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PRESS HAND-OUT

19th Oct. 1970.

The Working Committee of Centre of Indian Trade Unions, had its session at Jaipur from 2nd to 4th October, 1970. This was the first meeting of the Working Committee since formation of C.I.T.U. The meeting was attended by all except six members. Two could not attend due to illness while one was in jail. Three members were unable to attend due to local struggles.

The most important task before the Working Committee was to finalise the Draft Constitution of CITU. The changes taken place in the trade union movement and rise in the consciousness of the workers during the last 25 years were taken into consideration in the Draft which ensured democratic functioning in the entire structure of the organisation and development of CITU as an organ of class struggle with living link with the workers and the unions. The State Committees and Councils were given important functional responsibilities in developing and guiding day to day struggles. The Draft prepared by a sub-committee constituted by the General Council introduced important changes in complete departure from loose and non-functioning character of A.I.T.U.C. Constitution.

The Working Committee discussed problems faced by the workers in different industries like sugar, engineering, jute, port and dock, textile, railways and transport, plantation, etc. The problems of workers in coal mines were also discussed in greater detail. The Working Committee decided to co-ordinate industry-wise activities of CITU to give more effective guidance in struggles in each industry.

The meeting noted the rising struggles in W.Bengal and the leading role played by CITU in these struggles.

Reports from different States revealed that CITU with its appeal for bigger and wider unity came out in the forefront of struggles in almost all the States. 120 days strike of CEAT workers in Maharashtra, 40,000 hiri workers' strike in Tamilnadu, successful strike of Teletypewriters of Madras raising the minimum wage to Rs.215/-, struggle of Tamilnadu textile workers restoring wage cut in the mills taken over by Textile Corporation, 15,000 coir workers' strike in Alleppey, Kerala, engineering workers' struggle in U.P., Bihar and Rajasthan are some of the notable developments.

It was noticed from the reports that the AITUC leadership was playing more and more disruptive role in all the States. They continue to sign anti-working class agreements with employers. Most remarkable feature is that the AITUC leadership is being directly helped by the Congress Government in carrying on their disruptive role.

The Working Committee reviewed the developments relating to massive strike struggles of the State Government employees in Maharashtra, W.Bengal, Rajasthan and various other States; the struggle of the teachers in W.Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra; the struggle of the railway workers in S.E. Railway, N.F. Railway, Southern Railway, Eastern Railway and Northern Railway and decided to keep closer link with these employees to help their struggles in future.

The Working Committee condemned the repression perpetrated in W.Bengal and Kerala. During the reporting it came

out that repression was being extended to other States also not only to suppress trade union movement but also the democratic movements of the people as a whole. Unprecedented repression was perpetrated on the workers of Rajasthan. Frequent use of Essential Services Maintenance Act, to ban the strike have become a matter of routine. In Tamilnadu, convicted prisoners were employed to disrupt the struggle of Dairy Farm workers, something unheard of in the Indian Trade Union movement.

The heroic strike struggle led by Durgapur workers despite unprecedented police repression and strike-breaking activities of the AITUC leadership and others was one of the major items for discussion before the Working Committee. The members immediately took up the challenge and decided to observe 1st November as 'Durgapur Day' as a mark of solidarity, and raise funds on an all-India basis to support Durgapur workers. The meeting further decided to bring out pamphlets in different regional languages giving details of the repression and treachery of Dangeites, for distribution among the workers all over India.

Attack on the trade union workers by Naxalites, Siva Sena and anti-social elements with avowed intention to disrupt trade union struggles was taken serious note of by the Working Committee which decided to fight out this menace through greater unity and consolidation of the working class.

The Working Committee denounced the attempt by the Government to curtail trade union right and to contain trade union movement through formation of Industrial Relations Commission, a move already initiated through a Bill in Andhra Pradesh and a decision of the Tripartite Standing Labour Committee. The Working Committee resolved to continue relentless struggle against this attack and to build up a broad-based united struggle to forestall this offensive.

The Working Committee authorised the General Secretary to get in touch with other Central trade unions and members of Parliament of various parties to build a common front against the reactionary move of the Government.

The Working Committee condemned the Government for granting a paltry interim relief following the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission and supported the struggle of the Central Government employees for higher interim relief.

The Working Committee adopted resolution condoling the death of President Nasser, conveying warm greetings to the people of the People's Republic of China on the 21st anniversary of their revolution, on W. Bengal, on Kerala and on various other issues.

The Working Committee took note of the developments in U.P. and condemned the Congress Government for its undemocratic steps to use the Governor for advancing party interests.

The meeting revealed that in a short period of four months of its existence the CITU has emerged as a champion of working class rights and builder of unity and united struggles. The experience of several struggles during this period has convincingly proved that only through a policy of united resistance of the working class the T.U. movement can safeguard the interests of the workers and defeat the capitalist offensive to impose closures, retrenchment, lay-off and wage cuts and curtail T.U. and democratic rights. With confidence gained in united struggles the CITU will continue to fight in co-operation with other sections of the T.U. movement despite repressive measures of the Govt.

The Working Committee decided to hold the meeting of the General Council of CITU in Feb. 1971 at Kanpur.