

Somnath Bhattacharya speaks in CITU General Council Meeting on behalf of Power Sector

Respected Presidium and My Dear Comrades,

First of all I would like to convey my revolutionary greetings to you all.

At the same time I extend our solidarity and greetings to the comrades of Karnataka for this fantastic heart touching arrangement of the General Council Meeting.

We became enriched by the brilliant placing of the General Secretary's report as well as the splendid Presidential speech. At the same time the contribution of the comrades during discussion and greetings are also a great teaching to us.

Like other sectors, the Power Sector is also facing serious attack by the Narendra Modi led Central Government. They have continuous effort to shift it to the Private Sector. The power generation system is gradually captured by the private players under the patronization of the Central Government.

Nearly 50% of the total power of our country is now produced by the private companies.

Out of total installed capacity 3,57,875 MW almost half i.e. 1,66,202 MW is produced by the Private Sector.

Now Government of India (GOI) has expressed their strong preference to the Private Sector and gradually they are trying to withdraw Public Sector.

This intention is not only prevailing for the Power Generation System but even for Power Distribution System. They are religiously trying to weaken the distribution companies imposing different draconian rules.

“Letter of Credit” or LC is one such initiative which is imposed on the distribution companies.

According to LC, the distribution companies have to pay the full amount to the producers in advance, even if they do not consume the full quantity.

It is just like forward trading which was initially adopted under British Rule in India to exploit Indians more and more. The Modi Govt. is trying to get back the 19th Century colonial system in this 21st Century.

Central Government (CG) planned to provide Solar Energy by 2022 to all and withdraw the thermal and hydel power stations gradually. Apparently it looks good but there are many hidden agendas of hypocracies and short comings.

1. There is no alternative planning for jobs who will be jobless after the withdrawal of different thermal and hydel power stations.

It will not only affect the power sector. Simultaneously It will badly affect Coal Sector, Railways, Transports and many other important supplementary sectors.

2. While we are talking about Solar Energy, then what will be the source of energy during ‘dusk to dawn’? What will be the sources of energy at night ?

What will be the arrangement on the cloudy rainy days like today ?

In 2015 Modiji attended a Global Environment Summit in Paris and since then he is talking on Carbon Emission. But the word “emission” alone does not signify anything. We have to Calculate “per capita emission” and accordingly measures to be taken.

If you please allow me, I would like to quote a few lines from William Shakespeare.

In Macbeth he has written, “It was a tale, told by an idiot. Full of sound and Fury signifying nothing.”

This line of Shakespeare depicts the characteristics of Narendra Modi.

However, let us come back to our point.

GOI is trying to privatise NTPC which is sufficiently efficient and profit making company.

During Vajpayee regime BJP led NDA Government introduced anti people Electricity Bill 2003. After the initiatives of Trade Unions and struggle of Left MPs the UPA-1 Govt. has withdrawn the clause VI of the above said bill.

Through that Bill it was decided that the CG will not take any responsibility for rural electrification. That will be borne by the State Govt. or Panchayat or Co-operative.

This is their commitment towards the rural people. It should be exposed in a befitting manner.

In 2014 and 2018 again they tried to pass Electricity Amendment Bill, But still they could not able to do it. But nobody knows, any day this might be happened.

EEFI (Electricity Employers Federation of India) and NCCOEEE (National Co-ordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers) conducted several National level agitation and countrywide campaigning programme against it and similar programme was organised by our different unions in States, Districts and Local Levels to resist these onslaught.

In Kerala after the devastating flood our electricity union members donated their one month salary and collected nearly Rs.100 cr. to built up new Kerala, to respond the call while was given by the Kerala Chief Minister Pinarai Vijayan.

I am feeling ashamed to mention that, while our electricity comrades have collected Rs.100 cr. then Modi Govt. allotted only Rs. 500 cr. after such disaster in Kerala.

Another unfortunate point is there, that this Modi Govt. happily spends Rs.3,000 cr. to built up only one statue. We should raise our voice against it with “shame shame Modi Govt.”

Tamilnadu (TN) Comrades also collected money for Kerala. Later TN and Kerala both extended their support towards Orisha after Fony tornado.

In West Bengal our CESC union is facing tremendous attack by the Mamata Banerjee Govt. as well as company authority.

After one agitation programme our two comrades were suspended and their increment is stalled.

But still our comrades are fighting tooth and nail and they are very much on the battle field.

Contract workers are increasing day by day and victimization is also continuing and increasing.

We should be committed to execute “Equal wages for Equal work” This will be the fulcrum of the militant working class movement and we should be committed to this struggle.

Comrades, We sincerely feel the Energy Sector Co-ordination is very very important need of the time.

Under the leadership of CITU immediately it should be done.

Similar Co-ordination is necessary for Power Sector, BSNL, LIC etc. etc.

We have already planned for Centenary Celebration of Organised Trade Union Movement in our country as well as the Golden Jubilee Celebration of CITU with various programmes and activities.

So far the membership is concern there is no decrease in our sector. But no significant increase is also seen.

Though in the organised sector thousands of workers and employees are getting retired and new recruitment is not taking place but we are trying to explore new areas for new membership.

We are trying to expedite with CITU call : Reach the Unreached.

Day before yesterday Comrade Hannan Mollah narrated the experience of peasant movement. In their last conference AIKS raised the slogan “**Kissan Sabha in every village, All Kissan in Kissan Sabha.**”

In our 14th Conference CITU raised the slogan : **Reach the Unreached** which was extended in a befitting manner in 15th Conference that, **Unify the Class, Strengthen the Struggle.**

So, If we could able to execute the slogans of CITU and AIKS together along with Agricultural workers' issues unitedly only then the axis of class struggle will be formed.

Because they are the real exploited section of our country. And this exploitation is the common point to unite these toiling people together.

Another important point should be remember, that these toiling people should be taught properly, so that, they can keep themselves away from Bigotry, Communalism and Fundamentalism.

They might be the believer of any religion but they should not be communal, they should be secular in practice.

In this way a secular united strength of workers and peasantry along with other progressive sections of the Society must be able to combat the onslaught with continuous struggle.

If we look into the result of the parliament election, significant paradox is seen. BJP got 303 seats, which is 56% of total seats, but their vote is only 37%.

Similarly NDA got 353 seats, which is 65% of total seats but they got only 43% vote.

This is the paradox of Parliamentary democracy.

Professor Amartya Sen commented after the election result that Modi has won electorally but India has defeated Ideologically.

Because the Ideology of India is **Unity on Diversity.**

I remember one historic incident while standing in Karnataka. Once Tipu Sultan was the king of this Karnataka, erstwhile Mohisur. Hindu Marathas attacked Mohisur but failed to win. During their return journey to Maharashtra they destroyed Sarada Temple. Which was a temple of Hindu goddess.

As soon as this information reached to Tipu he took initiative to built it up.

This is the tradition of Karnataka, but unfortunately a few days back Yedurappa (BJP) captured the power of the state after heinous horse trading.

Once Rabindranath Tagore said, "I will not buy glass at the price of diamond."

He taught us, humanity is diamond. But other than humanity all the Identities of human being is cheaper. Nationality - Divides, Religion - Divides, Caste - Divides, Gender - Divides, Only Humanity Unites.

We should keep in our mind the teaching of Tagore for ever.

Finally I would like to quote a few lines from Faiz Ahmad Faiz

'Sar bhi bahut baju bhi bahut / Kat te bhi chalo, badte bhi chalo'

Which means, we have many heads, we have many shoulders these can be cut but we shall march on.

Thank you all.

Red salute

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