

FOR UNITED ACTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS

Documents of the
Conference of Represen-
tatives of Central Trade
Unions and National
Federations—New Delhi,
October 1-2, 1972



**UNITED
COUNCIL OF
TRADE UNIONS**

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Review of the Conference	1
2. Statement Adopted At The Conference	9
3. Resolutions	17
4. Correspondence	20

Photos Front Cover—Presidium
Back Inside Cover—Views of the Conference

**Conference of Representatives of Central Trade Union
Organisations and National Federations, New Delhi,
October 1-2, 1972**

—A, REVIEW

A meeting of the Central Trade Union Organisations and National Federations was held in New Delhi in the Constitution Club on 1st October 1972 at 10 A.M. The following organisations participated in the meeting.

1. Hind Mazdur Panchayat.
 - (i) George Fernandes
 - (ii) P. Chadambaram
2. Centre of Indian Trade Unions.
 - (i) B. T. Ranadive
 - (ii) P. Ramamurti
 - (iii) Suhrid Mullick Choudhury M. P.
 - (iv) Md. Ismail M. P.
 - (v) Monoranjan Roy M. P.
 - (vi) M. K. Pandhe
3. United Trade Union Congress.
 - (i) N. Srikantan Nair M. P.
 - (ii) Tridib Choudhury M. P.
 - (iii) Jatin Chakravarty
4. United Trade Union Congress (Lenin Sarani)
 - (i) Pritish Chanda
 - (ii) Fatick Ghosh
5. All India Insurance Employees' Association
 - (i) R. P. Manchanda
 - (ii) Bimal Roy
6. All India Newspaper Employees' Federation
 - (i) S. Y. Kolhatkar
7. Trade Union Cordination Centre.
 - (i) Prasanta Das Gupta

8. All India Modern Bakeries Workers' Federation.
 - (i) T. I. Madhavan
9. Confederation of Central Government Employees and Associations
 - (i) S. Y. Vyas (observer)
10. National Federation of P and T. Employees
 - A. S. Rajan (Observer)
 - Nani Banerjee („)
 - K. Adinarayan („)
 - T.V.V.S. Murty („)

To conduct the deliberations of the meeting Com. P. Ramamurti Convenor, proposed a Presidium of the following persons which was accepted unanimously.

1. Com. Srikantan Nair
2. Com. P. Chanda
3. George Fernandes
4. Com. Md. Ismal

Com. P. Ramamurti in his opening remarks clarified that there is no formal agenda before the meeting. He gave a brief review of the developments after the May 1971 Conference and pointed out that the Convenors' Group could not function due to the attitude of AITUC and HMS leaders. Though it was decided that a wider conference should be convened it was not possible to convene such a conference. Even the All India Textile Workers' Conference planned in Bombay in August 1971 was unilaterally cancelled by the AITUC leaders. UTUC (Lenin Sarani) in this period criticised that the Conveners' Group was not taking into confidence other organisations. However the refusal of the other two Convenors made any functioning impossible. Meanwhile AITUC and HMS were negotiating with INTUC for common understanding.

He described how during this period the Government and the employers intensified their attacks against the workers. He referred to the spiralling prices, growing unemployment, closures, retrenchment, Proposed Industrial Relations Bill etc. Yet no co-ordinated struggles could develop due to disruption in the T. U. movement. The Constitution of

Notional Council of Trade Unions was an attempt to give up the path of united struggle.

He referred to the growing unity at local levels by all the central T.U. organisations including the INTUC. This was a silver lining in the situation.

He suggested that methods be evolved to give effective leadership during the workers' struggles.

Com. Prithvi Chanda criticised the non-functioning of the Convenors' Group and observed that the AITUC and HMS had left us but we had not left them. He suggested that we should treat the chapter regarding the developments following the May 1971 Conference as closed and take this meeting as a fresh beginning in the drive towards T.U. unity. The working class unity and joint working class struggles are crucial issues facing the movement. Some organisations are trying to carry forward the Government policy but there may be a split in their combination. We should try to avoid any criticism of others and keep the door open for others.

Com. Jatin Chakravarty noted that the May 1971 Declaration is still of significance and we should not treat it as closed. Many important developments have taken place since then and after the General elections the situation has worsened considerably. Yet the slogans of the May 1971 Declaration are still valid. We should at least expect the HMS, the prodigal son, to come back. He suggested that this meeting should be treated as a continuation of the last Conference and some sort of a Committee should be formed to co-ordinate the activities in future.

Com. George Fernandes observed that after the last Conference in May 1971 a bigger Conference was expected to be convened. Seeing the failure to hold such a Conference he wrote to the three Convenors, however, except Com. Ramamurti nobody responded.

The 1971 meeting had some achievements. The unity achieved was wider than under the Rashtriya Sangram Samiti earlier. Therefore the idea of a clear break from the 1971 Conference was not correct, he said.

During the last 12 months there had been concerted efforts to hand over the working class movement to the Government. He characterised the National Council of Central Trade Unions as a Trojan Horse. The AICC Labour Cell decided to form such a Council. LINK reported that Labour Minister took initiative in constituting it to create a labour support to Government's policy. The objective of it was mentioned as weeding out extreme right and extreme left from T.U. movements. The Economic and Political weekly characterised the formation of the Council as a signal victory for Khadilkar.

Referring to the metamorphosis taking place in HMS, Com. Fernandes said that majority of the office-bearers and members of the Working Committee of HMS are Congressmen. Some of its leaders though call themselves independent are in reality Super-Congressmen. He criticised the AITUC leadership which only talked of struggle but actually was doing shadow boxing. Though the INTUC ranks had joined struggles on several occasions the leadership betrayed the struggles as in the case of All India strike of Cement workers.

He emphasised the struggle on the question of Bonus and suggested that an All India Conference on Bonus should be convened demanding Bonus to all employees not covered by the Bonus Act. A big movement of ten million Central Government, State Government and local-self Government employees can be launched in the country. He suggested that another Conference on prices, unemployment, T.U. Rights etc. can also be convened.

He suggested that an all-India body should be formed to give guidance to struggles and co-ordinate the activity.

Com. Prasanta Das Gupta (TUCC) referred to the suppression of T.U. movement in West Bengal and suggested that only by uniting our ranks we could fight the menace. He expressed his confidence that if we launched all-India struggle in a determined manner we can fight the attacks of the Government and the employers effectively.

Com. Tridib Choudhury (UTUC) observed that already a

consensus had been developed in the meeting. The participants were only carrying out the tasks formulated in the May 1971 Conference. A small drafting Committee should be formed to prepare the resolutions. A Committee can also be constituted for further guidance and co-ordination.

Com. S. Y Kolhatkar (AINEF) stressed the need for special efforts to build united action after the formation of National Council of Central Trade Unions. He agreed with Com. Fernandes that the question of Bonus would immediately agitate the minds of workers. He mentioned some prolonged strikes in Bombay during which workers felt that they were fighting a lonely battle. There should be a guiding centre to express solidarity for such struggles.

Com. S. K. Vyas (CCGEA) explained why the Confederation decided to attend the Conference as observer. He then explained how the Central Government employees are deprived of all T. U and democratic rights and emphasised the need to democratise the civil Service Rules. He mentioned the case of Chittaranjan Locomotives where the entire Executive Committee of the union was transferred to far away places. Even the struggles for economic demands of the Government employees are ruthlessly suppressed.

Com. Vyas suggested that on the question of Bonus it would be better if the Regional Conferences were organised first wherein wider participation could be ensured. Then an all India Conference would be successful. He gave his experience that on the question of victimisation successful conventions were organised at regional levels.

He criticised the tendency to divide the Central and State Government employees and emphasised that both of them along with the local self-Government employees should come together on common issues. The struggles for need-based minimum wages, 100 per cent neutralisation was still on and Government employees had been fighting only to prevent further reduction in the purchasing power of their wages. The Third Pay Commission had yet to submit the

report but struggles may break out if the recommendations are not satisfactory.

He appealed to all the trade union movement to support the struggle of the Central Govt. employees.

Com. R. P. Manchanda (AIIEA) said that the National Council of Central Trade Unions had been formed when the attacks on the workers were increasing. He expressed his hope that time was not far off when the leadership of the HMS and AITUC would either have to join the united struggle or isolate themselves from the mass of workers. He agreed with the idea of regional as well as national Conferences.

Com. Manchanda suggested that the question of automation should also be taken up seriously in view of the publication of the Dandekar Committee's Report. Steps should also be taken so that the decisions do not remain on paper but implemented fully.

Com. T.I. Madhavan (AIMBWF) criticised the AITUC and HMS leaders who did not remain true to the declaration. The issues like bonus, price rise, Section 311 (2) (C) of the Constitution could be used to rally the workers. Com. Madhavan who is also an Organising Secretary of the All India Defence Employees' Federation, gave a brief report of the decisions of the recent meeting of the Federation and expressed his hope that a common movement of all employees and workers could be organised in the country.

Com. A. S. Rajan (NFPTE) who attended the meeting as an observer noted that the NFPTE in its own way made a contribution in the movement of Central Government employees. He expressed his opinion that Central Government employees should be given more support by the national T.U. Centres which would enthuse them in carrying out their struggle further.

Com. Rajan gave a brief review of the struggle of P & T employees to protect their living standards despite differences within the organisation. He criticised the policy of the Government of refusing to pay bonus to the Government employees.

The victimisation measures taken against the Central Government employees for participation in strikes of 1960 and 1968 still continued and further attacks were in the offing.

He criticised the extra departmental system which deprives large number of employees from the wages and service conditions available to other Government employees and demanded that all these employees should be brought into the regular system.

Com. Rajan supported the proposal of Com. Vyas to organise regional Conferences prior to an All India Conference on Bonus and other issues facing the working class.

While referring to the NFPE Com. Rajan criticised the interference of the Government in internal affairs of the organisations of the Central Government employees. The Government while refusing to recognise the democratically elected leadership accorded recognition to a fictitious list by a disgruntled minority. The P & T employees are fighting against this policy unitedly. He expressed the hope that the T.U. movement will also raise its voice against the attack on the T.U right.

The meeting then discussed the question of drafting a statement of the Conference. A Committee consisting of Comrades P. Ramamurti, George Fernandes, Jatin Chakravarty and Prithish Chanda was appointed to prepare a draft for submission in the next day's morning session.

Regarding the formation of a Committee Com. Prithish Chanda suggested that instead of giving name of any organisation appeal should be made in the name of all participants. It was decided after discussion that a Council should be formed which should have 5 representatives from each participating organisation. It should also have a Secretariat of one representative from each organisation.

Com. Ramamurti read out his reply to the letter of the AITUC.

The representatives again met at 10.30 A.m. on 2nd October.

Com. George Fernandes moved the draft of the Statement for adoption. Comrades Monoranjan Roy, M.K. Pandhe and

R.R. Manchanda moved some amendments. It was decided to amend the draft in the light of the suggestions and the draft as amended was unanimously accepted.

Com. P. Ramamurti moved a resolution on the demands of the Government employees. It was accepted unanimously.

On behalf of the Presidium, Com. George Fernandes moved resolutions demanding withdrawal of emergency and refugee tax, stamps etc and pledging support to the fighting workers. The resolutions were accepted unanimously.

Com. P. Ramamurti then moved a resolution on the formation of United Council of Trade Unions. There was some discussion on the character of representation on the Council and the Secretariat. The issue whether there should be one or two Convenors was also debated at length. Ultimately it was decided that each participating organisation should have five representatives on the Council and one on the Secretariat. It was also agreed that there should be only one Convenor and Com. George Fernandes was unanimously elected as the Convenor.

The meeting also decided that the Central Office should function from Calcutta and Com. M. K. Pandhe should function as the Office-Secretary.

Com. P. Ramamurti while summing up the deliberations of the Conference thanked all the participants for responding to his invitation. He hoped that the spirit of understanding shown by the participants in the meeting would enable the CITU to fight for unity of the entire Indian working class. He said that the outcome of the Conference was a warning to disruptors, and concluded by appealing to all the organisations to popularise the decisions among the mass of workers by every possible means.

The Presidium then announced that the Conference was over.

At 4 P.M. there was a well attended Press Conference to explain the decisions of the Conference. It was addressed by Comrades P. Ramamurti, George Fernandes, Jatin Chakravarty, Prithvi Chanda and Prasanta Das Gupta.

Statement Adopted at a Conference of Central Trade Union Organisations and National Federations held in New Delhi on 1st and 2nd October, 1972.

The Conference of Central Trade Union Organisations and National Federations held in Delhi on 18th and 19th May, 1971 was an important step forward in the struggle for unity of the working class and Trade union movement in the country. It unanimously adopted a platform of demands and pledged to work for the realisation of the demands by promoting united trade union actions. It also set up a convening committee, with powers to co-opt, consisting of Comrades P. Ramamurti of the CITU, Satish Loomba of the AITUC and Mahesh Desai of the HMS to convene wider conferences for realisation of the objectives of the conference.

On May 21, 1971, after the conclusion of the conference of trade union representatives called by the Government of India, the representatives of the organisations that participated in the conference of May 18th and 19th, met and reiterated their resolve to carry forward the tasks laid down in the declaration. It was also decided to call a meeting of all participants in June or July 1971 for this purpose.

The decisions of the conference created tremendous hope and expectations among the working class throughout the country, since then there is a tremendous urge for united actions of the working class, over-riding the objections and vacillations of leaders of many organisations, a growing determination on the part of the working masses to combat the rapid deterioration in their living conditions. The united struggles and actions of the engineering and jute workers of West Bengal, the All-India strike of cement workers, the prolonged and united strike of Simpson workers in Madras, the united rally of all sections of workers behind the BEST and

and Corporation workers of Bombay and the innumerable united strike struggles in Kerala—all are witness to the awakening of the workers and their ardent desire for unity.

However, despite efforts made by Com. P. Ramamurti, to persuade the other two convenors to carry out the decisions of the conference, and the meeting, they deliberately and wilfully refused to fulfil their obligations. In the meanwhile, the AITUC and HMS joined hands with the INTUC and on the initiative of the Government went ahead with the formation of a so-called National Council of Central Trade Unions, consisting of their three organisations. In the process, they gave a complete go by to the tasks solemnly undertaken by them at the conference. They also gave up, at Government's instance, their accepted position in the conference, of the democratic principle of ascertaining the representative character of a union by secret ballot of the workers and accepted the Government's position of verification of membership by official machinery.

It is indeed a pity that the AITUC and HMS should have been parties to the Government's deliberate attempt at disrupting the growing unity of the Trade union movement which was exhibited at the May, 1971 conference. It need not be gainsaid that the attempt of the Government was designed to push forward their anti-working class and pro-monopoly policies and measures with a show of approval and support of the Trade union movement.

Despite these developments, Com. P. Ramamurti made serious efforts to get the other convenors to fulfil their tasks.

Having failed in these attempts, it became necessary to convene a conference of the participants of the May, 1971 conference to take stock of the developments and decide measures to carry out the tasks of the conference.

Accordingly the Conference met in New Delhi on October 1 and 2 with the participation of the following organisations :

1. Hind Mazdoor Panchayat
2. Centre of Indian Trade Unions
3. United Trade Union Congress
4. United Trade Union Congress (Lenin Sarani)

5. Trade Union Co-ordination Centre
6. All India Newspaper Employees' Federation
7. All India Insurance Employees' Association
8. All India Modern Bakeries' workers' Federation
9. Confederation of Central Government Employees and Associations (observer)
10. National Federation of P & T Employees (Observer)

The Conference reiterated the platform of demands of May, 1971 Conference and reaffirmed the pledge to work for the unity of the trade union movement and united trade union actions.

Since the adoption of the May, 1971 declaration, the situation on the Trade Union Front and the conditions of the working class and common people have tremendously worsened.

Last fifteen months have seen an unprecedented rise in prices and people are groaning under their burden. Already people and workers' organisations have started uniting to resist this unbearable burden. Every section of our people, the working class, the agricultural workers, the employees, teachers—all are penalised by the rising prices, their living becoming a continuous hell under their impact.

The problem of unemployment has greatly aggravated among all sections of the working people. Many factories and mills have been closed down and lay offs have become common. In spite of tall talk about resumption of industrial advance and advertised take-over of closed factories by the Government thousands of those who were formerly employed, are still without jobs. In the last year alone, unemployment in the cities has increased by more than 25 percent.

The Government and its apologists direct the attention to hoarders and blackmarketeers and attempt to establish an alibi for themselves. But the Government is the main culprit and the hoarders and others intensify the evil created by the official policies.

These developments are the direct results of the policies of the government of increased taxation on the commodities needed by the common people and inflationary deficit financing—all designed to rob the common people of their earnings and

put them accumulated in the hands of the monopolists in pursuit of the capitalist path of development.

It is significant that in this very period the assets of big monopoly houses have increased tremendously even according to government figures.

By promoting automation, use of computers and financing "modernisation" the Government is directly aiding to the growth of unemployment.

Despite this disruption the working class has been waging dogged and united struggles all over the country in some of which even the AITUC—HMS—INTUC unions had to take part.

In order to meet this growing resistance of the working people the government has been resorting to repression unprecedented in the annals of our trade union movement. Mass arrests under the DIR MISA and Maintenance of Essential Services Act, banning of strikes, institution of false cases, brutal lathi charges and firings have become the order of the day whenever the workers fight.

In West Bengal before and after the elections, several T.U. cadres have been murdered in cold blood by the gangster hirelings with the connivance of the police. Hundreds have been arrested and detained, hundreds have been implicated in criminal cases and thousands have been uprooted from their localities to seek shelter elsewhere. Similarly a large number has been forced to leave their factories and jobs and are prevented from attending to their work. Many have been brutally assaulted because they asserted their right to resume their jobs. Along with this, more than 200 T. U. Offices belonging to the several organisations represented here have been occupied by the goondas and T. U. functioning has been made impossible under threats of murder and brutal assaults. This phenomenon is spreading, although slowly, to some other states also.

In so far as the public service employees are concerned—whether in public sector undertakings or in government service—the conditions are far worse. Even the existing trade union laws are not observed. Victimisation of trade union

cadres is rampant. The government even has resorted to termination of services under Art. 311 of the Constitution without assigning any reasons of activists of Central and State Government employees' unions. Thus their trade union right is reduced to a mockery. When the Coking Coal industry was nationalised recently, the Government disowned all responsibility towards the liabilities of the previous owners to the workers. This is the crassest example of the Government's callous attitude to the workers in the public sector.

The Conference congratulates the workers throughout the country who have braved all these attacks and in many cases fought them back and won significant concessions.

The achievements of a minimum bonus of 8.33 percent was due precisely to this heroic struggle of the workers.

However, although compelled to accept this demand, the government still continues to retain the escape clause by empowering the state government to give exemptions to factories on the alleged ground of difficulties.

Secondly, they have provided that any bonus in excess of 8.33% or what the workers actually got in 1970 should be deposited compulsorily in the Provident Fund.

Thirdly, large sections of workers and employees such as public and Municipal employees have been excluded from the benefit of bonus.

The Conference is firmly opposed to these proposals. With the Government of India taking no action against the employers who have misappropriated the P. F. contributions of the employees and with the growing depreciation of the rupee it is cruel to ask the employees to deposit any portion of their hard-earned wages in the Provident Fund.

With the acceptance of the principle that the bonus is a deferred wage to cover partly the gap between the existing wage and the need-based minimum wage, there can be no reason to deny the minimum bonus to any section of the workers and salaried employees.

Another great danger facing working class is the open or clandestine proposal by government to impose a moratorium

on wages and strikes. This is an attempt to make the wage the scapegoat of government's policy and to thrust wage cuts on them, under the spurious argument that workers' wages have been responsible for the rise in prices. The fallacy of this reasoning is seen from the fact that during the last 25 years, workers' real wages have fallen while their productivity has more than doubled, and the percentage of workers' wages in the total cost of production has been continuously going down.

In the name of improving industrial relations, the Government is contemplating a new Industrial Relations Bill, which is designed to impose stooge unions on the workers, and ban strikes by representative unions.

The Conference warns the Government against the anti-working class, anti-strike legislations it is hatching in secret. In spite of the gravest provocative economic situation, the feudal attitude of employers in the private and public sectors, the working class has used the weapon of strike sparingly. The conference repudiates the lying propaganda that the frequency of strikes is due to trade union rivalry. When the employers make agreements behind the back of the workers with stooge unions, the workers had totally repudiated them and this is falsely ascribed to trade union rivalry.

The Conference declares that guarantee of minimum economic conditions like need-based minimum wage, security of employment and freedom of trade union rights and an end to the arbitrary and semi-feudal attitude of the management both in the public and private sectors will go a long way in changing the climate regarding industrial relations. It will enable the workers to fulfil the agreed norms of production, enthuse them to overcome defects which hamper production and fight corruption. Similarly a correct and democratic attitude on the part of the Government and the employers on the question of trade union recognition is absolutely essential if industrial disputes are to be minimised. They should accept the democratic method of determining the question of recognition by secret ballot of the workers concerned.

Thus, during the last 18 months since the last conference, the dangers facing the working class have greatly increased. The grip of the monopolists over the economic life grows everyday working havoc with the living conditions of the people, with high prices, growing unemployment and increasing profits of the capitalists. The Government, despite all wordy declarations to the contrary is actually intent on making further concessions to them and opening new avenues of exploitation for them through such proposals as "Joint Sector."

The Ruling party, which won a massive victory at the polls by using such slogans as 'Garibi Hatao' and 'Bekari Hatao' is using that victory to force these anti-working class, anti-people and pro-monopoly policies. The trend towards one party dictatorship is getting stronger every day.

The conditions of the poor peasants and agricultural workers have become unbearable. Despite all tall talk of land reforms and ceiling legislation, what is actually happening in the countryside is ever increasing evictions of peasants. The army of agricultural labourers swells. Rural unemployment has assumed colossal proportions and those that get work get a pittance of a wage.

Faced with these grave dangers, the conference pledges that it will do everything in its power to further strengthen unity and intensify the growing united struggles against these policies of the Government and the attacks on the workers' living standards and trade union rights and civil liberties.

It warns the workers to beware of the attempts of the Ruling classes to raise chauvinistic slogans, in order to divert their united struggles, and pit worker against worker. These attempts must be completely frustrated by the unshakable unity of the working class.

It calls upon all workers and trade unions to realise the grave danger facing them and forge unity and fight unitedly.

The Conference expresses its solidarity with the peasants and agricultural workers who are fighting heroically throughout the country and calls upon all trade unions to help the peasants and agricultural workers in their struggles.

In order to mobilise the workers to successfully carry on the struggle, the conference calls upon all trade unions to hold conferences at local, state and regional levels to mobilise support for our demands on the question of high prices leading to erosion of real wages, bonus, unemployment, relief for the unemployed, against automation and labour saving devices, for the right to work being inscribed as a fundamental Right in the Constitution, for trade union and political rights and against repression and suppression of strikes, against the use of semi-fascist goonda attacks on Trade Unions and trade union activists, for ending the domination of the country's economy by monopolists and black money racketeers and dependence on foreign help, The conference decided to convene an All India conference of all trade unions to further mobilise support and to decide further course of action.

The Conference appeals to the AITUC and the HMS to realise that it is even now not too late for them to retrace their steps of straying away from the path of unity of the May, 1971 conference, dissociate from the Government sponsored National Council of Central Trade Unions and come back and join the struggle for Trade Union unity and united struggles to defend the vital interests of the working class.

The Conference is confident that the working class, which has in recent times succeeded in overcoming disruption and fought united struggles, will respond to the call of this conference to carry forward still more steadfastly their struggle for unity and united struggles and defeat all the diabolical attempts at disruption and defend effectively their vital interests, carry on the struggle effectively against the grip of the monopolists over the country's economy and the policies that help to strengthen this vicious grip, and thus help in building a prosperous and democratic life for our entire people.

Resolutions :

On formation of United Council of Trade Unions

The Conference decides, subject to ratification by the constituents, to constitute a United Council of Trade Unions for the purpose of implementing the tasks enunciated in the statements adopted by the Conference.

The Council shall consist of five representatives from each of the organisations joining the Council.

The Council will have a Secretariat consisting of one representative from each of the organisations joining the Council and an alternative member.

It shall have an office-secretary and Com. M.K. Pandhe will be the office-secretary.

Com. George Fernandes will be the Convenor.

On Withdrawal of National Emergency

The Conference of the representatives of Central organisations and National Federations is of the firm opinion that there is no need whatsoever to continue the state of emergency in the country that was declared in the wake of the hostilities between India and Pakistan and demands that it be terminated forthwith.

On Withdrawal of Refugee Relief Tax

The Conference demands the withdrawal of the Refugee Relief Tax that was imposed when refugees from Bangladesh were in India.

On Solidarity With Struggling Workers

The Conference extends its whole-hearted support to the struggles of the workers in the FCI Plant at Gorakhpur, the coal workers in Malhargarh, Madhya Pradesh, the postal employees in Ahmedabad and the Engineering workers of Orissa and calls upon the working class to rally behind these workers.

On Government employees

This Conference of Trade Union Representatives of Central Organisations and National Federations held in New Delhi on 1st and 2nd October, 1972 **NOTES :**

That the 10 million employees of Central, State and Local Governments and their organisations have conducted many valient struggles against very heavy odds and ruthless repression let loose by their employers i.e. Central and State Governments to achieve :—

- i) Protection of their wage level and its real money value.
- ii) Improvement in their wages on the basis of norms of need-based minimum laid down by the 15th I.L.C. and job evaluation with ratio between minimum and maximum being 1 : 10
- iii) Repeal of the old service rules and Democratisation of service Rules and entire structure ensuring full Trade Union and political rights and job security.

Inspite of many nation wide struggles, they continue to get the lowest wages suffering maximum extent of erosion on account of very anomolous, partial and unscientific formula for neutralisation of rise in cost of living. With each struggle they have also been deprived of their basic trade union rights and have to contend with heavy repression calculated to curb their legitimate T. U. activities. Of late and in context of impending revision of their wages, victimisation in various forms including summary dismissals of Trade Union functionaries under extraordinary powers of Art. 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution of India and indiscriminate and mass scale use of Rule 5 of Temporary Service Rules has been intensified by Governments. The Government has also commenced an open policy of disrupting organisations of Central, State and local

Government employees by encouraging few disgruntled elements to foist scab unions and patronising them.

And Observes :

That since bonus has now been unanimously accepted as deferred wage to bridge to an extent the gap between the existing wage and the living wage there is absolutely no justification for the Government to deny it to its own employees. Its refusal to accept the unanimous recommendation in this regard is reprehensible.

That the Executive have misutilised the Proviso to Art. 309 of the Constitution of India vesting transitional power with the President to frame service rules only to make them more and more stringent in character and undemocratic in content and that it is high time the Parliament by enactment and on priority basis democratises these outmoded rules and grant them full T. U. and Political rights. That wages of 10 million Central, State and Local self-Government's employees are determined on the healthy principles of "fair comparison with outside rates" and need-based minimum with automatic and full neutralisation of rise in cost of living.

Therefore Demands : That 10 million Central, State and Local self Governments' employees be granted :

- (1) Minimum bonus of 8.33%
- (2) Need-based minimum wage according to norms laid down by 15th I.L.C.
- (3) Full neutralisation of rise in cost of living and
- (4) Trade Union and democratic rights and job security by vacating all types of victimisations including summary dismissals under Art. 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution of India.

This Conference extends its complete solidarity with the struggle of million workers and employees in Central and State and Local Self Government organisations for achieving the just and legitimate demands.

Correspondence

Circular Letter to all the Participants of May, 1971 Conference.

6th August, 1972

Dear Comrade,

You are aware that the Conference of trade union representatives of Central Organisations and National Federations held in New Delhi on 16th and 19th May 1971 chalked out a programme of united action for the entire Indian working class. The unprecedented unity achieved in the Conference generated enthusiasm among workers of all sections and hopes were created in the minds of millions of workers that this magnificent unity would pave the way for further united struggles on pressing issues facing the working class.

The Conference elected a three member Convenors' Group consisting of Comrades Satish Loomba, Mahesh Desai and myself. It is however painful to note that when the working class of India was being attacked more ferociously by the capitalist class and the Government, the Convenors' Group was neither allowed to function nor another meeting of all the constituents concerned could be convened to consider implementation of the decisions of May 1971 Conference.

It is indeed unfortunate that unanimous decisions of the Conference by and large remained unimplemented. Yet, the leadership of AITUC and HMS unilaterally took steps to join hands with the INTUC, which was not a constituent of the Conference, and formed a National Council of Trade Unions with the blessings of the Union Labour Minister. The formation of this Council only created a labour support for the anti-worker policies and measures of Government of India and disrupted united movement of the Indian working class.

It is, therefore, necessary that Organisations which partici-

pated in the May 1971 Conference should once again come together and discuss ways and means of forging an all India united front of the trade union movement to defend the working class interests.

I, therefore, propose that a preliminary consultative meeting of the constituents of the Conference of Trade Union representatives of Central Organisations and National Federations should be held sometime between 6th to 10th of September either in Bombay or New Delhi to consider the situation arising out of these developments and decide suitable steps to implement the decisions of the May 1971 Conference.

You are requested to send immediate reply to this letter so that the exact date and venue of the consultative meeting can be fixed in consultation with all concerned.

With Greetings,

Yours fraternally,
Sd/—P. Ramamurti
General Secretary.

C. I. T. U.

Press Communiqué :

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU proposing to convene a meeting has written letters on 6th August, 1972 to all the following Constituents of the Conference of Central Trade Union Organisations and National Federations held in New Delhi on 18th and 19th May 1971.

Full text of the letter is released to the Press which please see on the reverse.

1. General Secretary, All India Trade Union Congress, 24, Canning Lane, New Delhi 1.
2. General Secretary, Hind Mazdoor Sabha, Nagindas Chambers, 167, P. D' Mello Road, Bombay-1, B. R.
3. General Secretary, Hind Mazdur Panchayat, 204, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Road, Bombay-4.
4. General Secretary, All India Insurance Employees' Association, 24, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta-12.

5. Secretary General, Confederation of Central Govt. Employees and Associations, Hqrs. B-6/4, Ganga Ram Hospital Marg, New Delhi-50.
6. Com. S. M. Banerjee, President, 'All India Defence Employees' Federation, 113, North Avenue, New Delhi.
7. President, All India Newspaper Employees' Federation, Janashakti, Globe Mill Passage. Bombay-13.
8. General Secretary, All India Bank Employees' Association, Ballimaran, Chandni Chowk, Delhi-6.
9. Secretary General, National Federation of P&T Employees 9, Pusa Road, New Delhi.
10. General Secretary. United Trade Union Congress 249, B.B. Ganguly Street, Calcutta-12.
11. General Secretary, United Trade Union Congress 48, Lenin Sarani, Calcutta-13.
12. Com. B. S. Kolpe, President, Indian Federation of Working Journalists, 316/20, Adarsh Nagar, Prabhadebi, Bombay-25.
13. Sree Ashok Bajpayee, General Secretary. National Federation of AIR Employees, 1876, Moti Bagh (South), New Delhi.

AITUC's reply to 6th August Circular

26th August, 1972

To,

The General Secretary,
Centre for Indian Trade Unions,
172, Lenin Sarani,
CALCUTTA-13.

Dear Comrade,

Please refer to your cyclostyled circular dated 6th Aug, 1972 suggesting that a joint meeting be held of various national Trade Union Centres.

In this circular, which has presumably been cyclostyled for

wide distribution, you have made unwarranted and uncalled for attacks on AITUC. The language used is not the language of unity but of disruption.

While the need for united action among various trade union organisations has been there and is indeed growing, the approach, the language and the contents of your letter are most objectionable and do not convey any sincere desire on your part to forge unity. Rather they betray your attitude and practice of abusing and slandering other TU Centres unless they fall in line with your political and organisational thinking.

Such an approach makes it impossible for any one, however, desirous of forging united action on the various problems before the working class, to accept any proposal for a common meeting with you.

If you really desire a common meeting and united action, we would advise you to put a stop to slanders and abuses. In the present circumstances, therefore, the AITUC has no option but to decline your proposals contained in your letter under reply.

With greetings,

Yours fraternally,
Sd/—Satish Loomba
Secretary

**Ramamurti's Reply to AITUC's Letter Dated 26th
August, 1972**

3rd September, 1972

Secretary,
All India Trade Union Congress,
24, Canning Lane,
New Delhi-1.
Dear Comrade,

I have received your letter dated 26th August 1972 in reply to my letter dated 6th August, 1972 proposing a preliminary consultative meeting of the constituents of the Conference of

Trade Union representatives of Central organisations and National Federations held in May 1971.

I am surprised to read the contents of your letter.

You say :

"You have made unwarranted and uncalled for attacks on AITUC. The language used is not the language of unity but of disruption."

I have not made any attack on the AITUC or any other organisation in my letter. I have only stated the barest facts.

In the first para I had recalled the fact that the Conference of trade union representatives of Central organisations held in New Delhi in May 1971 had chalked out a programme of united action by the entire Indian working class. I had further stated that this Conference and its decisions generated enthusiasm among the workers of all sections.

In the second para, I had stated that a three-member Convenors' group consisting of Comrades Satish Loomba, Mahesh Desai and myself was elected.

Are these not facts ?

Later in same para, I had stated that the Convenors' group was neither allowed to function nor another meeting of all the constituents concerned could be convened.

Is this a fact or not ?

You know very well that if the Convenor's group could not function nor a meeting of the constituents of the Conference which elected that group could meet even though more than a year and three months have elapsed since then, it was not due to lack of efforts on my part. And yet I had not blamed either you or Com. Mahesh Desai, representing the AITUC and HMS for this.

I am not happy over this state of affairs. I had written in letter that 'it is painful' to note this fate that has befallen the group of Convenors. What is objectionable in this language, I fail to see.

Is it not a fact that you formed the National Council of Trade Unions with the INTUC, which was not a constituent of the May 1971 Conference nor was a signatory to the common platform

evolved by the Conference ? Is it not a fact that Shri Khadlikar blessed it ? Is it not a fact that Shri Khadlikar was so much interested in it that the Govt. of India paid the fares for the representatives of the three organisations for the various meetings ?

While all these were possible, a meeting of the group of Convenors was not possible. Nor was it possible to convene a meeting of the constituents who had elected the group and report to them the position.

Is it not also true that the May Conference unanimously demanded secret ballot as the only just method of ascertaining the representative character of a union ? The Govt. of India has all along been opposed to it. And yet, contrary to our joint solemn declaration you have accepted the Govt. policy of verification by Govt. machinery. Thereby the Govt. got the opportunity to proclaim that its anti-working class policy, i.e. of denying the right of the workers to choose their organisation freely and with any manipulation by Govt. and employees had the support of labour.

I may mention that you did not deem it necessary even to inform me and the other constituents of the Conference about this change in your position. I came to know it from the newspaper. It came as a shock to me ; for I had never imagined that the AITUC which had been all along opposing verification by Government machinery, and upheld the principle of a secret ballot and which had reiterated this principle solemnly along with other T. U. Organisations in the May 1971 Conference could have made such a volte face.

I had not detailed all these in my letter ; but had only stated that these developments were 'unfortunate'. What is the slander in the statement of the barest facts ?

Your statement that we want other organisations to fall in line with our political and organisational thinking is totally unwarranted. At the May 1971 Conference, you will agree, that we did not seek to impose our political thinking on the constituents ; on the other hand, we helped in evolving a platform acceptable to all of us.

We are only anxious that the organisation that was set up at the Conference should function and if it could not function, it should report back to those who elected that organisation. Is this our special organisational thinking, or is it the most elementary organisational responsibility of those that are elected by a conference and charged with specific responsibilities?

You yourself agree that "the need for united action among various trade unions has been there and is growing". In the recent period, our affiliates together with the affiliates of the AITUC, HMS and even the INTUC and others have fought many strike struggles in Tamilnadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and even West Bengal. Only recently, all the Federations of Engineering workers of West Bengal have jointly given notice of strike.

One of the leaders of AITUC, Dr. Ranen Sen, had issued a public statement last week in which he stated that many trade union offices, including those of the AITUC have been forcibly occupied with the help of the police. Another important leader of the AITUC, Com. Kalyan Roy, had also bitterly complained that his unions in coal fields are not being allowed to function by goondas in collusion with the police.

We are seriously concerned with this state of affairs. We had warned when we were the targets of such attacks that these attacks would not stop there and other trade unions also would be attacked. After all this, I hope you would realise that this is the fate that will befall all trade unions that express the slightest dissent with the establishment.

We are very serious in putting up a joint struggle in defence of the trade union rights of the workers, irrespective of the All India Centre to which their unions may be affiliated.

As regards my last letter to you having been cyclostyled, you would appreciate that it had to be so because of our having had to send it to all the organisations that had participated at the last Conference in May 1971, we also had to send copies to our State Committees. Democratic norms require us to keep our States informed of the steps we take from the Centre to forge unity of the trade unions.

I would not have gone into the past to this extent in this letter, but for the fact that you had objected to my reference to it in my last letter.

In conclusion, I suggest that we bury this unpleasant past and make all-out efforts to bring about unity for united action on the urgent issues facing the working class.

I assure you that we are serious in these efforts, as the recent joint strike struggles in many parts of the country would prove.

With Greetings,

Yours fraternally,
Sd/—P. Ramamurti
General Secretary
CITU

AITUC'S Reply to Letter of 3rd September

27th September 1972

To

The General Secretary,
Centre of Indian Trade Unions,
172, Lenin Sarani,
Calcutta-13

Dear Comrade,

We are in receipt of your letters dated 3rd Sept., 16th Sept and 23rd September, 1972.

We are surprised that though you talk so much about norms of functioning in a democratic way, and the need to carry forward the platform of the May 1971 Conference, you have not cared to first request the Convenors to meet in order to discuss the issue of calling a broader meeting. In the face of your unilateral decision to go ahead and call a meeting, your complaint that the Convenors' Group was not allowed to function seems rather misplaced.

Your letter of 3rd September is again full of slanders and in many cases even the so-called facts which you assume but did not have the courtesy to check up are wrong. We feel no

need to answer your letter of September 3rd, para by para. But just to give one instance of how you have even invented facts : Your slanderous statement that 'the Government of India paid the funds for the representatives of the 3 organisations for the various meetings' is not only entirely baseless, but the worst type of character assassination in which your organisation seems to be an expert.

In the face of such an attitude and behaviour, we feel that no useful purpose can be served by holding a formal meeting. If past experience is any guide, even while the meeting is going on, your organisation will simultaneously carry on a vicious campaign of villification, as has been done so often by you. Even after you issued the invitation to this meeting your President, B. T. Ranadive in an article on Bonus in People's Democracy of September 24, 1972 has labelled the AITUC, HMS as collaborators, accused their representatives on the Bonus Review Committee of vacillations, etc.

Apart from norms of behaviour, it is apparant to us that in to-day's situation any attempt to form a united movement must be on a wider basis than the May Conference and specifically it must include INTUC. Your own experience as quoted by you in your letter of 3rd September proves this point. Hence before any conference is to be called a prior meeting of representatives of the major trade union centres was essential. However you have arrogated to yourself the authority to call a meeting by-passing all major TU Centres, i.e. AITUC, HMS and INTUC

In this circumstances we must decline to attend the meeting summoned by you on 1st and 2nd October.

With Greetings.

Yours fraternally,
Sd/- Satish Loomba
Secretary.

Ramamurtis' Reply to AITUC's Letter of 3rd September

1st October, 1972

My Dear Com. Satish Loomba,

I have received your letter dated 27th September, 1972.

I had made the statement about the three organisations' representatives being paid their travelling allowance by Government on information from very reliable sources. If you say this is not correct, I am prepared to withdraw the statement.

I am sorry if my letter has hurt you. But you know we have also got many things to say against you and the behaviour of your organisation.

However, we are prepared to sit together and sort out the differences and come to agreement.

But may I point out that these differences did not stand in the way of our May, 1971 Conference. After December, 1971, you completely by-passed not only the CIU but all other organisations that constituted the May 1971 Conference and carried on negotiations on the very questions on which the conference had taken definite stand with the INTUC which was not a party to the May 1971 declaration. You did not even care to inform the constituents about your negotiations.

Under the circumstances, you cannot have any grudge about my convening the Conference. You now say that the Conference should have been called by all the three convenors. But in your letter dated the 26th August, 1972 you had outright declined my proposal for the conference. If you had then suggested that the conference should be convened by the three convenors I would have been happy and the conference could have been so convened. But your categorical refusal left me with no other alternative.

I agree with you that the conference should be wider one and the INTUC should be brought in. I shall be only happy

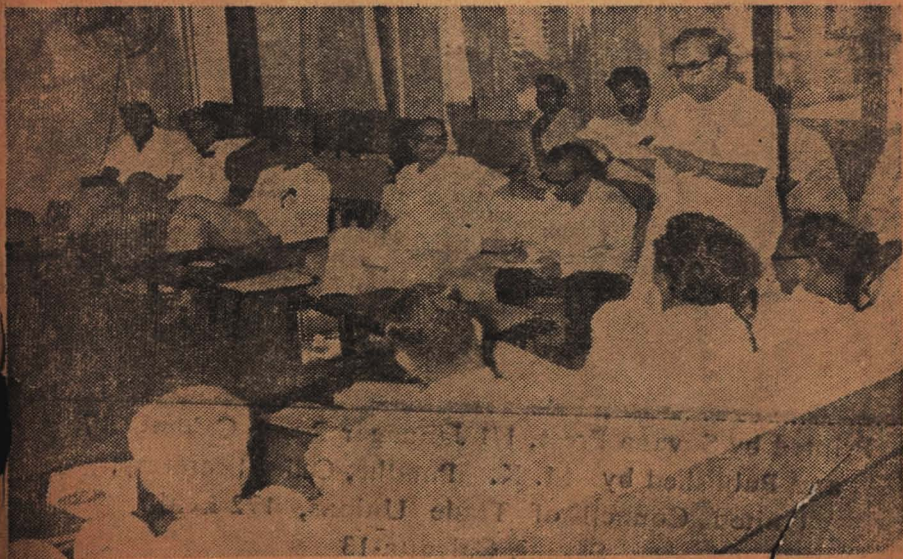
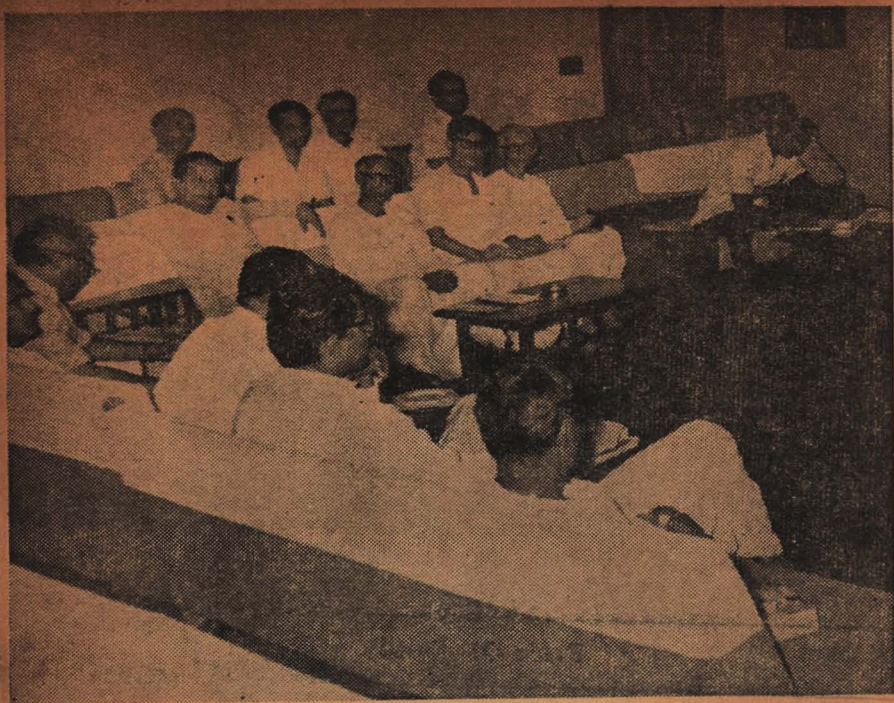
if you with your present close association with the INTUC are able to persuade them to join such a conference in any capacity,

However, if the INTUC refuses to come, we do not agree that the INTUC should be given the power to veto trade union unity.

I would request you to reconsider your position and come to the conference and make your contribution in evolving a common and united course of action.

With Greetings,

Yours fraternally,
Sd/-P. Ramamurti
General Secretary
CITU



Price 40 Paise

Printed by Sovana Press, 1/1 Jannagar Road, Calcutta-17
and Published by M. K. Pandhe, Office Secretary,
United Council of Trade Unions, 172 Lenin
Sarani, Calcutta-13