

C E N T R E O F I N D I A N T R A D E U N I O N S

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Camp: 4, Ashoka
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PRESS RELEASE :

The Working Committee of the CITU met in New Delhi for three days from 24-26 April, 1972, under the Chairmanship of its President Com.B.T.Ranadive. The meeting considered important issues facing the working class in the light of the developments that had taken place in the country since the last meeting in Coimbatore ten months ago.

The most outstanding development has been the spread of semi-fascist terror in West Bengal. The meeting noted that particularly after the recent elections, Congress goonda gangs supported by the state administration, its police and the CRP have been systematically invading T.U. offices and occupying them. Over 300 Trade Union offices have so far been occupied. In many cases the records have been burnt. Working class localities have been attacked, particularly in the coal-belt, in the Barrackpore industrial belt, forcing over 20,000 people to evacuate their residences. Over 30 Trade Union leaders have been murdered. Workers are intimidated to give up their Trade Union and join the Congress Trade Union. Factory owners are told to dismiss CITU trade union officials and workers and give employment to those named by the Congress goondas. In some of the biggest factories it has become difficult for Trade Union activists to enter the factories and over a thousand are keeping away from their jobs.

The Working Committee noted that recently these attacks have also started against some of the unions of the AITUC also. This only shows that these Congress goonda gangs are not going to spare any one who does not toe their line.

The Working Committee was proud that despite this unprecedented terror the working class of West Bengal is

courageously resisting these attacks and refusing to submit to their threats.

The Working Committee underlined the danger of these developments for the entire T.U. and democratic movement in India and decided to conduct a campaign throughout India, mobilising the entire Working class and other democratic people to put an end to this semi-fascist terror and defeat it. The attacks are not fortuitous.

Last year the General Secretary, Com.P.Ramamurti had refuted the claim of the Finance Minister that the economy of the country is poised for a big advance. Mr.Chavan himself had to admit during his budget speech that his contention was wrong.

Despite all the tall talks of 'Garibi Hatao' , advertisement of big harvest etc. the fact remains that the industries are stagnating and over 2000 factories remained closed.

The burdens of the crisis are sought to be transferred to the working class and toilers.

Before the resistance on a country wide scale breaks out to these attacks, the Government wants to totally suppress and eliminate, if possible, the most advance detachment of the trade union movement in West Bengal.

The Working Committee noted that last year saw united strikes and struggles of workers throughout the country, notably in West Bengal, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in which unions belonging to CITU, AITUC, INTUC, UTUC etc. join hands.

This unity has naturally alarmed the employers and the Government, and they have started to counter-attack. The Government of India is seeking to wean away the INTUC, HMS and AITUC from this united struggle by blandishing patronages to them. The Working Committee noted with regret that the leaders of these organisation are succumbing to these manoeuvres.

In May last year the leaders of the AITUC and HMS joined hands with the CITU in a conference and put forward a 8 point charter, accepted secret ballot for recognition of trade unions and agreed to launch a joint campaign for the fulfilment of those demands. Unfortunately they have refused to launch the campaign despite repeated efforts made by the CITU and to-day

they are joining hands with the INTUC, given up the principle of secret ballot and cooking up some sort of agreement abjuring the right of strike at the behest of the Government.

At a time when united actions are far more necessary and urgent than before, this path of these leaders will only help the employers and weaken the working class and its power of resistance. The Working Committee hoped that these leaders would even now desist from this path. It decided to re-double its efforts to build unity and united struggles.

It was proud that the united struggle of last year were mainly due to the initiative and untiring efforts of the CITU unions. It was confident that the objective realities would help the CITU unions to defeat all efforts at sabotage and disruption of the unity and the unions of CITU will be able to forge greater unity in the future.

In this connection the General Secretary has addressed a letter to the Trade Union Centres to join together so that entire working class would be mobilised against American imperialism and in support of the struggle of the Vietnamese People.

The Working Committee was firmly of opinion that without declaration of moratorium on all foreign debts and particularly the debts to U.S.A. and without nationalising United States concerns all talk of self reliance is moon shine and will only lead to attacks on the working class and the common people.

The Working Committee condemned the attempt of the monopoly press barons to retrench and otherwise lower benefits of the workers and the employees on the ground of cut in newsprint quota. It was of the opinion that there was no justification for it, particularly in view of the fact that during last two years these big newspapers had increased by 25 to 33% the number of pages without any addition to the complement of employees and workers. Their cry is only an attempt to maintain their super-profits. The Working Committee condemned the Government for not taking effective steps to prevent the managements from resorting to such tricks while curtailing newsprint quota. It demanded that the Government even now should take such steps.

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The Working Committee also demanded break up of the monopolists strangle hold over these newspaper by distributing their shares to the employees, journalists and workers and entrusting the management to their co-operatives.

The Working Committee condemned the attempt of the Chhatra Parishad goondas to forcibly enter the L.I.C. office in Calcutta on the 25th April, 1972 when the L.I.C. employees throughout country went on a day's strike. It condemned their physical attack on Com. Sunil Moitra Joint Secretary of the Association and others. This once again illustrate how the Chhatra Parishad goondas are being used as storm troopers to break-up working class strike.

(Sd/-) P. RAMAMURTI
General Secretary,
C.I.T.U.