

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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Statement issued by Com.B.T.Ranadive, President,
CITU in the press conference held at Calcutta
on 8th May 1975

The Third Conference of the CITU will be held at Bombay from 21st to 25th May 1975. About 3,000 delegates are likely to participate in the Conference.

The working class of India is directly confronted by the problem of growing recession, which has already thrown thousands out of employment and faces many more thousands with loss of jobs. The country and the working masses were not confronted with such a situation since the great depression of 1930. Already misery and starvation, loss of jobs have been imposed on lakhs of workers through lay-off, temporary or permanent closures and retrenchment.

The question has been squarely put before the working class and the people - who should bear the burdens of this crisis - the monopolists, landlords, the capitalists and the Government or the people. Official policies of inflation and anti-inflation, for promotion of exports, taxation -- all have one thing in common - to make the workers, the peasant and the common man bear the burden of their mismanagement of the economy. The CITU will demand that the burdens should be borne by the exploiting and richer sections.

It means that the trade union movement can no longer content itself with the end results of official policies - wage-cuts, lay-offs, but demand a basic change in the policies themselves. This requires the widest possible unity of the trade union movement and the CITU session will give a call for such unity on the basis of a common programme. This will carry forward the important achievements of the unity already scored through the formation of the National Campaign Committee against Wage Freeze which is to hold its all-India convention on 21st July. *29th June*

The terroristic repression against the CITU in West Bengal and Kerala will form the subject matter of a document which will be distributed to all international centres and organisations. A special memorandum will also be prepared on the gangsterism in Haryana where no trade union rights are permitted. The ILO and other organisations will be informed through these documents how all ILO conventions, all trade union rights are suppressed in India. Documents and resolutions will be sent to the WFTU which is totally silent on this growing repression of the workers.

The CITU at its last session raised the question of discrimination against women workers. It informed the ILO of the systematic violation of the convention signed by the Government of India. Since then nothing has changed. On the contrary official communication to the CITU has explained away the discrimination in wages as following the accepted pattern in India.

The CITU will demand the withdrawal of wage freeze and protest against the cuts imposed on workers' wages. The Central and State employees have been the special victims of the wage freeze act since they have been denied what is due to them under the Act also.

All these are part of the plan to thrust the burdens of the crisis on the common man and will have to be fought as such.

The CITU while calling all trade unions to resist this wage offensive will call their attention to the growing authoritarian trend in official labour policies. Apart from repression of the trade union movement and proposals to ban strike, the Government now claims the right to decide dictatorially how much the workers will be paid and makes short work of collective bargaining. It also insists on one official union - a forerunner of one party for the country.

These authoritarian trends followed the general attacks on democratic rights of the people. The prolongation of the Emergency, the use of DIR and MISA against the trade union and democratic movements and the rigging of elections all have created the danger of a drive towards one-party dictatorship. The CITU will urge all trade union organisations to come together to protect civil liberties and democratic rights and co-operate with other organisations for the purpose.

The CITU is aware of the intense sufferings of our people due to food shortage and high prices. It condemns the Government for permitting high prices to the landlords, for imposing procurement levy on the peasants instead of taking away all the surplus of the landlords. The CITU session will warn the working class that unless it champions the cause of the rural masses, the Government will drive a wedge between the two as it is already trying to do. The session will demand guarantee of jobs for the rural masses along with the unemployed in the cities. In the alternative it will demand unemployment wage for all those without work. The isolation of the trade union movement from the rural masses must be broken before the trade unions can play a revolutionary role.

The CITU will warn the entire working class of the deep-going machinations of American imperialism in our country. Many trade union organisations fail to see the danger. Meeting in the background of the historic victory of the peoples of Vietnam and Cambodia, the CITU will review the favourable international situation and rededicate itself to the cause of proletarian internationalism - the cause of peace, freedom and socialism.