries were arrested. The police imposed Sec. 144 Cr. P. C. and arrested 16 leading workers of the CITU unions and beat them up. Again on April 25, a number of CITU activists were arrested when they were holding a demonstration. The police arrested several workers in Nagda during their agitation against the Grasim management.

Haryana

1600 workers of Usha Spinning Mills, Faridabad, who were earlier with the AITUC and had recently joined the Suti Mill Mazdoor Union (CITU), went on strike on November 12, 1974 on their demands for D. A. Bonus etc. The police mounted a brutal repression on them and arrested 16 workers along with Com. Baldev Singh, CITU leader, who went there for conciliation talks. The workers were also attacked by hired goondas of the management and some AITUC men.

On July 6, 1974, when the workers of Gedore factory at Faridabad were holding a demonstration, under the leadership of the Workers' Union (CITU), in support of the striking workers of Good Year factory, Police made a lathi charge followed by tear-gassing and firing which led to the death of one Gedore worker, Tilak Raj, and injury to many others. The police also ransacked the Union office.

Himachal Pradesh

Com. S. K. Tewari, President of the Patel Engineering Workers' Union (CITU) was kidnapped by the police on August 25, 1973, when he was on his way to the Court. Later, on November 13 of the same year, he was severely beaten up by the police. Again on November 25, 1973, one worker of the Patel Engineering Workers' Union was killed and several others were seriously injured when the police made a brutal lathi charge on a demonstration of workers. Sucha Singh, General Secretary of the union was stabbed and many other CITU workers, including Shiv Raj, Vice-President of the union and Om Prakash, were beaten up.

Delhi

The management in different industries in Delhi, backed by the police and the administration, have launched a concerted

attack to curb the growing influence of CITU. Repeated attacks on trade unions and workers, particularly on CITU leaders and activists in the Hotels, Engineering factories, Coca Cola etc. are being perpetrated by hired goondas and the police. On September 21, 1974 hired goondas of the management launched a brutal attack on the leaders and members of the Statesman Employees Union after they failed to prevent the union from holding a meeting.

Tamil Nadu

In July, 1973, Com. V. P. Chintan, State CITU leader and Vice-president of Simpson workers' Union, was stabbed by DMK goondas while he was on his way to attend a meeting of workers. During the Railway strike of May, 1974, Com. Ramaswamy, a CITU worker of Madurai, was deliberately run over by a pilot engine when he was squatting on the tracks to protest against running of trains with the help of black-legs. During the Handloom workers' strike in Madurai in July, 1974, Com. A. Balakrishnan and Krishnamurty, CITU leaders, were severely beaten up by the police and later arrested. They had to be sent to hospital in precarious condition.

Assam

Though the T. U. movement is strong in Assam, repression and attack on T. U. workers, particularly those belonging to CITU, is increasing. On May 22, 1974 Com. Amal Ghosh Dastidar, Secretary of the State CITU, was arrested under MISA when he was returning to the office after addressing a workers' rally. Attacks by hired gangsters of the ruling Party and the managements on CITU unions and workers are also on the rise.

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