

Policy Statement On Productivity

Adopted by the General Council Meeting,

Visakhapatnam, April 4-7, 1974

C. I. T. U. considers that under capitalism where means of production are owned by handful of exploiters and profit is the only motive power for all productive activity, the productivity measures are just proposals to extract more work from the workers, for intensification of exploitation and add to the profitability of the employers. Moreover every such proposal has either led to reduction in the employed workers or stoppage in new recruitment.

The capitalists have considerably added to the productivity of the workers by introducing new advanced machines, mechanisation, modernisation, rationalisation which has led to the swelling of the vast army of the unemployed. The introduction of computers have made the problem of educated unemployed more serious.

The CITU therefore is opposed to all plans of increased exploitation whatever pretty name they may be given. This is our basic position. And the working class has to fight the capitalist designs put forward through innocent looking proposals for higher production, with all the enticements and inducements they offer.

The Government of India constituted the National Productivity Council in 1957 with the sole purpose of increasing the productivity of workers and add to the profitability of employers.

The NPC is not merely a body formed for the purpose of exchange of views etc., but it has administrative functions. It renders services to employers by taking assignments of consultants in various productivity measures. The NPC has provided several productivity schemes to the employers which amounted to an attack on the workers. The so called tripartite character of NPC is only a smokescreen to cover up its pro-employer activities. Therefore there is no question of our participation in NPC or its Committees which is likely to be used against us by the employers.

Trade Unions, however, cannot ignore the fact that the employers and the agencies created by the employers, knowing fully well that the workers will not agree with any proposal to increase the workload, make every effort to create illusions in the minds of workers by stating that they would also benefit by the scheme. Under such circumstances it would not be enough to state merely our basic position but to thoroughly study these proposals with a view to correctly expose their harmful effect on the working and living conditions of workers. In some cases trade unions will have to make counter proposals in order to mobilise the workers in the fight against the employers' proposals.

For example, we are opposed to job evaluation, work study, time and motion study and simi-

lar other devices of increasing productivity. However, an impression is sought to be created that these are most scientific methods of determining remuneration to workers and in fixing wage differentials. Since these schemes at times give more earning to the workers by intensifying the workload, they do not realise that this also enables the capitalists to grab higher profits and thus amounts to intensification of their exploitation. Trade Unions should expose their real class content by concretely placing facts about the increased exploitation and pseudo-scientific character of these devices.

In the name of sharing the gains of productivity some crumbs are thrown at the workers. The incentive schemes are just used as donkeys' carrot to extract additional workload with less cost of production per unit. The norms fixed are usually high and workers are cheated through statistical jugglery under the mask of so-called techniques of industrial engineering. Therefore their real content has to be uncovered with proper criticism and education of the workers.

The revisionists and the reformists oppose some of the productivity measures within the framework of the proposals placed by the employers. They put up a show of small demands and allow the entire plan of the Capitalists to succeed. They are satisfied with a little compensation for additional work-load. Our trade unions should resolutely oppose such erroneous attitude

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Railway Workers Strike From May 8

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Warning about the coming days, the resolution said that "the railwaymen today are at the threshold of the biggest ever struggle of their history. On the outcome of this struggle depends not only the future of the railwaymen, but of the entire working class movement and of the movement of the exploited and downtrodden people in the country. There is no doubting that the now inevitable struggle will be a bitter one. From past experiences, from the attitude shown by the Railway Administration during the negotiations and from the repressive measures already let loose, it is obvious that the Government will come down with all its might against the workers. Railwaymen will be called upon to make the greatest of sacrifices before they are able to wrest their just and legitimate demands from the Railway Ministry."

While directing all organisations to serve strike notice before April 23, the resolution appealed to NFIR to join the strike so that "the struggle may be quick and decisive." The railwaymen were asked to consolidate the unity already achieved and strengthen links with wider masses and frustrate the attempts to isolate railwaymen from the people. An appeal was also made to the people of the country and various mass organisations "to extend their support to railwaymen in their hour of trial."

In another resolution an appeal was made to all organisa-

tions of railwaymen "to suspend their sectional agitations already launched or proposed to be launched and concentrate all their energies and efforts to making the general strike a resounding success."

With ringing slogans of unity and struggle, the meeting ended with a note of determination for the ensuing struggle.

Strike By 6.5 Million Japanese Workers

SIX and half million workers and employees in both public and private transport services in Japan went on a nation-wide strike on April 11 demanding 30 per cent rise in wages and recognition of the right to strike for public sector workers.

The strike paralysed all forms of transport as workers in public and private railways, airways, bus transport, taxis and other forms of transport joined the strike, bringing production in all sectors to a grinding halt.

The workers of national railways have demanded wage rise of 30,000 Yen (100 dollars) per month plus an equal amount as ad hoc anti-inflation payment, whereas private railway workers are demanding monthly wage rise of 35,000 yen plus a special anti-inflation allowance.

The Government, which earlier offered a 20 per cent wage rise, had to climb down and start negotiations on the workers' demands.

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towards productivity so that interest of the workers are protected.

We are totally against linking of wages or bonus to productivity. Our opinion is that at the existing level of productivity there is a prima facie case for increase in wages. Any attempt to link wages with productivity should be unitedly resisted by the trade union movement.

While fighting against every productivity measure trade unions should always take into account the sentiment of democratic public opinion. In days of scarcity of all essential commodities, the capitalists seek to create an impression that "productivity is key to plenty". The opposition to productivity drive is quite often used to create a public opinion against the struggle of the workers, by emphasising that scarcity is due to low productivity. Trade unions should take note of this democratic opinion and try to educate the same exposing the profit greed of the employers and justifying the case of the workers in order to win sympathy of the people in favour of their struggle.

Trade unions should use every opportunity to express their views on the question of productivity, through all suitable forums without making any commitment on their part, so that the game behind the productivity drive of the employers is exposed and all sections of people understand the anti-working class and anti-people character of the productivity movement.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL of the CITU met at Visakhapatnam on April 4-7, with 149 members and invitees attending. Com. B.T. Ranadive, President CITU presided.

The General Council meeting evoked considerable enthusiasm among the working class and Trade Unions in the area who spared no efforts to make the meeting a grand success. A broad-based Reception Committee was formed with local trade unions, majority of them non-CITU unions, and about Rs. 15,000 was collected from among the workers for the meeting. Volunteers from the Hindusthan Shipyard, Bharat Heavy Plates, Coromandel Fertilisers and Visakha Port worked day and night to look after the conveniences of the members.

Com. Bhushan Rao, Chairman of the Reception Committee cordially welcomed the members, after which Com. B.T. Ranadive delivered his presidential address (see April, 1974 issue of *The Working Class*).

The General Council paid warm homage to the memory of Comrades Muzaffar Ahmed, Satish Pakrashi, Dr. Narayan Roy and others and also martyrs who laid down their lives facing police bullets and assassins' daggers.

The General Council welcomed the decision of the nine Left parties to observe May 3 as All-India Protest Day against the anti-people policies of the Government and, by a resolution, called upon all CITU Unions to organise country-wide strike and

CITU General Council Calls For Country-wide Struggle

hartal to protest against these policies.

General Secretary's Report

Comrade P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of the CITU then placed his report which reviewed the advance of the working class movement in the country and the activities of the CITU since the last meeting of the Working Committee.

At the outset he paid homage to the memory of those who fell victims to the bullets of Congress police and daggers of Congress goondas in West Bengal, Kerala, Maharashtra and other places as well as the martyrs who laid down their lives in Gujarat, Bihar and other States while fighting the anti-people policies of the Government.

New Strike Wave

Reviewing the upsurge of militant working class struggles all over the country, he observed "During the last six months, the entire country witnessed a new strike-wave involving several lakhs of workers. These strikes have been long-drawn, in character and have shown the growing awareness among the masses for resisting capitalist onslaughts with united strength and determination. The impact of some of the most important strikes on the industrial relations in the country was phenomenal."

Referring to the 41 day's strike of the Bombay textile workers, 33 days' strike of 3 lakh Jute workers all over the country and the strike by 1.5 lakh

textile workers of Tamilnadu, he observed: "The three major strikes alone thus have resulted in a total loss of over 18 million man-days. The total loss of man days during 1972 was a little over 17 million and according to available indications, the man-days lost during 1973 was almost the same. These 3 strikes during the last six months have taken a greater toll than the whole of 1972 or 1973 and it was slightly less than the peak year in 1971 when the total man-days lost was about 20 million."

He also referred to the strike of the Loco Running Staff in August and December last year and the struggle of the 40,000 LIC employees which he characterised as "among the most tenaciously fought struggles in this period".

Urge for United Struggle Growing

He also gave a detailed picture of the united struggles conducted in different States during this period and drew the attention of members to some other notable struggles of this period, viz. the long-drawn struggle of the employees of Indian Airlines, the struggle of junior doctors and engineers for better allowance and service conditions and the indefinite strike of 7500 doctors and engineers of West Bengal. The CITU, he pointed out, lent its wholehearted support to these struggles.

Summing up the lessons of these struggles, he observed "All the movement and struggles I have referred to here underline the unprecedented desire among all sections of the working class to take the path of unity and struggle. This feature is most welcome to our organisation and we have to strive our best to see that these trends are further strengthened which alone can create powerful forces to defeat the policies of the Congress Government."

United Struggles of Railwaymen and State Government Employees

He welcomed the new turn in the movement of 4 million State Government employees, specially the decision of the Working Committee of the A.I. State Government Employees Federation to go on one-day strike on April 9 as a "step in the right direction." The CITU, he said, fully supported the 7 point charter of demands and expressed its solidarity in their forthcoming strike.

Referring to the magnificent unity achieved by 17 lakh railwaymen on a common charter of demands, he pointed out that the meeting convened by the AIRF of all category-wise organisations in the railways and central trade unions on February 27 was a welcome move as this convention "for the first time brought all the fighting forces inside the railways on a common platform for common action."

Attacks on CITU Unions

Protesting against the continued incarceration of more than 30,000 political prisoners in the jails of Indira Gandhi, including thousands detained without trial under MISA, DIR and trumped up charges of murder, he pointed out that the thousands in jail also include our own comrades, fighters in the cause of workers and kisans. Our organisation, he said, has to take up this question.

Referring to the continued attacks on CITU unions in West Bengal, Com. Ramamurti said, "In West Bengal about 300 unions are still occupied by Congress hoodlums and trade union rights of a large number of workers are suppressed. The murderous attacks on trade union workers continue unabated and our unions are even now engaged in fighting this reign of terror."

"The national emergency," he added, "is deliberately being allowed to continue only to suit the interests of the ruling party. The DIR is being recklessly used during trade union struggles. I, therefore, reiterate our demand for immediate withdrawal of the emergency and to the use of DIR in industrial disputes."

Further advance of the UCTU

Com. Ramamurti reviewed the growth of the United Council of Trade Unions and pointed out that "it is gradually taking the shape of a form of unity of all sections of workers and

employees." He referred to the formation of State and Regional Committees of UCTU in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and other places and added, "We should do everything to strengthen such organisations wherever they have been formed and try to form them wherever they have not yet been formed."

Growth in CITU Activities

Reviewing the activities of the CITU in this period, he observed — "There has been a remarkable growth in the total activity of the CITU unions. Apart from the struggles conducted by our unions on demands of their members, they are increasingly participating in solidarity actions with other sections of the working class as well as with students, kisans etc. There have been several common actions in which the working class participated along with the entire people in the area or even State."

He went on to state, "Sections which were earlier not in the movement are also joining the mainstream of struggle and naturally they look upon the CITU for guidance and help. They have also seen through their experience that the CITU is the foremost champion of their cause and naturally, expectations about the CITU are being raised higher and higher."

Organisational Weaknesses

Comrade Ramamurti then pointed out some organisational weaknesses and emphasised that these must be overcome

to enable CITU to meet the challenge of the situation. He observed: "The situation is extremely favourable for us. The possibility of immense growth of the CITU in the near future is there if we utilise this situation properly. In this respect the organisation of the CITU plays an important part and we have to take immediate steps to meet the challenge of the situation."

He added, "Our success in the recent past should not blind us from the reality that we are at present unable to utilise the situation to the fullest extent. The radicalisation of the working class and the masses is taking place at a very fast rate but our organisational framework is lagging behind and at times we are only floating with the current."

"Under these circumstances we can ignore our organisational weakness only at a very heavy cost. I propose to speak about it frankly with the hope that all the members of the General Council will pay serious attention to it and make efforts to overcome it as soon as possible."

Comrade Ramamurti then discussed in detail the problems of small size unions and suggested formation of industry-wise unions to improve their functioning. He also dealt at length with the problems of industry-wise co-ordination, work among women workers, CITU's participation in seminars and bi-partite wage negotiation committees, etc. and suggested ways for meeting these problems.

Resist Attacks on People

While outlining the tasks

before the CITU, Comrade Ramamurti stressed the need for resisting the new attacks on the people and added, "Only one week ago the Central Government surrendered the earlier policy of wheat take-over. It was a boon to the hoarders and profiteers who would exploit the situation to boost the prices of wheat. The 80 per cent rise in the prices of textile cloth and increase in the margin of distributors from earlier 12 per cent to 20 per cent will further push up the already high prices of textile cloth."

"These two steps constitute another big attack on the poor people after the General and Railway budgets. All these measures put together will cause heavy inroads into the standard of living of the working class and the poor people. They are bound to join the resistance against these draconian measures."

"Our unions will have to play an important role in mobilising the working class in defence of their standard of living. Our policy of unity and struggle will be further tested in these struggles and the success of this line will give powerful blows to the machinations of disruptive forces."

Struggles of Other Sections

Comrade Ramamurti then pointed out the possibility of big struggles of agricultural workers and peasants and stressed, "We should not forget the rural poor who are hit more than others and there is every possibility of their joining the arena of struggle. The CITU should do everything to express its solidarity with the

struggles of the agricultural workers and peasants. The task of building worker-peasant alliance is of supreme importance in the forthcoming days."

In defence of T.U. Rights and Civil Liberties

Stressing the need for building up struggle for T. U. rights and civil liberties, Comrade Ramamurti said, "Faced with the growing isolation, the Government is resorting to more and more repressive measures and trade union and democratic rights of the working class are being attacked every now and then. The CITU should stand behind all sections of society facing repression and champion the cause of civil liberties and resist authoritarianism."

Comrade Ramamurti concluded with these words, "Comrades, I am confident that the deliberations of the General Council will enable us to fulfil our tasks in the present period and prepare the working class in carrying forward the struggle against the present capitalist-landlord Government and for proletarian Socialism."

Discussions on the Report

While taking part in the discussions on the report of the General Secretary, comrades narrated their experiences gained in the field of struggle and pointed out the betraying role played by the AITUC and INTUC leaderships, although their ranks very often participated in the common struggles.

Comrades Kamal Sarkar, Panchu Bose, S. P. Bhattacharya, Md. Ismail, Abul Hassan, Shanti

Bose, Chatur Ali, P. K. Kurane, Karmegham, D.D. Shirali, Bisweshar Ganguly, Vishwanatha Menon, M. K. Pandhe, Balaji Das, Hrishi Banerjee, Motilal Sharma, Shanti Ghatlak, Padmalochanan, Ghanashyam Saran Sinha, Dilip Mazumdar, Ravindranath, Robin Chatterjee, Ananda Pathak, Yeshwant Koli, Biren Dutta, Manjrekar (Goa), Hari Krishna, Gyan Sen, Shivaji Patnaik, K. Ramani and S.Y. Kolhatkar participated in the discussion, after which the report was adopted unanimously.

The meeting discussed in detail the question of CITU's stand on productivity and the National Productivity Council, in which twentyfive members participated. A policy statement was adopted in the meeting, calling upon the CITU unions to fight against all aspects of the productivity movement.

The meeting also discussed the Code of Discipline and the extension of ESI to plantations, mines and other establishments.

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU reported on his visit to Vietnam and depicted the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression.

Resolutions

The meeting adopted several resolutions on current issues before the working class. Com. Jyoti Basu, Vice-President CITU moved the resolution on the railway workers' struggle and congratulated the 17 lakh railway men for their decision to go on an indefinite strike if their demands were not met. He welcomed the unity of all fighting

forces in the railways and paid tributes to the valient struggle of the loco running staff. He called upon all CITU unions to rally behind the railway workers in their strike.

Com. Krishnapada Ghosh moved the resolution condemning continued reign of terror in West Bengal and demanding an end to it.

Com. Niren Ghosh moved the resolution greeting the Vietnamese people and workers for their valient fight against US imperialism and its puppets and supporting their demands.

Com. Samar Mukherjee moved a resolution expressing concern at the setting up of the US military base at Diego Garcia and demanding a firm stand by the Government of India to get the base vacated.

Comrade Monoranjan Roy moved a resolution condemning repressive measures by the Government and demanding their immediate withdrawal.

Comrade P. Ramamurti moved a resolution greeting the people of Gujarat for their heroic resistance and condemning police repression.

The General Council also adopted a resolution condemning the rise in prices and calling upon the working class to unitedly resist it. In another resolution it held the Government responsible for the power crisis and opposed all measures to shift the burden of the crisis on the workers.

By separate resolutions, the meeting congratulated the Jute workers, LIC employees, Indian Airlines employees, road transport workers, port and dock

workers, doctors and engineers, as also cashew, refractories and ceramics and aluminium workers for their heroic struggle.

The General Council greeted the decision of the four million State Government employees to go on strike on April 9 and also the decisions of the New Delhi Convention of March 15 for united movement of Central Government employees.

Resolutions were also adopted demanding withdrawal of emergency, demanding implementation of Beedi & Cigar Act, condemning police repression in Bihar, etc.

The meeting unanimously adopted the audited statement of accounts for the year 1973 presented by Comrade Samar Mukherjee, Treasurer of CITU. The meeting also adopted a report of the Credentials Committee granting affiliation to 65 unions with a total membership of 13,448.

The meeting decided to co-opt Comrades A.P. Chatterjee, Prakash Ghosh, Bishwanath Dasgupta, Vimal Randive and Sukhomoy Paul in the General Council.

Industry-wise Meetings & Open Session

Industry-wise meetings were held for plantations, road transport, port and docks, engineering, electricity, paper and beedi industries to discuss the question of co-ordination of CITU unions.

After the meeting, a well-attended mass meeting was held at Vishakhapatnam on April 7 which was presided over by Comrade N. Prasada Rao. Comrades B. T. Ranadive, P. Ramamurti and Jyoti Basu, in their speeches, explained the decisions of the General Council and called upon the working class to unitedly resist the impending attacks on their standard of living.