

ALL INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS

CIRCULAR: PTUC/43/1954.

The State Committees, and
Regional Councils.

Pawha Mansion, (1st. floor),
Kamla Market, Asafali Road,
NEW DELHI. 17th. August 1954.

OBSERVE AUG.25TH. AS ANTI-RATIONALISATION DAY.

The resolution on anti-rationalisation moved by P.T. Punnose, M.P. has secured first place in the ballot in the House of the People. The resolution will be taken up by the Parliament on 27th. August 1954.

This resolution comes up before the Parliament in the midst of a planned offensive of rationalisation and increase of work-load by the employers and the Government. If these plans are allowed to materialise large number of workers who are in employment will be thrown out of jobs and work-load will be considerably increased on the remaining workers.

Workers at various centres have been resisting these attempts to introduce rationalisation and increase of work-load. With a view to mobilise the entire workers and also public opinion against these attacks as also to demonstrate our united protest we request you to OBSERVE 25TH. AUGUST 1954 as anti-rationalisation day by holding meetings, demonstrations and other possible actions.

Since the issue concerns all workers, efforts should be made to draw in unions and workers affiliated to other national centres as also workers who are not yet members of any union.

Immediately after the observance of the Day please send telegrams to the Prime Minister and Labour Minister, Govt. of India, New Delhi, copy endorsed to A.I.T.U.C.

In this connection we should also request you to expedite your reports ~~xx~~ on our Circular No.PTUC/40/1954 dated 14th.August 1954.

SECRETARIAT.

ALL INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

To

Pawha Mansion (1st. floor),
Kamla Market, Asafali Road,
NEW DELHI. 17th.August 1954.

FOR FAVOUR OF PUBLICATION.

The All India Trade Union Congress has appealed to all trade unions and workers irrespective of affiliation to observe 25th. August 1954 as anti-rationalisation Day with a view to rally the workers and the people behind the anti-rationalisation resolution balloted for 27th. August 1954 in the name of P.T. Punnose, M.P. in the House of the People.

The Appeal also has asked to send protest telegrams and letters to the Government of India.

SECRETARIAT.

CIRCULAR: PTUC/49/1954.

Pawha Mansion, Kamla Market,
Asafali Rd., NEW DELHI.

The State Committees, and
Regional Councils.

Dt: 28th. August 1954.

We are sending a report by Comrade Indrajit Gupta, representative of the A.I.T.U.C. in the Committee for fixing the Minimum Wages in the central sphere, regarding the meeting of the Committee held on 27.7.1954. The report is self explanatory.

Your suggestion regarding the items asked in the report for the next meeting may be sent to this office so as to reach us by 4.9.1954.

SECRETARIAT.

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REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE FOR
FIXATION OF MINIMUM RATES OF WAGES IN THE CENTRAL SPHERE.

This is one of the Tripartite Committees set up under Sec.5(1)(a) of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. By the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Act 1954, the time limit for fixation of minimum wages in the employments specified in Part I of the Schedule was extended to December 31st. 1954. The present Committee's responsibility is, therefore, to make its recommendations before the above date in respect of those categories of workers falling within the Central Government sphere for whom minimum rates of wages have not so far been fixed and notified. This Committee is not empowered to amend or revise the wage rates already fixed by the Central Govt. for several categories of workers; that being the function of a separate Committee appointed under Sec.6 of the Act.

The present Committee is constituted with the following personnel:

1. T.S.Parasuraman, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Transport.
2. C.K.Nair, Under Secretary, Ministry of Defence.
3. S.P.Saksena, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of W.H. & S.
4. R.R.M. Tandon, Deputy Chief Engineer, Northern Railway.
5. Nirmal Kumar Sen, I.N.T.U.C.
6. Indrajit Gupta, A.I.T.U.C.
7. Biswanath Debuey, U.T.U.C.
8. Bagaram Tulpule, H.M.S.
- 9) One representative each of the Labour & Finance Ministries.
- 10)

At the first meeting held on 27.7.1954 at New Delhi, all the above members, with the exception of the representative of the Railway Administration, were present.

The circulated Agenda for the meeting comprised proposals from various Ministries in respect of the following categories of workers:

1. Unskilled contract labour of the C.P.W.D. in Uttar Pradesh, engaged on road construction, building operations, stone breaking or stone crushing;
2. All outstanding categories of CPWB workers engaged in similar operations as stated above;
3. All categories of workers in Railway Administrations, excepting Eastern Rly., engaged in the above-stated operations;
4. Workers at the Cittarangan Locomotive works engaged in the above stated operations;
5. Workers engaged in the above stated operations on the Shoranur-Nilambur and Ernakulam-Quilon Sections of the Southern Railway;
6. Women Mazdoors employed by C.P.W.D. in Ajmer;
7. Various classes of employees in Lebong, Dagshai, Benares & Mathura Contonments.

At the outset, certain general points of procedure and principles were discussed.

It was agreed that in order to give the Govt. adequate time to study the Committee's recommendations and announce its decisions by the statutory time-limit of 31.12.1954, the Committee's work should be completed by mid-October.

The next meeting of the Committee was fixed for September 6th. (and subsequent days, if necessary), at New Delhi.

The U.T.U.C. representative proposed that the Dock Labour Boards of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras should be included as "local authorities" within the meaning of Part I of the Schedule, and minimum wages should be fixed for workers falling within the sphere of the Dock Labour Boards. The representative of the Transport Ministry promised to look into the matter, and to circulate proposals before the next meeting, provided the Ministry agreed that Dock Labour Boards were 'local authorities' for the purpose of the Act.

The A.I.T.U.C. representative prepared for inclusion of workers on Govt. owned Cinchona Plantations and those employed in the Saddlery and Harness Factory, Kanpur. The representatives of the Labour Ministry and Defence Ministry promised to look into the matter and circulate proposals, if possible, before the next meeting.

It was generally agreed that all categories of workers for whom the Central Government had not yet made notifications should be made known to the Committee.

After considerable discussion and arguments, the official representatives conceded the unanimous demand ~~for~~ of the labour representatives that this Committee need not be bound down by the recommendations of the Central Minimum Wages Advisory Board (though these recommendations should be 'borne in mind'), but would be free to discuss de novo the basis and principles of fixation of minimum wages.

In this connection, the A.I.T.U.C. representative pointed out that the recommendations made by the Central Advisory Board at its Bombay meeting on April 8th - 9th were not unanimous and the A.I.T.U.C. had opposed the suggested wage rates as being unjustifiably low.

The A.I.T.U.C. representative also stated that in his opinion this Committee, in fixing specific rates of minimum wages, should refuse to be guided by considerations of 'financial capacity', 'under-production', 'over-production', and similar arguments applicable to private industry. The Committee was concerned with Govt. concerns which are not expected to function on a 'profit-making' basis. Hence, the wage-fixation here should be properly linked with minimum standards and costs of living and should serve as a model for private employers to follow. Rates considered essential on this basis should be guaranteed, if necessary, by Central Government subsidies, suitable budgetary provisions etc.

The above views were recorded, though the official representatives did not express themselves thereon.

The specific proposals already submitted (as listed above) were then taken up, one by one.

Item (1): The CPWD proposals for Uttar Pradesh were as follows:

Adult Male Mazdoor or Beldar	-	Rs. 1- 6- 0 per day
Adult Female " "	-	1- 2- 0 " "
Boy " "	-	0-13- 0 " "

The rates (all-inclusive) were unanimously opposed by the labour representatives who suggested instead:

Adult Male	-	1- 8- 0
" Female	-	1- 4- 0 (with phased advance to 1-8-0)
Boy	-	1- 0- 0

After considerable discussion, the rate of Rs.1-8-0 for adult males was

agreed to, but the CPWD representative refused to raise the proposed rates for females and boys. His main arguments were (a) that 'too high' rates for women would lead to their not being employed by contractors, and (b) that the 'market' rates and State Govt. rates in U.P. being much lower, the violent dislocation of labour supply would ensue.

No agreement was possible.

Item (2): The CPWD & WH & S Ministry's proposals for 23 outstanding categories in Delhi, Bombay, Madras, W.Bengal, Assam, Bihar, E.Punjab, U.P., Madhya Bharat, Madhya Pradesh, Travancore-Cochin and Hyderabad were next taken up.

The labour representatives pointed out a number of seeming anomalies in the proposed rates, wide fluctuations from State to State, absence of any uniform principle, the generally low and unsatisfactory levels etc. They demanded that more data be supplied, especially on the actual existing rates, as there were strong grounds for suspicion that the latter were no lower, and in some cases even higher than the proposed minimum rates. They also demanded that instead of a single minimum rate for any particular category throughout a State, different rates should be proposed for different regions, cities etc. within the same State in the light of variations in cost of living, conditions of work etc.

The discussion was inconclusive and was postponed till the next meeting. In the meantime, the data asked for by the Labour representatives would be prepared and circulated.

Items (3), (4) & (5): were postponed in view of the absence of any representative of the Railway Administration.

Item (6): The CPWD proposal for women mazdoors in ~~xx~~ Ajmer was -/13/- annas per day (the current rate) as against Rs.1/8/- per day for men.

The labour representatives vehemently opposed the proposal and prolonged discussion took place. Even the representative of the Transport Ministry admitted that a rate of -/13/- as. seemed too low. The U.T.U.C. representative put forward an uncompromising demand for immediate and full parity of wages between men and women, i.e. Rs.1/8/- for all. This demand was equally firmly opposed by all the official representatives. Since, in the event of no agreement, there was a real danger of the -/13/- as. rate being maintained by Government, the AITUC representative put forward a proposal for immediate increment of the rate to Rs.1/2/- per day, on condition that this was raised to Rs.1/8/- within 2 or 3 years. This proposal was eventually carried, the UTUC representative recording his dissent.

Item (7): Proposals of the Defence Ministry for employees of Lebong, Dagshai, Benares and Mathura Cantonments were discussed, but no conclusions could be reached due to insufficient data. Consideration was postponed to the next meeting. In the meantime, the Defence Deptt. will prepare and circulate data regarding the nature and extent of duties performed by different categories, existing rules, whether any other monetary benefits are provided for not, etc.

Before concluding its work, the Committee considered a Memorandum of the Ministry of Labour on interpretation of the word 'limit' appearing in Sec.26(2A) of the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Act, 1954. The Committee was invited to express its opinion as to whether the word 'limit' should be interpreted as applying to (a) a scale of pay, or (b) the actual amount of wages. The labour representatives expressed themselves unanimously in favour of the latter interpretation, as this would more effectively safeguard the interests of lower-paid workers consistent with the spirit of the Act.

Proposals of the Transport Ministry for fixation of minimum wages of employees in Cochin Port engaged in road construction and building operations were received too late for consideration at this meeting and were postponed accordingly.

Sd/- INDERJIT GUPTA.

September 7, 1954

DOCUMENT No.11 (b)

Draft

RESOLUTION ON 15TH AUGUST

The PB Circular on August 15th celebrations has brought to the forefront certain questions regarding the exact nature of the changes that are signified by August 15th. The circular, while leaving the nature of August 15th to be once again debated by the CC, took one positive attitude that whatever may be our understanding regarding the "freedom" won, the change is such that our celebration or participation should not be of a character as would make it an Anti-August 15th "demonstration". That means that we may be critical of August 15th, we may even not do anything on that day but if we do anything, it must not amount to hostility and denunciation of the event known as August 15th.

No doubt that the Government and the Congress use August 15th to deceive the people as to the true nature of the change that has taken place in the country. While proclaiming that they have attained complete Independence and Freedom from foreign imperialist rule, they conceal the fundamental fact of the domination of British capital. They conceal the fact that their "Government is pledged to the protection of foreign British capital". They treat India's membership of the Commonwealth as merely a formal matter, which makes no difference to the complete freedom. They conceal from the people the fact that our defence forces are dependent upon British imperial forces in all essential matters. Above all, they conceal from them the fact that what is ruling over them is a landlord-bourgeois State and not a people's State.

Does this mean that no significant change has taken place?

Everybody agrees that a change has taken place. The Party Programme itself says so.

A vital change has taken place in our relations with British imperialism. The character of the State established after August 15th is essentially different from the State we had before.

Formerly, we had a purely colonial State, a State which had no Statehood of its own as such apart from being an appendage of the capitalist-imperialist State of Britain. That means no class in India was allowed to share power in the State in a manner as to give it any independence in external or internal matters. It was an open militarist dictatorship of British Imperialism.

India as such had no attributes of a sovereign State, even within the framework of the Commonwealth. The Viceregal veto was the insignia of the dictatorship and the occupation army its sanction.

Has this changed or no? It has changed. And so far as the masses are concerned, it is this what they call attaining independence on August 15th. Their country got a State, which

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could make its own constitution, have its own foreign relations, build its own Indian Army, in short do what they liked with it. They understand it as the realisation of their slogan of 1942, "Quit India".

The question is, does the mass understanding square with reality. Yes, it squares with reality, not fully, but in essence.

The State that we have now is a landlord-bourgeois State. ^{ie. something} It is not a British imperialist dictatorship. It means that power is now wielded by the exploiting classes in our country, our own exploiters, and not foreign exploiters. We have now all the formal attributes of a sovereign independent State.

And form is an important element in statehood. The form now allows the Indian bourgeoisie to strengthen itself at the expense of imperialism, only if it would gather courage to do so. It does not do so because it is tied up economically with imperialist economy. But even within that tie-up, room for development of contradictions is opened up by August 15th.

In form, at least, we can negotiate independently with USSR, China, etc. We can play between Anglo-American rivalries and use them for our advantage. This is an important element of sovereignty and independence.

Can the Parliament in principle make any laws now regarding land, and capital, regarding the worker and peasant? Can the worker and peasant, as a citizen in a free State, go and vote out the Government that is elected? The form here too is important. The form here can be wielded as a means for struggle, for further advancement to full independence and sovereignty. The formal sovereignty, formal independence and formal democracy are vital weapons achieved by the people's struggles on August 15th.

That they have to be made full and complete is common ground with us all. But what prevents this further development? Is it August 15th or something else?

What does full national Independence and sovereignty connote? Eliminating British capitalist hold, British advisers' hold, British influence through the Empire ties.

Has the Parliament full and formal power to do it? Is there any external State-relation, subordination to any foreign State law that prevents us from doing this? Is there any external limitation of sovereign right to do the above things? None whatever.

What prevents is the classes that wield this State for their own purposes. It is because it is now a "landlord-bourgeois State", which finds it in its own interest to continue the hold of British imperialist interests. If this State is dependant, its economy is semi-colonial, it is due to our own landlord-bourgeois classes. They cannot plead an alibi and save themselves.

Therefore, it is the replacement of this Government and this State by a People's Democratic State that completes the sovereignty and independence we have got on August 15th by negating the rule of classes tied to imperialist partnership.

class struggle
Therefore, completion of independence and sovereignty is now an internal task, essentially a matter of the struggle of the people against the collaborating bourgeoisie and landlordism inside the country and not essentially external task in the sense that we have to fight a foreign occupying imperialism.

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The fight, therefore, becomes more simplified. The attainment of an independent sovereign State on August 15th removed from the consciousness of the people an allegiance to the national-bourgeois as the leader of the anti-imperialist liberation struggle, whose main aim was to have "our own Indian Government, our own State". Now if this State is dependent, its economy is semi-colonial, it is due to our own landlord-bourgeois classes, who have to be fought in a direct class struggle. They cannot plead an alibi and save themselves.

Thus the change of August 15th is a vital change, which gives to the revolutionary masses valuable weapons of direct class-struggle and a clear consciousness of class tasks in relation to our own country. Despite poverty, it is not for nothing that conscious sections of the people feel that they have now a country of their own. Hence it is that we speak of strengthening our sovereignty and independence and defending it.

Not having understood this, the Party has always found itself "out of tune" with even its own masses.

Has August 15th then a "liberationist" part and a betrayal part? Yes, it has. The Statehood given is due to our struggles. The ties and hold of imperialism that remains and hampers our progress to full independence, democracy and prosperity is the betrayal, by which the national revolution was not fought to the end. If it had been fought, the compromising classes would have failed to come to power. The State would have been different. ~~The Constitution would~~ have been different. This betrayal we expose.

Hence, on this day we hold meetings under our own Flag to glorify struggles of the people and the victory they attained in throwing out our British occupiers, and the necessity of defending the fruits of that victory and carrying them forward. And we criticise the landlord-bourgeois classes, who having captured power behind the backs of the masses have now retained the British foreign vested interests and their agents inside the country. We demand the continuation and completion of the revolution, which means the attainment of a People's Democracy as against the landlord-bourgeois State tied to British imperialism.

In these meetings, we stand for defence of our country from any aggression and for peace, freedom and democracy. As regards how to convey them in terms of the Programme, which lays down the essential characteristics of the Constitution we want, we need not dilate on that here.

Even when we hold the above views, we should not hoist State Flags on our offices and at our meetings because we have to explain to the masses that we have to change the Government of landlords and monopolists. It is one thing to defend the flag and even the existing bourgeois-landlord State against foreign aggression, but it is entirely different thing when we are to expose the character of the present State and the Government.

The question of our MPs and MLAs attending State functions is in principle not to be banned and has to be decided from place to place and time to time, so as not to lead to misunderstanding by the people that we are supporting the present Government.

Dange, Ramamurti and P.Sundarayya