

World Marxist Review

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A.I.T.U.C. GENERAL COUNCIL
NEW DELHI - AUGUST 4 - 6, 1967

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Information Document No.2

In the period since the last meeting of the General Council (November 30 - December 2, 1966), the AITUC Secretariat has endeavoured to intervene in all major developments facing the TU movement. Efforts were made to coordinate the work of the affiliated unions industry-wise as far as practicable and also in the matter of solidarity actions.

Particularly in respect of those unions which have to deal with the Union Labour Ministry such as in coal and iron ore mines, ports and docks, etc., it has been possible to give the required assistance to the affiliated unions, in the matter of their demands and struggles.

The tripartite meetings at national level during this period were the Standing Labour Committee and Industrial Committees on Cotton Textiles and Coal-mining besides the bipartite committee on bonus formula.

The Standing Labour Committee met on May 20. The AITUC was represented by S.A. Dange, General Secretary, Satish Loomba, K.G. Sriwastava and M.K. Pandha, Secretaries. The Report of this meeting was published in the TRADE UNION RECORD of May 20, 1967 and the General Secretary had addressed a press conference on May 12, on the walk-out staged by our delegation from the SLC meeting on the question of ghraos.

The bipartite meeting on bonus which had its second meeting on January 20 failed to reach any accord. Satish Loomba, Secretary, represented the AITUC at this meeting.

The Industrial Committee on Cotton Textiles met on May 8. The AITUC was represented by S.G. Patkar, S.S. Yusuf and M. Atchuthan.

Three tripartite meetings on coalmining problems were held during this period. These meetings mainly discussed the industrial relations problems in coal-mines as well as the deadlock over the Wage Board report. The General Secretary S.A. Dange attended the important meetings along with K.G. Sriwastava, Secretary and representatives of the IMWF Kalyan Roy and Prakash Roy. The meeting held in Delhi on July 15 was a very stormy one. The Government ultimately announced the acceptance of the Wage Board recommendations. The announcement was made in Parliament on July 24. Another meeting on the same question took place in Delhi on 4th August 1967 as the employers refused to implement the Wage Board Report.

The following press communiques were issued during this period:

- Dec 20 On AITUC donation of Rs. 3,800 as solidarity with Vietnam.
- Apr 4 Demanding early publication of Wage Board reports in Coal and Iron Ore Mining

- Apr 14 On the joint meeting of representatives of unions affiliated to AITUC, INTUC and HMS in sugar industry and decision to observe 10 May as Interim Relief Day.
- Apr 14 Releasing letter written by S.A. Dange, General Secretary, to Gajendragadkar Commission opposing move for CDS in DA payments.
- Apr 20 On Delhi Policemen's strike.
- May 12 On AITUC walk-out from SLC meeting.
- Jun 8 On Israeli aggression on Arab countries.
- Jun 30 On Pilots' Strike in Air-India.
- Jul 9 Employers' violence in coalfields.
- Jul 9 On Wage Freeze proposals made at Chief Ministers' meeting.
- Aug 3 On Firemen's struggle in S. Rly.

The following circulars were issued by the AITUC during this period:

- Dec 28 On nominations to TU school of FDGB, GDR
- Jan 11 On 5th International Conference of Building TUI
- Jan 23 On 5th International Conference of Chemical TUI
- Mar 3 On coordination of work of cement unions
- Mar 23 On consultative meeting proposed of unions in Building and construction industry
- Mar 29 On Sugar Wage Board
- May 6 On Questionnaire of National Labour Commission
- May 15 On questionnaire of the Committee on Welfare Schemes
- May 25 On meagre interim relief awarded by Sugar Wage Board
- Jun 8 On recommendations of the Iron Ore Wage Board
- Jun 9 Verification of TU membership
- Jul 13 On nominations for TU school in Moscow
- Jul 15 On Coal Board recommendations and meeting of affiliated unions in coal convened in New Delhi on 7 August
- July 25 -do-

PUBLICATIONS

The TRADE UNION RECORD was published regularly during this period.

A publication on 'INDIAN WORKING CLASS' - SIZE & SHAPE' was issued by the AITUC. G.D. Sane is the author.

NOMINATIONS MADE BY AITUC SECRETARIAT

During this period, the following nominations were made by the AITUC Secretariat **after** calling for suggestions from the State Committees.

1. Industrial Committee on Plantations -
Monoranjan Roy & P. Balachandra Menon, M.P.
2. Czech TU Congress -
V. Tamhane
3. Solidarity with Aden Committee -
Maqdoom Mohiuddin (could not go)
4. National Productivity Council -
Dr. Raj Bahadur Gour
Barin Chowdhury
5. Hungarian TU Congress -
Barin Chowdhury
E. Balanandan (could not go)
6. Coal Mines PF Trust Board -
Shafique Khan
7. Committee on Family Planning -
Mrs. Usha Gupta
8. Minimum Wages Committee -
R. Umanath, M.P.
9. May Day Delegation to USSR -
P.K.Thakur,
Ambika Bajpai (could not go)
10. May Day delegation to GDR -
S.V. Subba Raju
Harish Tewary
11. May Day delegation to Cuba -
Ali Amjad
12. Chemical TUI Conference -
G.Sundaram, Jadugopal Sen,
S.S. Bose
13. Standing Labour Committee -
S.A. Dange, Satish Loomba,
K.G. Sriwastava and M.K.Pandhe
14. Industrial Committee on Jute -
Indrajit Gupta, Ghanshyam Sinha
15. Advisory Committee on Iron Ore Welfare Fund -
Prakash Roy, S.K. Sanyal for M.P.
and Maharashtra
16. Development Council for Organic Chemicals -
George Chadayamuri
17. Development Council on Paper -
Lakhan Lall

18. Council of Technical Education -
V. Ghanekar
19. Film Industry Wage Board -
Haripada Chatterjee
20. Consultative Meeting on Vocational Training con-
vened by W.F.T.U. -
Nihar Mukherjee
21. Institute of Manpower Research -
Gerald Pereira
22. Delegation to GDR -
Ambika Bajpai, Raoba Chikne
23. Delegation to USSR (July) -
Gangaram Jadhav, Darshan Singh,
Sadhu Singh

Draft Resolutions

3.

ON SOLIDARITY WITH NAXALBARI PEASANTS

The General Council of the AITUC notes with grave concern the situation that has arisen in the Naxalbari area of W. Bengal as a result of the local peasantry's struggle to satisfy their age-old land hunger and to establish their legitimate rights as tillers of the soil.

Throughout the 20 years since national independence, the jotedar-ridden Congress regime in W. Bengal utterly failed to carry out effective land reforms, to distribute surplus lands to the poor peasants, to prevent 'benami' land transfers or to protect the sharecroppers against the evictions and oppressions of the landlords. Thousands of acres of land in this area remained in the illegal occupation of the plantation owners who never developed them as tea gardens. In this background, when the new, democratic government of the United Front assumed office after the general elections, it was but natural that the peasantry should be fired with new hopes and expectations that their rights would be recognised at last, land from which they had been illegally evicted and which are under 'benami' occupation of the jotedars would be restored to them and iniquitous rents would be abolished and land revenue reduced.

But when the peasants of Naxalbari, majority of whom are Santhals, Oraons and other tribal people, began a mass agitation and movement last May to establish their rights on land, the jotedars aided by the police resisted violently, attacked the peasants and provoked clashes. In one of these, ten persons including eight women and a child who were part of a peaceful assembly of kisans, were shot dead as a vindictive reprisal for the earlier death of a police inspector. The General Council expresses its sorrow and indignation at this coldblooded killing and pays homage to the memory of these martyrs.

In the opinion of the General Council, the exploited peasants were perfectly within their rights to reoccupy jotedars' lands from which they had been illegally and forcibly dispossessed and this was the essence of their movement which the bourgeoisie and landlords and all their reactionary supporters, have sought to depict as some sort of armed 'liberation' movement. In any case, it is the height of hypocrisy to equate the primitive bows and arrows which every tribal peasant traditionally carries with the rifles of the police and the guns of the jotedars and their hirelings.

But just when the Naxalbari movement was showing promise of achieving concrete gains, when the United Front government had recognised the justice of the peasants' demands and the urgent need for long overdue land reforms, when the 6-Ministers' mission had toured the area and set up broadbased Land Committees to carry out land distribution, it is a matter of deep regret that the Peking Radio began to broadcast this struggle as a flowering of Mao's 'thoughts' on Indian soil and as an armed struggle for the overthrow of the government. These broadcasts, with their far-fetched and absurd interpretation, gave a convenient handle to the Government of India, the Congress Party, certain all-India leaders of some other political parties and all those who wanted to malign, isolate and crush the peasants struggle against jotedar oppression.

In the opinion of the General Council of the AITUC, the Naxalbari movement should have made use to the fullest extent of the possibilities of achieving concrete gains through a broadbased mass movement of peasants and other democratic

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