



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

**100 Years of Struggle & Sacrifice**

**50 Years of Fight for Unity of the Working Class**

**CITU 50<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day Inauguration**

**30 May, 2019; New Delhi**



1. Flag Hoisting at BTR Bhavan, CITU Centre
2. General Secretary addressing
3. Meeting at Mavlankar Hall



# Devastating Trail of Cyclone in Odisha

(Report Page 4)



**Bite of Fani**



**“We Need Your Help”**

## Immediate Contribution Made

*(As per available report at CITU centre as on 19 May)*

1. CITU Centre – Rs.1 Lakh
2. CITU Andhra Pradesh State Committee – Rs.25,000
3. Personal contribution of personnel at CITU Centre – Rs.13,750
4. BEFI Centre – Rs.1 lakh

## **Send Fund to CITU Odisha State Committee Bank A/C by Bank Transfer**

Account Name: Sramik Ekta  
SB A/C No.: 089510011005488  
Bank: Andhra Bank  
Branch: Madhusudan Nagar; Bhubaneswar  
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## **CITU Odisha State Committee**

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# Post-Election Working Class Agenda

## WORKING CLASS

JUNE 2019

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The result is out and Modi is in with his Hindutwa brigade storming the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, the powerful corporate – communal combine ruling over it.

The day after, corporate media, through editorials and series of write-ups, are setting their own agenda for Modi government - II to follow. These are land, labour reforms and privatisation.

Modi government – I, during its 5 years rule, failed to implement the same agenda, set by the corporates in 2014. Facing countrywide peasants protest, supported by broad sections of the people, the Land Acquisition Bill was withdrawn. Facing large number of sectorwise workers and employees' strikes and three countrywide workers general strikes - 2 September strikes in 2015 and 2016 and 2 days strike on 8-9 January, 2019, supported by peasants and other sections of the people – Modi government – I, for pro-corporate labour reforms, could not pass a single of the proposed 4 Labour Codes replacing all 44 existing labour laws. Facing strikes and struggles of the workers and employees, supported by vast sections of the people, Modi government – I could not privatise all PSUs across the board. (Assuming power at the Centre, Modi had said '*PSUs were born to die*'). Modi government has also failed in providing promised jobs to vast number of unemployed youths.

But, in the name of FDI, message had to be sent to the corporates and international finance capital. Some peripheral changes have been made in some of the existing labour laws and increasing disinvestment of PSUs. Modi government needed a second chance from the corporates. It has been given. So, increased attacks on labour laws and rights, PSUs and land are in the card.

Hence, the battle line is drawn and agenda before the working class and the people of the country are also clear. The working class has to build broadest unity - trade unions unity and workers-peasants unity at the core of broadest people's unity - to defend, implement and advance all labour laws and rights in establishments, industries and sectors; defending peasants lands, remunerative prices and loan wavers; defending and reviving PSUs as the core of economic development; and for jobs to vast number of unemployed, the future workers reserve force. This unity and united actions will also defeat attempts of divisions and remaining vigilant in defending the Constitution and democratic institutions.

Only through class struggle with proper plan and agenda, the ruler's majority in the Parliament can be turned into their minority among the people.

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# Rush Help to Odisha Cyclonic Victims

Recent severe cyclone Fani hit Odisha on 3 May causing widespread devastation causing loss of lives, livestock, livelihood, shelters, communications etc.

Media had generally underrated its devastating effect mainly comparing the number of loss of lives to that of earlier cyclones, hitting Odisha, and praising the CM and the PM for the timely measures undertaken and promises made for rehabilitation, just on the eve of general selection. However, of late people have started realising the magnitude of devastation as the reports started coming in.

*Indian Express* presented the centre spread 'Big Picture' on Fani's devastating effect on the people of Odisha – 64 persons died; 1.65 crore people affected; affected 18,388 villages in 14 districts; 5.8 lakh houses damaged; 1.8 lakh hectares of farmland destroyed and 41.7 lakh livestock perished.

## CITU's Ramesh Jena from Odisha Reports

According to state government 64 persons died and 156.56 lakh people in 159 blocks and 52 municipalities and NACs of 14 districts have been badly affected. The cyclone has damaged Puri and capital city Bhubaneswar the most.

Lakhs of marginalized sections of the people including small farmers, share croppers, fishermen and artisans lost their livelihood, livestock, fishery, fish culture, coconut farming and other belongings. Estimated 26.15 lakh livestock have been lost including 26.12 lakh in poultry, rest in dairy farming, goats and sheep. Thousand hectares of land with standing crop of paddy, vegetables, betel leaf have been damaged.

Several lakhs of houses, particularly kachha houses, have been destroyed. In Puri district alone 1.89 lakhs houses either destroyed or damaged. In slum areas of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack thousands of houses / asbestos roofs were destroyed.

The cyclone badly hit electricity infrastructure uprooting 1.56 lakh electric poles; snapping 6078kms of 33Kv lines and 34.814kms of 11kv lines; destroying 26 primary sub-stations and 12.042 distribution transformers. It badly hit other infrastructures including bridges, dams, lift irrigation, telecommunication. Rural and urban water supply has been seriously affected.

According to Forest & Environment department's assessment, lakhs of trees have been uprooted in forest area and, in outside forest areas, plantation trees also are in the verge of destruction.

Government's buildings have been damaged. School and college buildings under School & Mass Education and Higher Education department have been damaged. Infrastructures of Industries department also have been damaged.

CITU Odisha state committee has launched statewide collection drive for fund for relief and rehabilitation work among the cyclone victims. CITU unions are organizing fund collection and are also staging mass demonstrations / deputations to the authorities for relief and rehabilitation work.

## CITU's Call to Rush Relief Fund

On 13 May CITU gave call to all its units, affiliated unions and federations to give countrywide drive for fund collection and rush immediate fund to CITU Odisha State Committee for relief and rehabilitation of Fani cyclone victims in Odisha.

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## **100 Years of Struggle & Sacrifice**

### **50 Years of Fight for Unity of the Working Class**

# **CITU Golden Jubilee Celebration**

30 May, 2019; Mavlankar Hall, New Delhi

The yearlong Golden Jubilee celebration of the foundation of CITU was inaugurated on 30 May at Mavlankar Auditorium in New Delhi with specially composed song for the occasion by Jasbinder Kaur of Punjab and staging of famous street play 'Machine' by Jan Natya Manch.

All office bearers and activists working at CITU Centre; AIKS general secretary Hannan Mollah, Vikram Singh of AIAWU, Punyavati of AIDWA, SFI general secretary Mayukh Biswas; CITU state leaders and activists of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan participated.

CITU president Hemalata, its vice president A. K. Padmanabhan, AIKS general secretary Hannan Mollah and CITU general secretary Tapan Sen addressed the meeting, Hemalata inaugurating and Tapan Sen concluding.

In their speeches, the speakers pointed out that in its Golden Jubilee year, CITU is celebrating centenary of the foundation of the first Central Trade Union in India; the working class struggle and sacrifices under it along with the national independence movement, which CITU inherited; struggle against reformism; 50 years of the Foundation CITU going forward successfully with efforts of unity and struggle; workers-peasants unity; the class perspective and class objective of the working class emancipation and establishing socialism which CITU has enshrined in its constitution; hence, CITU's clarion call in Golden Jubilee year - 100 years of Struggles and Sacrifices; - 50 years of Fight for Class Unity – which are embedded in the history of the working class movement in India.

In conclusion, Tapan Sen presented CITU's statement for yearlong celebration with concrete Tasks and Activities.

### **Conclusion by the General Secretary**

#### **For the Year Long Observation of 50 Years of CITU's Foundation**

**THE** yearlong observance of 50<sup>th</sup> year of CITU's foundation has to be conceived, realised and implemented in the basic premise of CITU's call for – *Reaching the Unreached*, - *Linking the issues facing the working class and the people with the policy regime*, and - *Exposing the politics that determine and promote the policy regime* - in order to unify the toiling people in entirety in the forthcoming struggles which is going to be tremendously challenging.

**THIS** is the urgent need of the hour to combat the aggressive onslaught of the rightwing political regime on the people – *On the national economy*, - *On the democracy and democratic institutions*, and - *On the unity of the people and the society at large*.

**AND**, in order to effectively implement this call, the entire CITU, and its primary workplace level unit committees

in particular, need to be educated, equipped and activated as leaders of the working people.

**LET** All Round Initiative be unleashed in the entire CITU for yearlong observance of – **50 years of CITU's Foundation** this year which again coincides with the beginning of the **Centenary Year of First Ever National Trade Union Centre** in the country – the AITUC.

**THEREFORE**, CITU's observance of its 50 years of foundation carries with it the rich legacy of the 100 years of working class movement of which the founders of CITU were an integral and inseparable entities.

**LET** Us Pledge to take up this Historic Task to -

- Aim at strengthening CITU and develop the organisation as a strong militant force of the working class of India;
- Strengthen and widen unity of the working class;
- Strengthen trade union unity at the workplace / factory level;
- Focus on political ideological development of CITU cadres and activists;
- Develop and strengthen joint actions of the workers and peasants at the state/district/ local level;
- Special initiative of independent, followed by joint, campaign on the most crucial issue of “unemployment”, “employment generation”, “quality of employment and employment relations”.
- Strengthen solidarity actions – towards workers' struggles in other industries, struggles of other sections of toiling people, international solidarity.

### **ACTIVITIES**

- Use every programme and action of CITU at all levels to put into practice CITU Call: *'Reach the Unreached' and 'Link Issues with Policies; Expose Politics that Determine the Policies'*;
- Activate the lowest level committees of CITU – *the union committees*;
- Workshops and trade union classes, starting from CITU secretariat up to the lowest level of the organisation – union committees – on Kozhikode document on organisation and the tasks before CITU in the present economic and political situation – to be concretely planned and finalised by the full secretariat of CITU which will meet on 17-18 June 2019;
- Seminars/popular lecturing etc on crucial issues of peoples' lives and livelihood and issues affecting the society and the role of working class;
- Intensify propaganda activities through publication of literature, increase efforts for self education and encourage use of innovative and modern technology for education;
- Membership enrolment for 2019 to be taken up as a specific task by all affiliated unions, industrial federations and committees of CITU, fixing a definite time frame; focus on renewing all existing members and increasing membership in all sectors and all states; target of 1 crore membership to be achieved in 2020, by the end of the Golden jubilee celebrations; all the states and all federations/ coordination committees to send reports of their concrete plans by the end of June; to be regularly monitored;
- Identify at least 50 activists from different sectors/ districts in the state and focussed efforts to develop their political ideological understanding and organisational abilities; special attention to develop cadres from among women and socially oppressed sections of the working class;
- All state committees to identify and prioritise at least one key sector for organisation and concentrate on it by allotting required resources – human and financial;
- All state committees to achieve financial stability and self sufficiency to be in a position to take up all the necessary activities for expansion and consolidation, to reach the unreached and publishing necessary literature linking up issues with policies and exposing politics that determine policies; and
- Be vigilant to protect unity of the working class and the people in general; actively intervene whenever attempts are made to disrupt such unity by whatever forces including the communal and divisive forces of various hues.

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# **50 Years of Fight for Unity of the Working Class**

[During Golden Jubilee year of CITU : 30 May, 2019 – 30 May, 2020 : The Working Class has undertaken collection and publication of the write ups on Sectorwise 50 years 'Fight for the Working Class Unity'. Fight for workers unity in Electricity Sectors, is being published in this issue. – Editor]

## **Fight for Unity in the Power Sector**

**Prasanta N Chowdhury**

On the Fight for Unity of the Working Class; CITU president B. T. Ranadive in his concluding speech in CITU's foundation conference on 30 May, 1970 in Kolkata had said, *"The Struggle for unity is a serious struggle, it has to be carried on with the great precision, with great confidence and in the bargain and in the process, the forces of disruption have to be isolated. Only then, our organisation can really develop the fighting strength of the working class and can be an effective organ of the struggle to defend the working class and can be an effective organ to develop its consciousness further so that it can discharge its political obligations which history has placed on it."*

Underlining the importance of struggle for class unity, CITU's Kozhikode organisational document noted, *"Uniting the working class, broadening and heightening struggles, and raising the consciousness of workers to make them recognise their real enemies as well as the root cause of their distress in the system and in the polity are the most important and urgent tasks for us today."*

### **Electricity for Progress**

Power sector is directly related to the progress and for protecting the interests of all electricity consumers - domestic, agricultural, commercial, industrial as well power sector workers, employees and engineers.

But, in colonial India, Electricity Act 1910 was enacted mainly to give legal support to private power companies, who were operating in township for profit earning, to lay the distribution system without any hurdle from land owners and other people. Electricity was not for wide use for developmental, domestic or commercial activities for the people. At the time of independence, total installed capacity in the whole country was only about 1360 MW with insignificant number of personnel engaged in the operation and maintenance work. As such, no trade union movement worth its name existed.

After independence, a comprehensive plan was made to develop power projects in different parts of the country, depending on available resources, and to integrate those under a common national grid. Electrical power is essential for infrastructural development in agriculture, industry, services and also for other infrastructural development.

In the early days after independence, there was lack of financial capability of domestic private capital for huge investment required in developing the infrastructures, especially in power sector. Hence, the government took the responsibility of developing electric power and, with this objective, enacted Electricity Supply Act, 1948 bringing electricity under public sector. After 1956, state electricity boards (SEBs) were formed in most of the states separating from direct government departments. Even now in some states electricity is under state governments' departments.

### **Unionisation of Power Workers**

Though, early workers in electricity boards took initiative to form trade unions in most of the states, but they were reluctant to affiliate these unions with the central trade unions, a lingering-effect of past government employees. Many unions elected political leaders as their top office bearers under illusion to influence government's decision. Some unions elected lawyers as leaders hoping to get easy relief through legal

course. Some workers formed category-wise and caste-wise unions. All these unions did not think of the workers united organized might in collective bargaining. Reformist trade union leaders and the managements encouraged this style of functioning. In such a situation workers of the industry together could not exert pressure on the managements.

But, gradually workers changed their attitude; started getting organized in unions relying on workers united might and using striking power; and got the unions affiliated to the central trade unions by the second half of 60s. The formation of All India Federation of Electricity Employees (AIFEE) in 1966 is the result of such a changed attitude of the workers.

However, formation of AIFEE did not help much. AITUC started pursuing their policy of collaboration with the government. They advised the workers to adopt legal means, peaceful ways and without obstructing the capitalist development of the country. As members of the regional committees of the first national labour commission, they did not oppose the government policy of using Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) against the striking workers.

After the 3rd Five Year Plan, the government, facing economic crisis, started curtailing the benefits of workers and employees; ruthlessly suppressed government employees' strike in September 1968 who were demanding wage hike based on need based minimum wage. They dismissed many of the leaders of the central government employees' movement and shot down number of striking workers in Pathankot, Bikaner and Indraprastha. The then national trade union federations including AITUC did not come out for the rescue of these government employees.

The respective state governments, led by national or state bourgeois parties, stood with the central government to suppress the strike. Only the Left government of Kerala helped the striking workers and did not use ESMA, declared by the Government of India.

### **Struggle of Power Workers**

After the formation of CITU, several unions in central, state and private power utilities became affiliated to it. In some of states, some unions were ideologically closer to CITU, but were not formally affiliated. Some of those remained with the state government employees' federation.

The electricity workers in Kerala started agitations in late fifties and sixties demanding regularization of jobs of temporary workers and pay hikes for temporary and permanent workers. All these unions were category-wise unions. They did not go for indefinite strike. Only temporary and casual workers went on indefinite strike many times with the support of the Left parties and solidarity actions by militant trade unions. And, many demands were won by them.

In states like Assam, Bihar, Tamilnadu and West Bengal also such struggles in the electricity industry developed. In Tamilnadu thousands of temporary workers' jobs were regularized through prolonged agitations and strikes. In Assam, West Bengal and Kerala, engineers also went on strike. In Kerala a strike of the graduate engineers of the electricity board continued for 65 days. The union, led by AITUC, opposed the strike. At that time, the state government, supported by CPI leader and CPI's electricity minister, banned the strike and referred the issue to the industrial tribunal. K. O. Habeeb was the convener of the action council. CITU supported the strike and twice organised statewide strikes in support of the engineers' strike. In Orissa, through struggles, system of casual workers was abolished in 1971-72. In Kerala also casual and NMR system were abolished through agreements signed by CITU and other unions in 1972. In West Bengal, muster roll, work charged, ad-hoc and ex-cadre system of engagement continued till LF Govt came to power in 1977 and abolished all.

Electricity unions of Kerala, Tamilnadu and West Bengal were affiliated to CITU. On 17-18 August, 1973, union labour minister convened a conference to discuss the issues of electricity workers. Habeeb, Janakiraman and Sukhamoy Pal took part on behalf of CITU. As suggested by the union labour minister Raghunath Reddy, Central Wage Guide Line Committee was constituted. The Committee recommended a



wage and dearness allowance formula. On 19-20 October, 1974 a convention of electricity workers took place in Delhi. Wage formulation was one of the main agenda of the convention. In June, 1975 internal emergency was declared and all forms of democratic movement was banned.

### **Formation and Expansion of EEFI**

Going through the process of series of struggles and sacrifices and on CITU's line, Electricity Employees Federation of India (EEFI) was founded on 13-15 January, 1984 in a national convention in Trivandrum. The convention had the valued guidance of B. T. Ranadive. E. Balanandan and D. Janakiraman were elected as president and general secretary. Many unions of electricity workers, not affiliated to CITU, are affiliated in EEFI and are comfortably functioning in it. This bondage of unity for class struggle added immense strength. 22 Unions from 15 states took affiliation of EEFI at its very inception.

### **Neoliberal Attacks**

In 1991, Government of India adopted the policy of neoliberal economy as the path of development. Private capital was invited in electricity industry. SEBs was unbundled by Electricity Act, 2003 to serve the interests of the private profiteers. EEFI independently and in the joint platform of NCCOEEE (National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers) launched heroic struggles to combat the challenge of privatisation.

EEFI grew stronger during this period of thirty five years, both organisationally by effective intervention on various issues across the country. It expanded in new areas, new states, new utilities and among new sections of industry and within both regular and contractor workers. EEFI activities have increased in terms of the types of the issues addressed, the places and sections in which they are conducted and the number of workers participating in them. EEFI is today recognised by electricity workers all over the country as the most militant fighting organisation of the electricity workers. At present EEFI has 45 affiliated unions from 22 states and UTs covering both regular, contract, casual and daily rated workers of both public and private sectors.

### **NCCOEEE & Its Struggle**

Directed by BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, Electricity Bill, 2000 was drafted by National Council of Applied Economic Research with object, as mentioned, to nullify all existing laws applicable for power sector in order to attract investment in power sector from private foreign capitalists on the pretext of competition. The main goal was for privatisation of SEBs annulling the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948.

Government of India suppressed the fact of economic advancement of the country due to commendable performance of SEBs. SEBs added generating capacity over 70 times since independence; increased rural electrification from 1,500 to 5 lakhs villages and energisation of 1.2 crores pump-sets contributing towards growth of food production making a starving country to food surplus one. Following economic growth, demand for electricity went up. Now, the Government thought to invite profit greedy private capitalists in this sector. For obvious reason, they focused on accumulated loss of Rs.26,000 crores during 5 decades!

Outline of the draft of the electricity Bill, 2000 was placed in power ministers' conference in New Delhi in February, 2000. The proposed Bill, once enacted, would have curbed the independence of the country and stall all developments in technology, manufacturing as well indigenous production system. It would have stopped employment generation in all sectors like infrastructure, agriculture, commerce and industry. All national level trade unions and organisations of engineers and officers in electricity sector assembled in a convention in Jaipur on 30 April, 2000. E. Balanandan and A. B. Bardhan, legendary leaders of power sector workers, took part in this convention. They formed a very broad based platform as National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers (NCCOEEE) to fight back the Bill by the electricity employees and engineers and involving wider section of people to oppose the game plan of the NDA government to convert electricity from a service for the socio-economic development of the country to a market driven

commodity. CITU central office assigned a national centre for this historic work of EEFI.

NCCOEEE National Chapter decided to constitute Regional and State Chapters to carry out the struggle. EEFI played a pivotal role in all the states, regions and at national level. CITU leadership extended guidance and all round support for the nationwide united movement of the workers, officers and engineers in electricity.

Going beyond the agenda on electricity legislation, NCCOEEE has extended its struggle to make right to electricity as human right, to keep national energy resources as public property, equal wages for similar jobs, abolition of contract system in regular jobs and to oppose New Pension Scheme. All national federations of electricity employees and engineers are the constituents of NCCOEEE. After installation of BJP led NDA government in 2014, electricity federation affiliated to BMS has distanced itself from the united activities under NCCOEEE.

### **Achievement of the United Struggle**

United struggle of NCCOEEE achieved notable successes with the support from left political parties during UPA-1 government which was dependent on left parties support. Clause 6 of Electricity Act, 2003 to curb the right to electricity of rural people was deleted. After deletion of this clause, Rajeev Gandhi Gramin Vaidyutikaran Yojana, largest ever project for rural electrification, was taken up with major funding by the Government of India. Anti-people clauses like abolition of cross subsidy were amended.

Again, Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2014 was placed in the Parliament on 19 December, 2014. The Bill proposed splitting distribution service into 'carriage' and 'content'. In protest, there was massive March to Parliament on 8 December followed by discussion with the minister. But, the Government did not take into consideration the points raised by NCCOEEE.

In this background, power ministers' conference was held at Kochi on 6-7 November, 2015. NCCOEEE promptly organized a protest rally before the venue of the conference. All national federations of electricity employees, engineers and officers of Kerala played major role to make the protest demonstration successful. Besides Kerala, power sector leadership of Tamilnadu and of adjacent states also contributed in making the demonstration a mammoth one. All over Kerala placards, banners and festoons highlighted the anti-people features of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2014. In this background, the Ministry of labour, Government of India, convened meeting for discussion on 5 November, 2015 at RLC office at Kochi. The meeting was fruitless.

Around 16,000 electricity employees, officers and engineers surrounded the venue of the power ministers' conference, held rally and public meeting. K. O. Habeeb presided over the meeting. Manik Dey, the then power minister of Tripura, took part in the rally and greeted the NCCOEEE for working in the interest of people of the country. Ultimately, Piyush Goyal, the union power minister invited NCCOEEE leadership for discussion. The meeting continued over 1 hour without result.

### **Struggle Widens**

Following this, series of massive regional, state and district rallies were organised in different parts of the country with submission of memoranda to the Prime Minister opposing the government's move to curb the right to electricity for the poor people of India.

National convention of electricity workers convened by NCCOEEE on 8 June, 2018 decided nationwide power strike on 7 December, 2018. But, later, in view of proposed countrywide workers general strike on 8-9 January, 2019, 7 December power workers strike was deferred.

### **Government's Move Stalled**

Due to vibrant united struggle of power workers, despite serious attempts through five years, Government could not enact the 2014 Bill except introducing a new Bill as Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2018. *(Prasanta N Choudhury is General Secretary of EEFI, Convener of NCCOEEE & President of TUI, Energy of WFTU)*

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# Significance of May Day

**J. S. Majumdar**

May Day, the International Working Class Solidarity Day, is being observed on 1 May every year. There are different understandings about the celebration of May Day.

One understanding is to observe the May Day as remembrance of a historical incident that happened on 4 May, 1886 in the Haymarket in Chicago during workers' struggle demanding 8 hours legal limitation of a day's normal work. Such understanding confines to the rituals of celebration of a past incident of great significance, as if it was an 'accidental event' in the history. They also promote rest and recreation on May Day. Further, it limits the working class struggle only to 8 hours a day. This is a reformist understanding.

There is also a misconception that red flag came into being from cloth that was soaked in the blood of the martyred workers of Haymarket.

Trade union movement, having Marxist view of class struggle, observe the May Day with different understanding which is much deeper; going beyond the Haymarket incident in history; and linking it with the ongoing economic, social and political struggle of the working class for improvement and advancement.

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The working class struggle in different countries for legal limitation of working hours in a normal day's work emerged out of their own experience much before the Haymarket struggle for it. From the extensive studies of such struggles in the then advanced capitalist countries, Karl Marx came to his conclusions and propounded the *Theory of Surplus Value* and the essence of class struggle in the capitalist mode of production.

About two decades before the Chicago incident, Karl Marx wrote about the 'Limitation of the Working Hours in a Normal Working Day of the Workers' thus, "*the working day has a maximum limit... Within the 24 hours of the natural day a man can expend only a definite quantity of his vital force. A horse, in like manner, can only work from day to day, 8 hours. During part of the day this force must rest, sleep; during another part the man has to satisfy other physical needs, to feed, wash, and clothe himself. Besides these purely physical limitations, the extension of the working day encounters moral ones. The labourer needs time for satisfying his intellectual and social wants, the extent and number of which are conditioned by the general state of social advancement. The variation of the working day fluctuates, therefore, within physical and social bounds.*" (*The Capital Vol.-I, Part-3, Chapter 10: 'The Working day', Section 1*)

From this narrative of Karl Marx emerged out today's working class' May Day slogan "8 hours work, 8 hours rest and 8 hours recreation & cultural activities".

Marx then wrote about the "*The Struggle for a Normal Working Day*" in three consecutive Sections. (*Sections 5, 6 and 7 in Chapter 10; The Capital Vol.-I*)

In Section 5, examining the '*Compulsory Laws for the Extension of the Working Day*' from middle of 14<sup>th</sup> Century to middle of 18<sup>th</sup> Century - the period of industrialization, the rise of capitalism and struggle between the labour and the capital; Marx concludes thus, "*The establishment of a normal working-day is the result, of centuries of struggle between capitalist and labourer. The history of this struggle shows two opposed tendencies. Compare, e.g., the English factory legislation of our time with*

## *Significance of May Day*

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*the English Labour Statutes from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to well into the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup>. Whilst the modern Factory Acts compulsorily shortened the working-day, the earlier statutes tried to lengthen it by compulsion.”*

Marx then narrated about the ongoing working class struggles in different countries for legal limitation of working hours in Section 7 “*The Struggle for a Normal Working Day; Reaction of the English Factory Acts on Other Countries.*”

Being emphatic on *Working Class Unity for Struggle*, he writes, “*In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose. The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight hours’ agitation that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California.*” (Underline added for emphasis).

Emphasising on the Significance of the International Working Class Movement on legal limitation of the working hours, Marx writes, “*At the same time, the Congress of the International Working Men’s Association at Geneva, on the proposition of the London General Council, resolved that ‘the limitation of the working day is a preliminary condition without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive... the Congress proposes eight hours as the legal limit of the working day.’” “*Thus the movement of the working-class on both sides of the Atlantic, that had grown instinctively out of the conditions of production themselves.*” (Underline added for emphasis)*

Earlier, in the same year 1866, the National Labour Union of the United States, had taken decision for 8 hours work a day. Endorsing that decision, the Geneva Congress of the International Workingmen’s Association noted in the resolution, “*As this limitation represents the general demand of the workers of the North-American United States, the Congress transforms this demand into the general platform of the workers of the whole world.*”

It was the International Workingmen’s Association, of which Karl Marx was the prominent leader and a member of its 32-member ‘London General Council’, in its first Congress at Geneva on 3-8 September, 1866 had adopted the resolution on the struggle to achieve the demand on legal limitation of 8 hours work a day in all countries of the world.

Marx’ imprint in drafting the resolution was very much clear. The resolution noted, that achieving ‘*limitation of the working day is a preliminary condition*’ for the working class movement for advancing all further struggles for ‘*improvement*’ in other conditions of work in the capitalist system itself and for further advancement of struggle for ultimate ‘*emancipation*’ of the working class.

Hence, the essence of May Day celebration as the International Workers Day is for rededicating working class struggles for achieving 8 hours work-limitation, and not limiting to it, as a preliminary condition; for further advancement of the working class struggle within capitalist system for economic and social justice for all social partners and on political issues emerging out of these struggles; and preparing ground for onward march to Socialism.

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About two decades later, after the International Workingmen’s Association in its Geneva Congress adopted resolution on 8 hours work limitation and after the death of Karl Marx, the guide; the Federation of Organized Trades and Labour Unions in USA had unanimously set May 1, 1886 as the date of general strike for achieving eight-hour work limitation.

This common demand and strike decision have to be seen in the background of rapidly growing industrialization in USA and it emerging as the most important centre of capitalist world; severe exploitation of the workers associated with long hours of forced work; and police, big bosses, strikebreakers and media combine ruthlessly suppressing workers organisations and agitations.

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On that day, on May 1, 1886, estimated about half a million workers were on strike and joined rallies across United States. The battle cry was – “*Eight-hour day, with no cut in pay.*”

On next May 3, striking workers in Chicago assembled near McCormick Harvesting Machine Company. Under protection of 400 police personnel, strikebreakers broke the picket line and entered the McCormick plant. When workers resisted the strike breakers, police fired on them killing six workers on the spot.

A protest rally was held next day, on May 4, at Haymarket. The rally was peaceful and was addressed by August Spies, Albert Parsons and Samuel Fielden. Large number of police was present. Addressing the rally Spies said, “There seems to prevail the opinion in some quarters that this meeting has been called for the purpose of inaugurating a riot, hence these warlike preparations on the part of so-called ‘law and order.’ ... The object of this meeting is to explain the general situation of the eight-hour movement and to throw light upon various incidents in connection with it.”

At about 10:30 pm, police arrived with big force and ordered to end the rally. At that time a home-made bomb was thrown into the path of the advancing police killing a policeman and wounding six others.

In all, seven policemen and at least four workers were killed. Historian Paul Avrich maintains that the police fired on the fleeing demonstrators, reloaded and then fired again, killing four and wounding as many as 70 people. An anonymous police official told the *Chicago Tribune*, “A very large number of the police were wounded by each other’s revolvers. ... It was every man for himself..”

Yet, the *New York Times*, dateline May 4, screamed with headline “Rioting and Bloodshed in the Streets of Chicago ... Twelve Policemen Dead or Dying”. It referred to the strikers as a “mob”.

A harsh anti-union clampdown followed. Without caring for warrants, Chicago police squads resorted to two-months-long physical attacks on the labour activists, ransacking their meeting halls and places.

No person could be arrested or identified as bomb-thrower. Many believe the hand of notorious Pinkerton agency, the private security and detective agency, behind the bomb throwing.

Yet, the workers leaders, who spoke and addressed the workers rallies in connection with 8 hours work limitation, were arrested and the trial began on 11 June, 1886. The trial was conducted in an atmosphere of extreme hostility created by the media toward the defendants. Judge Gary also displayed open hostility to the defendants. Selection of the jury lasted three weeks and nearly one thousand people were called; all union members and anyone who expressed sympathy toward socialism were dismissed; and, in the end, a jury of 12 was seated, most of whom confessed prejudice against the defendants.

On November 11, 1887 - Engel, Fischer, Parsons, and Spies were hanged to death. They sang the *Marseillaise*, then the anthem of the international revolutionary movement. Moments before they were hanged, Spies shouted, “*The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today.*”



At the time of Haymarket incident, Marx was no more, so also the International Workingmen’s Association (First International). The International Workingmen’s Association (Second International) was reorganized which held its first Congress in Paris on July 14, 1889.

After hearing from the American delegates about the workers struggle in America for 8-hour day and being inspired by the great struggle and martyrdom of the workers in Haymarket, the Congress adopted the historic resolution that “*The Congress decides to organize a great international demonstration, so that in all countries and in all cities on one appointed day the toiling masses shall demand of the state authorities the legal reduction of the working day to eight hours, as well as the carrying out of other*

## *Significance of May Day*

decisions of the Paris Congress. Since a similar demonstration has already been decided upon for May 1, 1890, by the American Federation of Labor at its Convention in St. Louis, December, 1888, this day is accepted for the international demonstration. The workers of the various countries must organize this demonstration according to conditions prevailing in each country.”

Absence of Karl Marx and domination of reformists in International can be seen in the draft the resolution. It confines to worldwide demonstration on May Day every year for statutory limitation of working day to 8 hours without connecting it with ‘improvement’ and ‘emancipation’ as was in 1866 resolution.

And, yet, one international solidarity action on May Day by the working class of different nation-states is of great signification for the working class revolutionary movement. Engels writes on May 1, 1890, “As I write these lines, the European and American proletariat is reviewing its fighting forces, mobilized for the first time, mobilized as one army, under one flag, for one immediate aim: the standard eight-hour working day to be established by legal enactment, as proclaimed by the Geneva Congress of the International in 1866, and again by the Paris Workers’ Congress of 1889.”

However, in the next Congress in Brussels in 1891, May Day resolution of 1889 Congress was again revised restoring class perspective. Reiterating 1889 Congress decision to observe May Day for 8-hours day; it added that the demonstrations on May Day will also be to “improve working conditions”, “to ensure peace among the nations” and “deepening of the class struggle.”

The class perspective in organising the May Day celebration was best explained by Lenin in the preface to a pamphlet, *May Days in Kharkov*, in November, 1900. Lenin wrote, “In another six months, the Russian workers will celebrate the first of May of the first year of the new century, and it is time we set to work to make the arrangements for organizing the celebrations in as large a number of centres as possible, and on as imposing a scale as possible, not only by the number that will take part in them, but also by their organized character, by the class-consciousness they will reveal, by the determination that will be shown to commence the irrepressible struggle for the political liberation of the Russian people, and, consequently, for a free opportunity for the class development of the proletariat and its open struggle for Socialism.”

## **The Red Flag**

Jim Connell's song – ‘*The Red Flag*’, published in 1886, became popular for the revolutionary movement at that time which has reference of Chicago incident, in the third stanza, thus, - “Look round, the Frenchman loves its blaze, - The sturdy German chants its praise, - In Moscow's vaults its hymns are sung, - Chicago swells the surging throng.”

Red was the colour symbolizing the French Revolution. However, now the flag in red colour is being used as revolutionary tradition since Paris Commune of 1871.

### **Notice**

#### **GCM Tier Working Women Coordination Committee Meeting**

Date: 6 August, 2019;  
Time: 10 am – evening;  
Venue: CITU state committee office, Bangalore.  
Participants: All women office bearers and general council members of CITU; conveners of the state CCWWs.

- Tapan Sen, General Secretary

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# MAY DAY 2019 REPORTS

[May Day 2019 has been celebrated by CITU units, unions and federations across the country in different forms including hoisting flags, holding meetings, bringing out rallies, staging demonstrations etc. Following is the gist of some reports received at CITU centre]

## Tripura

Defeating all attempts of obstructions by BJP hoodlums, May Day 2019 was observed in Tripura in all districts and subdivisions by hoisting CITU flag and paying floral tributes to the martyrs. Rallies were organised culminating into street corner meetings in Belonia, Sabroom and Gandacherra subdivisions. In Dharmanagar, Ambassa and other subdivisions, hall meetings were held.

At Agartala, people participated in *Prabhat Feri* with revolutionary songs and recitation in early morning. In the evening a public meeting was held at Rabinda Satabarsiki Bhawan premises. As BJP-led Tripura government cancelled government holiday on May Day this year, the tea garden workers could not attend the programme in large number as before. The meeting was presided by CITU state president Manik Dey and addressed by the state general secretary Sankar Prasad Datta. Former chief minister, CPI(M) Polit Bureau members and state opposition leader Manik Sarkar was the main speaker. Jaya Barman spoke on behalf of working women. Bijan Dhar, chairman of the Left Front, and Tapan Chakraborti, CITU state vice-president were on the dais.

## Kerala

State president Anathalavattom Anandan hoisted the CITU flag in the state centre, specially decorated for the occasion. May Day 2019 was celebrated jointly by CITU and AITUC throughout the State with good participation of the workers.

At Thiruvananthapuram, the procession from Palayam to Putharikandam Maithanam was joined by more than 10,000 workers. The public meeting was inaugurated by state president Anathalavattom Anandan. State general secretary Elamaram Kareem addressed public meeting in Kozhikode Town.

May Day programme was held at 17 centres in Kollam, 9 in Pathanamthitta, 10 in Kottayam, 13 in Alappuzha, 22 in Ernakulam, 16 in Trissur, 14 in Palakkad, 17 in Malappuram, 13 in Kozhikode, 4 in Waynad, 17 in Kannur and several centres in Kasaragod districts.

## Tamilnadu

CITU's May Day Manifesto was translated in Tamil and published in the CITU journal *Seithi* and *Theekkathir* daily. A joint statement of CITU and AITUC on May Day was issued. All unions in the state hoisted the Red flag. CITU and AITUC jointly celebrated May Day in districts bringing out rallies and holding public meetings addressed by CITU and AITUC leaders. CITU National and state leaders A. K. Padhmanabhan, T. K. Rangarajan, G. Ramakrishnan, K. Balakrishnan, G. Sukumaran, R. Singaravelu, Malathi Chittibabu, V. Kumar participated and addressed May Day rallies.

## Punjab

May Day 2019 was observed at 50 places in Punjab and Chandigarh by holding rallies and

public meetings calling upon the working class to defeat anti-people and anti-national policies and communal fascism. These rallies were addressed by CITU state and national leaders Raghunath Singh, Usha Rani and others.

## Andaman and Nicobar Islands

CITU and Non-Gazetted Govt. Officers Association (NGOA) jointly celebrated May Day 2019 throughout the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. At Port Blair procession began from Crusade House premises at Phoenix Bay culminating at Tiranga Park public meeting addressed by CITU state general secretary B. Chandrachoodan, its president M. Boominathan, NGOA general secretary T. S. Sreekumar and others.

May Day rallies were also brought out and public meetings held at Diglipur, Rangat, Kadamtala, Little Andaman, Kamorta, Katchal and Campbell Bay.

### Notice

## CITU General Council Meeting

7-10 August, 2019; Hassan, Karnataka

The meeting of CITU General Council will be held as per following schedule:

Dates: 7-10 August, 2019

Time: From 10 am of 7 August - To 12 noon of 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2019

Place: Hassan in Karnataka, (exact venue will be informed later)

Agenda: 1. Presidential Address; 2. General Secretary's Report; 3. Review of the post election situation; 4. Future course of activities; 5. Trade Union Education Programmes at P. R. Bhavan; 6. 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of CITU & related issues; 7. Any other issue with the permission of the Chair.

### NOTE

1. There will be open session after conclusion of the GCM;
2. Each GC member will pay delegate fee of Rs.1200;
3. All GC members are requested to reach Hassan by 6 August evening;
4. Hassan is at about 180 kms distance from Bangalore; there are rail services from Bangalore, Mangalore and Mysore; it is also well connected by bus service.

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- Tapan Sen, General Secretary



# INDUSTRIES & SECTORS

## Brick Kiln

### **Lakhs of Brick Kiln Workers under Threat of Losing Jobs**

When the country has been fully engaged for the 17<sup>th</sup> General Election, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change of the outgoing Modi government quietly issued a gazette notification on 25 February, 2019 asking for public opinion within 60 days, on the Ministry's move to issue final notification for (i) immediate banning of new red clay brick kilns within 300 kms radius of all coal / lignite power plants; and (ii) converting all existing red clay brick kilns, in these areas, into coal ash based manufacturing facilities.

This gazette notification was issued just a fortnight before the Election Commission announced the election schedule and asking for public opinion, to fulfill formalities as legal requirements, during the ongoing election process.

To bypass the Parliament on such a vital issue, the Ministry adopted a dubious method. It proposed to implement these decisions through backdoor just by amending a two decades old circular of 14 September 1999.

If this decision is implemented, most of the red clay brick kilns will be closed affecting vast majority of estimated 1 crore under-privileged piece-rated workers engaged in the brick kiln industry across the country today; and the people will be deprived of the cheapest building materials – the red clay brick.

Government proposes to convert the existing brick kilns in these areas into manufacturing coal fly ash bricks, blocks, tiles, roofing sheets using cement as binder. The proposal is to convert the brick kilns into factories operated by machines replacing the human labour within one year. Brick kilns operation is seasonal, but such factories will operate round the year. It is obvious that the intension is that most of the red clay brick kilns get closed.

### **CITU Rajasthan State Committee's Initiative**

CITU Rajasthan State Committee took up the issue to *save jobs, save brick kiln industry* and strongly opposed Central government's move; held meetings explaining the issue to the workers; brought out rallies and submitted memoranda to the local administrations. It sent protest letter to the Union government. After May Day meeting at Sri Ganganagar, a procession of thousands of brick kiln and other workers was brought out culminating in a demonstration before the district administration and submitting memorandum on brick kiln issues.

### **29 May Rally at Jaipur**

1000 plus activists and workers of CITU's Rajasthan brick kiln labour union, coming from Sri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh and some other districts; held a state level rally at Jaipur on 29 May protesting against central government's notification to ban red clay brick kiln.

They were also joined by the trade union activists from Neemrana to protest against victimisation and denial of trade union rights by the Japanese multinational Daikin.

The workers marched from Martyrs Memorial and held rally, demonstration and public meeting at Civil Lines Gate before the chief minister demanding his intervention. The meeting was addressed by

CITU state president Ravindra Shukla, general secretary V. S. Rana and its other office bearers, leaders of brick kiln workers union, union leaders of Neemrana and of Daikin and others.

A delegation representing CITU, brick kiln union and Daikin union, in absence of the chief minister, met his OSD and submitted two memoranda.

In one memorandum, CITU demanded about one lakh brick kiln workers' job protection in Rajasthan in view of central government's 25 February notification and demanded of the chief minister to immediate write to central government opposing the notification.

In the other memorandum, CITU demanded immediate implementation of 25 April agreement between the government and CITU on Daikin workers issues including their reinstatement, institution of judicial enquiry on police action against the striking workers of Daikin during 8-9 January, 2019 workers national general strike; and withdrawal of false cases against the workers filed by Neemrana police. OSD assured to take up the issues urgently with the chief minister.

## **CITU's All India Initiative**

On getting report from its Rajasthan state committee, CITU general secretary wrote to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change sharply bringing out the issues involved and strongly opposing the move.

In his letter Tapan Sen accused Modi government for this move only to help Adani Power Limited of Adanis, the number one private power producer, and the Reliance Power Limited of Ambanis, the second biggest private power producers, just before the election, displaying crony capitalism at work.

CITU condemned Modi government's attempt of bypassing the Parliament on such vital issue; and implementing its decision through backdoor by an executive order by amending a 1999 notification.

CITU accused Modi government for this move without even consulting the Ministry of Labour and ignoring the central trade unions when lakhs of most under-privileged brick kiln workers are under threat of losing jobs due to this move of the Government.

CITU accused Modi government for this move ignoring consultation even with State governments who have been made responsible, and also directly the district magistrates under them, for implementation of these decisions exhibiting one more attack on federalism.

In a separate letter CITU general secretary has drawn attention of the Election Commission on the outgoing Modi government taking such major decisions just prior to election, seeking opinion during the ongoing election process with intention to implement the same as routine administrative measures.

### **Condolence**

#### **Comrade N. Venkateswarlu**

CITU expressed its grief on the demise of Comrade N. Venkateswarlu in a hospital in Hyderabad on 7 May, 2019 after prolong illness due to cancer.

Comrade N. Venkateswarlu, popularly known as Kiran, was the general secretary of United Electricity Employees Union of CITU in undivided Andhra Pradesh and, thereafter, in Telangana; was an office bearer of Electricity Employees Federation of India (EEFI) and a member of CITU General Council. Comrade N. Venkateswarlu was an active members of the CPI(M).

EEFI has separately expressed their grief and conveyed condolences on the passing away of Comrade N. Venkateswarlu. He was twice elected as national office bearer of EEFI in its 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> conferences. EEFI union in undivided Andhra Pradesh was expanded under his leadership and of the team led by him. EEFI conveyed condolences to his comrades in the Union and his family.

# WORKERS – PEASANTS UNITY

## Nationwide Call to Boycott PepsiCo

CITU gave nationwide call on 26 April, in solidarity with the call of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), to boycott PepsiCo products, including its well-known potato chips brand 'Lays', to support the struggling potato farmers of Gujarat who are under attack from the US multinational beverage company.

PepsiCo had filed a case in a Ahmadabad court against 11 potato farmers of Gujarat demanding Rs1.05 crore compensation from each farmer alleging that these farmers were cultivating FC-5 variety of potato on which PepsiCo claimed to have "obtained exclusive right in the country in 2016". AIKS asserted that PepsiCo's stand is in violation of '*Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act 2001*'.

AIKS in its statement on 25 April 2019 said that it, along with other peasant organisations, had already approached Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPV&FRA) demanding its urgent intervention. "This is a test case of the corporate exploitation of farmers under the WTO regime," the statement said.

Upholding AIKS call on "Lay" other potato products of PepsiCo, CITU called upon the entire working class and their trade unions to actively organize boycott movement across the country in coordination with AIKS.

## PepsiCo Retreats

The boycott of Pepsi products had spontaneous support of the people and created pressure on the Company. Ultimately PepsiCo expressed its intent to withdraw the lawsuit against the farmers.

In a statement on 3 May, AIKS said it is a significant victory in farmers' struggle for protection of seed freedom and congratulated the farmers and the organisations that stood for this cause.

However, nothing concrete had been done yet. AIKS demanded of Gujarat government to publicly spell out about the negotiation that it is having with the Company. AIKS demanded unconditional apology from PepsiCo and also demanded deterrent action against it including exemplary compensation to the farmers and revocation of license in case of Company's refusal.

## Issues this Episode Brought into Fore

The episode has brought into fore some issues which are threatening the farmers. One is the predatory agribusiness aiming to take-over agriculture violating laws and farmers' seed rights and freedom.

'Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers Right Act, 2001' (PPVFR Act) Section 39(1)(iv) states, "*Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act – a farmer shall be deemed to be entitled to save, use, sow, re-sow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected under this Act in the same manner as he was entitled before the coming into the force of this Act, provided that the farmer shall not be entitled to sell branded seed of a variety protected under this Act*".

AIKS demanded that States and Central governments strictly adhere to this clause and establish fool-proof mechanism for registration of varieties compliant with it.

There is also need of effective price control, stopping illegal seed trade, monitoring on contract farming, seed traceability and monitoring of agribusiness and trade.

## Chhattisgarh

### **Murderous Attack on CITU Leader at Bhilai**

#### **B. Sanyal**



Yogesh Soni, the general secretary of CITU affiliated contractor workers union in Bhilai Steel Plant and a member of CITU Chhattisgarh state committee, while on way to join duties in the early hours of 7 May, was attacked by a hired criminal gang. He was stabbed repeatedly. Soni fell down on the road profusely bleeding and the attackers fled. Exhibiting tremendous courage and grit, Soni pulled himself up and was immediately taken to Sector 9 hospital where he was admitted. His life was saved.

In protest CITU gheraoed the police station and met higher police officers and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits. Almost all trade unions of Bhilai jointly staged demonstration. CITU

state centre also demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

As a result of the movement, several attackers and the conspirators including the contractor Sudhansu Khandelwal, supervisor Govind Sahu, conspirators Y. Nagaraj and Chiku Hiyal, hired attackers Nagarjun and R. Samuel have been arrested. Another attacker K. Benjamin is absconding. Most of them have past criminal records.

The contractor has recruited many criminals as workers who are used to suppress the democratic rights of the workers and the protest movement against exploitation. This murderous attack on Soni through the hired goons is a clear threat not only to Soni but also to those who are in the forefront of CITU-led struggle for contract workers in BSP.

Contract workers in BSP are being deprived of their legal rights and benefits including payment of minimum wage; pay slip, PF, adequate safety etc. CITU union has been leading long drawn struggles for implementation of the labour laws and rights of contract workers. Because of this, BSP management and the contractors nexus became alarmed. This gruesome attack on Soni was connived by the contractors and the BSP management. This attack was not just to threaten him but to physically eliminate him.

The BSP management has been refusing to blacklist the contractor despite several complaints of illegal activities by them. This suggests about the unholy management-contractors nexus in BSP. CITU reiterated the demand to blacklist the contractors with criminal background and to take stern actions against BSP officers giving them protection. CITU also reiterated its demand of the implementation of labour laws in BSP with regard to the contractor workers and ensure equal wage for equal work and regularisation of all contractor workers.

*(B. Sanyal is the CITU Chhattisgarh state president)*

## Maharashtra

# **TUs Jointly Protest against Externment of Karad**

## **Vivek Monteiro**

CITU centre condemned Nasik city police and general secretary Tapan Sen wrote to the chief minister of Maharashtra on 18 April protesting against the vindictive police action, issuing illegal 'Externment Order' from Nasik, Thane and Ahmednagar districts under the obscure Bombay Police Act, 1951 on 17 April, 2019 to Dr D. L. Karad, CITU Maharashtra state president, its national vice president and a leading member of the CPI(M). This police action was at the instance of the industry-owners and for political reason during the ongoing general election in the country.

Karad is the eye sore of the industry-owners for leading legitimate trade union movement in Nasik and in adjoining districts. Charges in externment order are mostly for organizing morchas and agitations of the workers on their demands and complaints and about labour law violations by the employers. The narrative in the order is packaged with manufactured complaints of 'threats of violence' by one 'secret witness'.

The entire exercise by the concerned police administration is also politically motivated as the CPI(M) candidate was contesting from Dindori constituency within which Nasik region also falls.

This anti-union conspiracy of the Maharashtra government, Nashik police, and local politicians and unscrupulous anti-union employers is obviously intended to obstruct the growing influence of CITU in these districts.

CITU Maharashtra state committee has responded to this attack by staging protest demonstrations in Nasik, Solapur, Mumbai and in other districts. A delegation of Trade Union Joint Action Committee (TUJAC) of Maharashtra including V. Utagi, Joint Convenor of the TUJAC; Mahendra Singh, Vivek Monteiro, Sayeed Ahmed and K.R. Raghu from CITU; Dhumal from HMS; M.A. Patil and N. Vasudevan from NTUI; and Uday Chaudhary from AITUC met the joint director of the Maharashtra police on 18 April and submitted memorandum pointing out that the externment proceedings are illegal and mala fide and was being initiated at the behest of vested interests.

The letter stated that the timing of the notice appears to be with the deliberate intention of preventing the participation of Dr. Karad in the Lok Sabha election campaign and forthcoming Maharashtra assembly elections.

TUJAC demanded unconditional withdrawal of the proceedings against Dr. Karad and action against the police officers who have initiated them at the behest of a section of anti-labour vested interests. Several unions from other states have also written protest letters to the Maharashtra government and sent letters of solidarity to CITU Maharashtra.

Almost one year back, in June 2018, demonstrations were held in all industrial centres of Maharashtra to protest the filing of a false case against Dr. D.L. Karad by the Nashik police. Along with CITU unions, all trade unions under the banner of the Kamgar Sangathana Samyukta Kruti Samiti, Maharashtra (Trade Union Joint Action Committee) came forward to protest against the fabricated case.

In a joint letter to the Maharashtra government at that time JAC had stated: "The KSSKS, Maharashtra, takes a serious view of the misuse by the Maharashtra government of the law and order machinery to attack the trade union rights of the working class. A recent example is the case registered by the Nashik Police against Dr. D.L. Karad, president of CITU Maharashtra state committee and workers of a small factory making false and fabricated serious charges, including 'attempt to murder' u/s 307, in a matter of what was only a minor scuffle between workers with no serious injury to anyone. A simple perusal of the F.I.R. registered clearly

shows that this is a misuse of the authority of the police to frame and harass a senior trade union leader. We urge you to direct the Nasik police to immediately withdraw the charges made against Dr. D.L. Karad, and also drop the charges u/s 307 of IPC and other false charges made against workers.”

The conspiracy of the BJP - Shiv Sena government to attack the trade unions and curb trade union organization is continuing unabated. The show cause notice for externment of Dr. Karad is replete with false allegations and is silent on the fact that Dr. Karad has been honourably acquitted by the courts in all the false cases filed against him. During the hearings, which are still in progress at the time of writing, Dr. Karad has responded in details pointing out the illegalities and falsehoods contained in the show cause notice.

*(Vivek Monteiro is Secretary, CITU Maharashtra state committee)*

## Tamilnadu

### An MNC, Police and a Biased Court

## **CITU leader Arrested for Protecting Workers**

The management of Hawashi, a subsidiary of South Korean auto company Hyundai, and hundreds of policemen led by an additional DSP, jointly raided the premises of Shovel India Ltd at Kanchipuram at the midnight of 19 May and arrested CITU district leaders, secretary E. Muthukumar and S. Kannan, and all the workers who were staying inside the factory protecting the machines from being forcibly removed by the management of Hawashi. Muthukumar was sent to jail and was later released on bail. The arrested workers were released from police custody next day.

Shovel manufactures car glasses for Hawashi. It employs 151 permanent workers and 30 other workers. Since March, 2019 the South Korean managing director Choi yongsuk, is absconding leaving behind substantial debt burden, statutory outstanding and workers dues including Rs.26 crore as GST arrears; Rs.34 crores on account of workers PF dues, 6 months due wages and canteen dues; Rs.30 crore to private lender. Yet, the workers voluntarily involved themselves in the production process in shifts and managed the activities in the factory to save their jobs and the company.

But, Hawashi management wanted to remove all machineries and equipments from the Shovel company premises. The workers and the union objected and resisted all such attempts. CITU raised disputes on workers' wages which is admitted in conciliation. On 28 April a MOU was signed between the Hawashi management and the union led by CITU before the DLC that the production would not be stopped in Shovel till the managing director returns.

But same day, at the instance of Hyundai, the management filed petition before the court for police protection, due to the alleged threat of CITU leadership and the workers, and to help the management to remove machineries from Shovel factory. The biased court did not even hear the union and, on very next day, issued order in favour of the management charging CITU leaders and the workers of criminal actions and directed police under an additional DSP to oversee the removal of machineries.

The government and the court did not even care to take notice of the absconding foreigner Shovel managing director, a Hyundai accomplice; the huge government and statutory outstanding and workers arrears and issued order in dismantling a factory; and took action against the starving workers who were demanding their wage arrears and protection of their jobs, machines and the company.

This is a classic example of anti-labour policies of Tamilnadu government; and the nexus of government, police, labour authorities and the court to defend the multinational company and its exploitative policies against the workers.

*(Inputs: K. C. Gopikumar)*

## Chennai Metro Rail

### **Workers Strike; Dismissed Worker Reinstated**

250 permanent employees on Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), the joint venture company of Central and Tamilnadu State governments, on instant issues of withdrawal of all allowances, lower pay fitment and withdrawal of existing leave facilities staged 10 days long protest sit-in before CMRL head quarter. Management did not respond. The workers then contacted CITU and formed CMRL Employees Union in a general body meeting on 5 August, 2018, elected CITU state president A Soundararajan as its president, DREU vice president R Elangovan as its vice president and seven other office bearers from amongst them; and got it affiliated to CITU.

The newly formed union made several representations, mass deputation to the management without any response. In November 2018, management attempted to outsource the post of station controllers. Soundararajan wrote to the management drawing their attention to Madras High Court's order of recruitment of 100 empanelled candidates first; and not to outsource the post failing which it would be contempt of court. Enraged management suspended all 7 office bearers in the company on 3 December.

The union served strike notice on 24 January; labour commissioner admitted the dispute in conciliation and advised status quo pending conciliation. On 23 April state labour commissioner advised the union to seek remedy from CLC (Centre). The strike notice then was served to CLC(C). CLC(C) asked the union to seek remedy from state labour commissioner. The union then moved petition in Madras High Court on 26 April to decide about the appropriate government and for interim stay prohibiting any action against any employee. On 29 April, the Court issued order of status quo. However, by that time, CMRL management issued summary dismissal order to all seven office bearers.

Workers went to the MD in a mass deputation and, on his refusal to meet, sat in daylong protest dharna and went on total strike. Three employees who were in central control room were confined and beaten by management goons and were rescued with police help. An FIR has been filed. They were suspended.

Taking suo moto notice, the state labour commissioner convened a conciliation meeting and held that management's actions of suspension and dismissals of the employees during the pendency of conciliation and without approval of the conciliation officer are illegal. The conciliation meeting failed and strike continued.

CMRL management faced hurdles in running of the trains despite operating it by outsourced employees. The strike was widely being reported in the media. The management brought manpower from Bangalore.

On 1 May, understanding was arrived at in conciliation meeting. Face-saving formula were evolved out that dismissed employees would 'appeal' for reinstatement, management assured no further disciplinary action against them on joining duties; enquiry would continue against separately suspended three employees; and rest of the disputes would be pursued in the conciliation. Later, the general body meeting of the union decided to call off the strike.

On 2 May, seven union office bearer employees submitted their appeal and have resumed duties.

### **Background**

Though in public sector, CMRL runs like a profiteering private corporate under the present Central and State dispensations.

CMRL does not have any registered standing order under Industrial Employment (Standing Order) Act. Instead, it has an arbitrary private 'H.R. Manual' framed by its board with provision that M.D. can modify or change it or insert any rule.

Initially these 250 permanent employees were posted as train operators, station controllers, traffic controllers, junior engineers, technicians etc. Rest of the categories are outsourced. There are 600 contract employees engaged as sweepers and cleaners, ticketing staff, security staff and helpers under various departments. Initially the permanent employees were running the trains as train operators. They are now replaced by 170 outsourced employees. At present all the drivers or train operators are contract employees. The contract employees do not get minimum wage, working conditions are worst and the provisions of all labour laws are denied to them. The contract workers do not have a union for fear of retrenchment.

The permanent employees of CMRL, like in other Metro rails, are given second pay revision committee's pay structure. They are entitled for a 35% cafeteria allowance, which is an umbrella allowance covering transportation, health, children education etc. They were also entitled to leave facilities including half pay leave and paternity leave. Third pay revision committee recommended uniform fitment benefit of 15% of basic pay for both executives and non executives and continuation of 35% cafeteria allowance effective from 1 January, 2017.

CMRL management implemented the third pay revision committee's recommendation after 18 months delay on 30 June 2018; but while granting 15% fitment benefit to executives, reduced to 10% to non-executives. Cafeteria allowance has been reduced to 20% for executives, but completely withdrawn for non-executives with retrospective effect. As a result, entire cafeteria allowance amounts, paid in last 18 months, have been recovered. Management also withdrew the paternity leave and half pay leave, already being enjoyed by them.

The management also increased longer working hours of the station controllers in two shifts refusing to convert it in three shifts; and also refused to provide cab facilities or rest room at the station.

## Delhi

### MCD's Anti-Encroachment Drive

## **Street Vendors Union Demands Filing FIR**



Under the banner of Delhi Pradesh Rehri Patri Khocha Hawkers Union (Street Vendors Union), about 200 street vendors staged demonstration in front of Nizamuddin police station on 5 May in protest against illegal eviction drive of street vendors jointly by Delhi Municipal Corporation (MCD) and the police. The union was demanding to file FIR against the MCD officials.

Fact remains that the court order, which MCD officials were referring to, is against encroachment by permanent or temporary constructions and not against the street vendors. Under law street vendors are not encroachers. Under clause 3(3) of Street Vendors Act, 2014, removal of street vendors is illegal because as per the Act survey, certification, creation of vending zone etc are to be completed first which MCD failed to do so far.

CITU Delhi state president Virendra Gaud addressed. Memorandum was submitted to the SHO, Nizamuddin PS (*Inputs: Ahmad Siddique*)



# WORKING WOMEN

## Tamilnadu

### **11<sup>th</sup> State Convention of WWCC**

The 11<sup>th</sup> state convention of Tamilnadu Working Women Co-ordination Committee (WWCC), held at Salem on 18-19 May 2019, was participated by 220 delegates from 34 districts and from 14 sectors - ICDS, electricity, construction, tailoring, beedi, handloom, powerloom, engineering, garments, BSNL, insurance, bank, ITEs and co-operative have taken part in the convention. Young women, graduates and post graduates were in large number among the participants.

The convention began with a colourful procession from VPC Memorial Hall to Comrade Saraswathi Memorial Hall (Convention Venue); followed by an open session presided over by state Anganwadi federation general secretary D. Daisy. T. Udayakumar, chairman reception committee, welcomed the participants.

Inaugurating the convention, all India WWCC convener and CITU national secretary A R Sindhu spoke on the problems faced by the working class in general, repressions and curtailment of workers' rights, growing unemployment, the issue of equal wage for equal work, increasing contractorisation and casualisation of the work force. On women specific issues she drew attention to sexual harassment of women workers at workplaces and need of formation of complaints committee, lack of basic amenities including crèches at work places, dress code, against employing women in night shifts, etc. She emphasised on independent and joint struggles and commended Tamilnadu WWCC for its contribution drawing increasing number of women workers in the main stream of the movement and developing increasing number of women cadres and leaders in CITU.

Addressing the convention CITU state general secretary G. Sukumaran explained CITU's aim to bring more women workers in the mainstream of the movement and in the leadership; need to campaign extensively among rural workers and on organising 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CITU in a massive way. Greeting the convention, AIDWA state president Valentine said about violence against women and sexual harassment; and on need of joint movement against these challenges.

In the delegates' session the state convener of WWCC, M. Mahalakshmi presented the work report. 45 delegates have participated in the discussion. The report was adopted unanimously. Resolutions on 33% reservation in legislatures, maternity benefits, formation of complaints committees, timescale for scheme workers, minimum wage for all, implementation of Domestic Workers Act, regularisation of part-time workers etc were also adopted. The convention elected M. Dhanalakshmi as the convener of Tamilnadu WWCC.

CITU Tamilnadu state treasurer Malathy Chittibabu, in her summing up speech, emphasised on the need to conduct survey among women workers to find out their problems and living conditions identifying the demands arising out of these for effective state level agitational programme as a future task of Tamilnadu WWCC.

*(Inputs: Malathy Chittibabu)*

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS (GENERAL) FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS  
(BASE 2001=100)**

State	Centre	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	State	Centre	Feb 2019	Mar 2019
AP	GUNTUR	287	288	MHR	MUMBAI	302	305
	VIJAYWADA	291	291		NAGPUR	387	386
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	291	290		NASIK	357	357
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	272	273		PUNE	329	331
	GUWAHATI	272	273		SHOLAPUR	324	324
	LABAC SILCHAR	270	273	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	326	328
	MARIANI JORHAT	255	256		ROURKELA	308	309
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	248	250	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	313	312
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	334	340	PUN	AMRITSAR	333	332
CHD	CHANDIGARH	305	307		JALANDHAR	318	319
CHS	BHILAI	323	323		LUDHIANA	291	292
DLI	DELHI	293	297	RJN	AJMER	284	286
GOA	GOA	329	329		BHILWARA	283	288
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	278	279		JAIPUR	299	302
	BHAVNAGAR	292	293	TN	CHENNAI	278	276
	RAJKOT	296	297		COIMBATORE	282	282
	SURAT	266	268		COONOR	325	325
	VADODARA	274	275		MADURAI	292	294
HRY	FARIDABAD	272	274		SALEM	287	287
	YAMUNANAGAR	290	291		TIRUCHIRAPALLY	296	293
HP	HIMACHAL PRADESH	266	267	TEL	GODAVARIKHANI	321	321
J&K	SRINAGAR	278	279		HYDERABAD	257	258
JRK	BOKARO	294	297		WARRANGAL	314	315
	GIRIDIH	343	342	TRP	TRIPURA	258	259
	JAMSHEDPUR	348	351	UP	AGRA	349	351
	JHARIA	356	358		GHAZIABAD	336	339
	KODARMA	381	376		KANPUR	335	340
	RANCHI HATIA	376	381		LUCKNOW	328	334
KNT	BELGAUM	303	306		VARANASI	323	325
	BENGLURU	292	295	WB	ASANSOL	330	332
	HUBLI DHARWAR	324	326		DARJEELING	272	272
	MERCARA	307	306		DURGAPUR	325	329
	MYSORE	309	308		HALDIA	336	337
KRL	ERNAKULAM	314	314		HOWRAH	281	285
	MUNDAKKAYAM	308	310		JALPAIGURI	277	277
	QUILON	357	356		KOLKATA	285	288
MP	BHOPAL	322	324		RANIGANJ	285	288
	CHHINDWARA	302	304		SILIGURI	276	276
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## Protest Actions



Protest before the Chief Minister at Jaipur (Report Page 17)



Against victimisation and repression of Daikin workers at Neemrana in Rajasthan, protest demonstration and sumitting memorandum to Daikin regional manager in Hyderabad



Workers and employees of Jetlite Airways, a subsidiary of Jet Airways, staging demonstration at Borjhar airport in Guwahati, Assam on 9 May demanding re-opening of flight operation and payment of due wages.

# May Day Celebration



Rourkela, Odisha



Thiruvanthapuram,  
Kerala



Agartala, Tripura



Vishakhapatnam,  
Andhra Pradesh



Arson, Punjab