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F. A. C. T. Navika Thozhilali Union,

Reg: No. 21/53.

OFFICE ELOOR,

Ref: No.

1. 6. 58

To the Editor
Trade Union Record.

The Navika Thozhilali (Boatmen) engaged in transporting fire-wood by country-boats to the Fertilizers And Chemicals Travancore Ltd Alwayse (Kerala) - the second biggest fertilizer factory in India - are given one months' more work this year. The boatmen were usually discharged by 15th March on the plea that water-transport is difficult or impossible during the summer and the management used to engage lorry-transport which is actually more expensive. This year the F. A. C. T. Navika Thozhilali Union ^(CAITUC) the fighting union of the boatmen bargained with the management and they without much hesitation to extend water transport for one more month i.e. up to 15th April. Besides they have given the contract of dredging the river for this period to the Union. The river can be

... dredged from 15th January onwards
(when the water level is low.)
Previously this contract was given
to private parties. It is noteworthy
in this connection that in the
last year the workers were given
only the minimum amount of work
(30,000 tons of firewood) and let it
itself after a pretty long strike
facing merciless police repression
and prosecution, and then they are
allowed to transport 90,000 tons
of firewood! Why? Only because
there is a Government in Kerala
which who have undoubtedly
declared: "No police intervention
in labour disputes." This is only
one of hundreds of instances
how the toiling masses gain
under the new regime.

(M)hari
Payyappilly Balaram
General Secretary

ALL-INDIA SEAMEN'S FEDERATION

27-B, CIRCULAR GARDEN REACH ROAD
KIDDERPORE, CALCUTTA-23

Members :

United Seamen's Union - Calcutta
Calcutta Saloon Committee - "
Seafarers' Union of India - "
United Seafarers' Federation - Bombay

New Delhi address:
113, North Avenue.

Ref. No.

Dated 11th July 1958

Sri Raj Bahadur,
Minister of Shipping,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

Sir,

/have
We beg to state that we ~~had~~/been functioning as by the far the biggest seamen's organisation at Calcutta since about last 8 years. The boycott movements in 1951 and 1955 and a series of other movements organised and led by us will bear it out. With the United Seafarers' Federation of Bombay, to which the National Union of Seamen of India at that port has lost most of its ground, joining us, we became the strongest seafarers' organisation on all-India basis. But unfortunately, when the Seamen's Employment Board was set up at Calcutta and Bombay, the sole representation of the seafarers' side of it was given to the National Union, and similar sole representation was given to it in the Seamen's Welfare Board and the National Maritime Board subsequently. Thus the National Union of Seamen of India was imposed upon the seamen in total disregard ~~of~~ our preponderant claim to a recognition. However, as a protest against the recognition being undemocratically denied to us, we called a boycott of the Seamen's Employment Office at Calcutta as a result of which the registration of seamen at that office....

The Steam & Motor Boat Crew Association,

(REG. NO. 5 OF 114)

ALLEPPEY.

20--7--1958.

JOURNEY BY BOAT

"One anna per trip, irrespective of distance
Allow us to travel free!"

Comrades! Friends!

The struggle led by the I N T U C before the Collectorate of Alleppey was about to breathe its last, when, to resurrect this corpse, the sweet little children of our country were driven into the vortex of the anti-boat campaign. As far as the architects of the struggle are concerned, their look-out is to fight against the Communist Government, and not to see whether the immediate demands of the students could be achieved.

The matter becomes clear as crystal to any one that peruses the memorandum submitted by students to the Corporation. We invite the attention of all classes of people to the relevant portions of their memorandum.

"Irrespective of distance, a student must get a fifteen days' concession within a duration of 25 days at the rate of one anna per journey".

Another memorandum dated 11-7-1958 reads: "..... therefore, we request you to be kind enough to redress our grievances by allowing us to travel free of charge".

The Director Board of the Corporation has been pleased to grant 50% concession to all students. As per this decision those students who used to travel at the rate of 4 as need pay only 2 as, per journey. But Sri.K.Balakrishnan with his perverted perspective details in the editorial columns of the Kaumudi that the Corporation has raised the charge from one anna to two annas, ignoring the fact that Rs.2 as.12 per mensem is an incalculable burden on a middle class family". While professing to view things dispassionately, he fails to mention that the students who used to go from Moncompu to Alleppey at the rate of 4 as now get 2 as rebate per journey according to the decision of the Director Board. By this decision an ordinary middle class family is benefitted to the extent of Rs.5-50 n.Ps per mensem.

The Corporation decided to extend 50% concession to all students in between Cullion and Ernakulam, not due to pressure exerted by acts of hooliganism like detaining boats, beating workers, pelting stones at Ministers' cars and transport buses and

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squatting before vehicles. On the other hand, it was out of consideration for our beloved students. Over and above this concession given by the Board, the Transport Minister promised to enquire into the matter of other concessions that might have existed previously. The Chairman of the Corporation gave assurance to this effect. Still the struggle has not ceased. A question may arise as to why the matter should be enquired into. There are no records to prove that formerly any concession existed. As such, any one can claim this concession.

Some of the former boat owners used to allow their relatives and nuns to travel free. It is reported that a few students were charged one anna per journey. Amidst these ambiguous complexities with regard to the rate of concession, it was decided to give a general concession of 50% to all students. This so called rate of one anna was the offspring of the Philanthropic gesture of a few boat owners who belonged to a particular community, to attract students to schools of their denomination.

It is a controversial question whether a quasi Government Corporation should continue to give this kind of concession. Even if this concession is continued, there will be universal clamour for getting this rebate. That is why it has been promised that necessary action will be taken after proper enquiry. Slogans like "Charge one anna irrespective of distance", and "Allow travel free of charge" are befitting only to those who professed by stand for sabotaging the Corporation.

This cannot be conceded by workers who earn their livelihood from back-breaking drudgery.

Probably the editor of the Kaumudi does not know that there are students who have taken season passes from Alleppey to Kottayam. How can he know; when comrades like him, who "view things through the Marxist microscope" do not collect their material from ordinary workers and the public? They gather their data from palaces of money-bags like Poopally and N.C.Johna.

What would be the result if one anna is fixed irrespective of distance? Students who used to give the full fare of 7 annas to Kottayam are now paying only 3 as. 3 pps. That also would come down to one anna. Who can support this? There was no concession previously for students, who used to come to Alleppey from places like Kainakary, Chennamkary, Moonnattumukhom, Moncompu, Pulinkunnoo, Nedumudi, Kavalam and Pullangady. Now a concession to the tune of 50% has been given, and season passes have been issued to this effect. It is understandable if this concession is to be increased to 55 or 60%. On the other hand, nobody can entertain such demands as to charge one anna irrespective of distance and to travel free of charge. Why should a struggle be carried on for a demand that is prima facie unjustifiable?

These people have proclaimed that the Corporation would be incurring losses. They want to let this materialise. They want to implement their slogan of liquidating the Corporation. The Government gave shape to the Corporation at a time of crisis when the lives of two thousand workers and their families were at stake. With the coming into being of the Corporation, these workers have gained self-confidence and a sense of security for the future. Under these circumstances, the workers cannot tolerate any attempt to sabotage the Corporation. At the same time, they will stand with the students and the passengers for safeguarding their interests and for conceding their just demands.

Comrades and friends,

These people are interested in not merely liquidating the Corporation, but also in overthrowing the Communist Government.

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Why do they want to overthrow the Government? In case they succeed, they can evict thousands of peasants and tenants at their will, utilise the police for this and undermine progressive bills like the Education bill and the Agrarian Relations Bill. Again the capitalist can exploit the worker, and the landlord the tenant. Section 144 that is now utilised by the Communist Government against anti-social elements can then be used by the bourgeoisie against workers and peasants.

So the Boat Crew Association calls upon all lovers of democracy, to come out under the leadership of the working class against the anti-social elements who mislead the students, to keep in check reactionaries, to unite in order that law and order may be maintained.



M. T. Chandrasenan,
GENERAL SECRETARY,
BOAT CREW ASSOCIATION.

Re. fare of boat services (motor boat); classification re. fares; & raised by students and others.

“ബോട്ടയാത്ര—

ഭൂതത്തെ പരിഗണിക്കാതെ ഒരു യാത്രയ്ക്ക് ഒരണങ്ങളെ സൗജന്യമായി യാത്രചെയ്യാൻ അനുവദിക്കുക.”

സഖാക്കളേ! സുഹൃത്തുക്കളേ!!

ആലപ്പുഴ കളക്ടറേറ്റിന്റെ പടിക്കൽ ഇണ്ടക്കു നടത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്ന സമരം മരണശയ്യയിൽ കിടന്ന അന്ത്യശ്വാസം വലിച്ചപ്പോൾ അതിന് അല്പമെങ്കിലും ജീവനേകവാൻ പറമുറയെന്ന് പരിശോധിക്കുന്നതിനായിരുന്നു നമ്മുടെ നാടിന്റെ പൊന്നോമനക്കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെ ബോട്ടസമരത്തിലേക്കു തള്ളിയിട്ടത്. കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് ഗവണ്മെന്റിനെതിരായി സമരം ചെയ്യണമെന്നല്ലാതെ സമരത്തിൽ ഉന്നയിക്കുന്ന അടിയന്തിരാവശ്യങ്ങൾ നേടണോ-നേടുവാൻ പറന്നുവയങ്ങോ എന്നൊന്നും നോക്കേണ്ട കാര്യം സമരത്തിന്റെ സുത്രധാരന്മാർക്കില്ലെന്നത് വ്യക്തമാണ്.

വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ കോർപ്പറേഷൻ ഏഴുതി അയച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന അടിയന്തിരാവശ്യത്തിലേക്ക് കണ്ണോടിക്കുന്ന ആർക്കും തന്നെ അതു മനസ്സിലാകുന്നതാണ്. അവർ ഏഴുതി അയച്ച ആവശ്യങ്ങളുടെ പ്രസക്ത ഭാഗത്തേക്ക് ഇന്നാട്ടിലെ തൊഴിലാളികൾ, കൃഷിക്കാർ, വ്യവസായികൾ, ഇടത്തരക്കാർ, അഭ്യസ്തവിദ്യർ തുടങ്ങിയ എല്ലാ ജനങ്ങളുടെയും ശ്രദ്ധയെ ഞങ്ങൾ ക്ഷണിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

“ഭൂതത്തെ പരിഗണിക്കാതെ കട്ടിക്ക് ഒരു യാത്രയ്ക്ക് ഒരണ എന്ന കണക്കിൽ 15 ദിവസത്തെ പാസു 10 ദിവസത്തെ സൗജന്യത്തോടുകൂടി 25 ദിവസത്തെ കാലാവധി വെച്ചു” ലഭിക്കണം.

മറ്റൊരു മെമ്മോറാണ്ടത്തിൽ (11-7-58-ൽ നൽകിയത്)

“അതിനാൽ ഭയമായി ഞങ്ങൾ സമർപ്പിച്ച മെമ്മോറാണ്ടത്തിൽ പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്ന സംഗതികൾ പുനരാലോചിച്ചു ഉടനടി ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് സൗജന്യ യാത്രാസൗകര്യം നൽകണമെന്ന് അപേക്ഷിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.” (അടിവര ഞങ്ങളുടേത്)

കോർപ്പറേഷന്റെ ഡയറക്ടർ ബോർഡ് വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് 50% സൗജന്യം അനുവദിച്ചു. ഈ തീരുമാനം മൂലം 4൯ മുന്യ കൊടുത്തിരുന്നവർ ഇപ്പോൾ 2൯ കൊടുത്താൽ മതിയാകും. കൗമുദി പത്രാധിപർ സി. കെ. ബാലകൃഷ്ണന്റെ മറ്റൊരു കണക്കുകൂട്ടലുണ്ട്. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പത്രത്തിൽ മൂന്നു കോളം നീളത്തിൽ മുഖപ്രസംഗമെഴുതി വിട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ഒരണയിൽനിന്നും രണ്ടണയായി ചാർജ്ജ് വർദ്ധിപ്പിച്ചു. ഇതു മാസം 2 രൂപ 12൯ വരും. ഈ സംഖ്യ ഒരു ഇടത്തരം കുടുംബത്തിനു താങ്ങാനാവാത്തതാണ് എന്ന് അദ്ദേഹം പറയുന്നു. സമചിത്തതയോടുകൂടി കാര്യങ്ങൾ കാണുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കണമെന്നു ഭാവിയിൽ അദ്ദേഹം ഒരു കാര്യം മിണ്ടുന്നില്ല. മകോമ്പിൽ നിന്നും ആലപ്പുഴയ്ക്ക് 4൯ കൊടുത്തുകൊണ്ടിരുന്ന ചാർജ്ജ് 2൯യായി. മാസം 5൯ രൂപായോളം ഒരു ഇടത്തരം കുടുംബത്തിനു ലഭ്യമുണ്ട്. ഇതും കോർപ്പറേഷൻ ഡയറക്ടർ ബോർഡിന്റെ തീരുമാനമനുസരിച്ചാണ്.

ബോട്ടു പിടിച്ചു കെട്ടിയിട്ടല്ല, തൊഴിലാളിയെ തല്ലിയിട്ടല്ല, ട്രാൻസ്പോർട്ടുവണ്ടിക്കും, മന്ത്രിമാരുടെ വണ്ടിക്കും കല്ലെറിഞ്ഞിട്ടല്ല, വണ്ടിയുടെ മുമ്പിൽ കമിഴ്ന്നു കിടന്നിട്ടല്ല, കോർപ്പറേഷൻ കൊല്ലം മുതൽ എറണാകുളം വരെയുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് 50% സൗജന്യം നൽകുവാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചത്. നേരേമറിച്ച് വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ നമ്മുടെ പൊന്നോമനക്കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളാണെന്ന പരിഗണനയിലാണ്. ബോർഡ് മേൽപറഞ്ഞ സൗജന്യം അനുവദിച്ചതിനും പുറമെ ആർക്കെങ്കിലും എവിടെയെങ്കിലും സൗജന്യം ലഭിച്ചിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ അതേക്കുറിച്ച് അന്വേഷിച്ചു പരിഹാരമുണ്ടാക്കാമെന്ന് ട്രാൻസ്പോർട്ട് മന്ത്രി, ഏഴുതിക്കൊടുത്തു. കോർപ്പറേഷൻ ചെയർമാൻ ഉറപ്പുകൊടുത്തു. രേഖാമൂലം ഏഴുതിക്കൊടുക്കാമെന്നും പറഞ്ഞു. എന്നിട്ടും അടങ്ങാത്ത സമരമാണ്. അപ്പോൾ ഒരു ചോദ്യം. മുന്യ കൊടുത്ത തങ്ങളെക്കൊടുത്തുകൂടെ? എന്തിന് അന്വേഷിക്കണം? മുന്യ കൊടുത്തിരുന്ന സൗജന്യത്തിന് വ്യക്തമായ രേഖകളൊന്നുമില്ല. രേഖകൾ ഇല്ലാത്തകാലത്തോളം എല്ലാവരും സൗജന്യക്കാരാകാനാണ് സാധ്യത.

സപകാര്യ ഉടമകളിൽ ചിലർ അവരുടെ ബന്ധുക്കളേയും കന്യാസ്ത്രീകളേയും സൗജന്യമായി യാത്രചെയ്യാനനുവദിച്ചിരുന്നു. ചുരുക്കം ചില വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ഒരണയായിരുന്നു ചാർജ്ജ് എന്നും പറയുന്നു. അങ്ങിനെ സൗജന്യ നിരക്കിനെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം ഒരു വ്യവസ്ഥയും ഇല്ലാതിരുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിൽ പൊതുവിൽ 50% സൗജന്യം വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് നൽകുവാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചു. ഒരു പ്രത്യേക മതവിഭാഗത്തിന്റെ സ്കൂളിലേക്ക്, കട്ടികൾ വേരുവാൻ പ്രോത്സാഹനകമായി, ആ വിഭാഗത്തിലെ ബോട്ടുസമരത്തിൽ ചിലരുടെ ഉദാരമനസ്ഥിതിയിൽ നിന്നും ഉടലെടുത്തതാണീ ചുരുക്കം ചില വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ലഭിച്ച ഒരണ സൗജന്യം.

P. T. O.

ഗവണ്മെന്റിന്റെ 51% ഷെയറുള്ള ഒരു കോർപ്പറേഷൻ ആ സൗജന്യം തുടന്നു നൽകണമോയെന്നത് വിചാരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഇനി അതു തുടന്നു അൽക്കാമെന്റവെച്ചാലോ, മിക്കവാറും എല്ലാവരും ഒന്നായ് യാത്ര ചെയ്തിരുന്നവരായിട്ടാണ് പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെടുന്നത്. അതുകൊണ്ടാണ് അപ്പോഴായി തീരുമാനിക്കാം, സൗജന്യം ലഭിച്ചിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ അതു നൽകാം എന്നു പറയുന്നതിന്റെ ചുരുക്കം. ദൂരം നോക്കാതെ ഒരേ നിലയിലുള്ള, സൗജന്യയാത്ര അനുവദിക്കുക എന്നീ രണ്ട് ആവശ്യങ്ങൾ, "കോർപ്പറേഷനെ തല്ലിപ്പൊളിക്കും" എന്നു മുദ്രവാക്യം മുഴക്കുന്നവർക്ക് ചേർന്നതാണ്.

എല്ലാമുറിയെ പണിയെടുത്തു ജീവിതം നയിക്കുന്ന തൊഴിലാളിക്കു അനുകൂലിക്കുവാൻ കഴിയുന്ന ഒരു കാര്യമല്ലിത്.

ആലപ്പുഴയിൽനിന്നും കോട്ടയത്തേയ്ക്ക് സീസൺപാസ്സെടുത്തിട്ടുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ ഉണ്ടെന്ന് ഒരു പക്ഷേ—കൗതുകപരമായൊരു കൂട്ടരും അറിയുകയില്ലായിരിക്കാം. എങ്ങിനെ അറിയും? മാർക്സിസത്തിന്റെ കഴൽകണ്ണാടിയിലൂടെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ എന്നും അപഗ്രഥനം ചെയ്യുന്നവെന്നഭിമാനിക്കുന്ന ഈ സഖാക്കൾ തൊഴിലാളികളുടേയും നാട്ടുകാരുടേയും അടുത്തുവന്നല്ലോ വസ്തുതകൾ ശേഖരിക്കുന്നത്. അഥവാ "പൊതുജനം അവരുടെ റൂപ്പിയിൽ കഴുതകളല്ലേ." പുപ്പള്ളി, എൻ. സി. ജോൺ തുടങ്ങിയ കമ്പോളങ്ങളുടെ പൂമേടകളാണല്ലോ അവർക്ക് വസ്തുതകൾ നൽകുന്നത്.

ദൂരത്തെ പരിഗണിക്കാതെ ഒരേ തീരുമാനിച്ചാൽ എന്താണ് ഫലം? ആലപ്പുഴ കോട്ടയം 7-നെ മുഴുവൻ ചാർജ്ജ് കൊടുത്തു യാത്ര ചെയ്തിരുന്നിട്ട് ഇന്ന് വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ ദീർഘകാലം കൊടുത്താൽ മതി; അതും ഒരേ യാത്ര. ഇതിനോട് ആർക്കെങ്കിലും അനുകൂലിക്കുവാൻ കഴിയുമോ? കൈനകരി, ചേന്നങ്കരി, മൂന്നാറുംമുഖം, മങ്കൊമ്പ്, പുളിങ്കുന്ന്, നെടുമുടി, കാവാലം, പുല്ലങ്കുടി തുടങ്ങിയ പ്രദേശങ്ങളിൽനിന്നും ആലപ്പുഴയ്ക്കുവരുന്ന ഒറ്റവിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ മുൻപ് സൗജന്യമായിരുന്നു. ഇന്ന് 50% സൗജന്യം അനുവദിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. അവിടെ എല്ലാത്തന്നെ സീസൺപാസ്സ് എടുത്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ 50% സൗജന്യം 55-ാം 60-ാം ആക്കി മാറ്റണമെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞാൽ അതു മനസ്സിലാക്കാം. നേരേമറിച്ച് ദൂരപരിഗണിക്കാതെ ഒരേയാക്കണം, സൗജന്യമായി യാത്രചെയ്യാനനുവദിക്കണം എന്നല്ലോ ഡിമാൻഡുവച്ച് സമരം ചെയ്യുന്നതിന്റെ അർത്ഥമെന്താണ്? പ്രത്യക്ഷത്തിൽതന്നെ നീതികരിക്കാൻ കഴിയാത്ത അടിയന്തിരാവശ്യം വെച്ച് സമരം ചെയ്യുന്നത് എന്തിന്?

കോർപ്പറേഷൻ നഷ്ടമാകുമെന്ന് ഇവർ പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. അതു ശരിയാണെന്നു വരുത്തണം. കോർപ്പറേഷനെ പൊളിക്കണമെന്ന മുദ്രവാക്യം നടപ്പാക്കണം. ഏതായാലും ഒരുകാലം തീർച്ച. ബോട്ടുവ്യവസായം തകർച്ചയിലേയ്ക്കു നീങ്ങി 2000-ത്തോളം തൊഴിലാളികളുടേയും അവരുടെ കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങളുടേയും ജീവിതം വെള്ളത്തിലാകുമെന്ന ഘട്ടത്തിലാണ് ഗവണ്മെന്റ് കോർപ്പറേഷൻ രൂപീകരിച്ചത്. കോർപ്പറേഷന്റെ രൂപീകരണത്തോടുകൂടി ഈ തൊഴിലാളികൾക്ക് അവരുടെ ഭാവിക്ക് ഒരു ഉറപ്പും ജീവിതത്തിൽ ഒരു ആത്മവിശ്വാസവും ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ സ്ഥിതിയിൽ കോർപ്പറേഷനെ പൊളിക്കാനുള്ള ഏതു നീക്കത്തേയും തൊഴിലാളികൾ പൊരുക്കുകയില്ല. അതേസമയം യാത്രക്കാരുടെയും വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടേയും താല്പര്യം സംരക്ഷിക്കുവാൻ ന്യായമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾ സാധിക്കുന്നതിനുംവേണ്ടി നിലകൊള്ളുകയും ചെയ്യും.

സഖാക്കളേ, സ്നേഹിതരേ!

ഇവർക്ക് കോർപ്പറേഷനെ പൊളിക്കുന്നതിനും പുറമേ കമ്മ്യൂ: ഗവണ്മെന്റിനെ മറിച്ചിടുകയുംവേണം. എന്തിനാണ് കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് ഗവണ്മെന്റിനെ മറിച്ചിടുന്നത്. ഈ ഗവണ്മെന്റിനെ മറിച്ചിട്ടാൽ അന്നുതൊട്ട് ആയിരക്കണക്കിന് കുടികിടപ്പുകാരെ കുടിയറക്കാനും, കൃഷിക്കാരനെ ഒഴിപ്പിക്കാനും, പോലീസിനെ ഉപയോഗിക്കാൻ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസബില്ലും, കാർഷികബന്ധബില്ലും, മറ്റും അറബിക്കടലിൽ താഴ്ത്താം. മുതലാളികളെ തൊഴിലാളിയേയും, ജനിക്കു കുടിയന്തേയും കൂട്ടതൽ കൊള്ളയടിക്കാനവസരമുണ്ടാക്കാം. സാമൂഹ്യവിരുദ്ധശക്തികൾക്കെതിരായി കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് ഗവണ്മെന്റ് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന 144 തൊഴിലാളിക്കും കർഷകത്തൊഴിലാളിക്കും എതിരായി ജനീ-മുതലാളി വർഗ്ഗത്തിന് ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്താം.

അതുകൊണ്ട് തൊഴിലാളി വർഗ്ഗനേതൃത്വത്തിൽ ഇന്നാട്ടിലെ ജനാധിപത്യശക്തികൾ ഉയന്നെഴുന്നേറ്റാൽ ഈ സാമൂഹ്യവിരുദ്ധശക്തികളുടെ കയ്യിൽ പാവകളായി കഴിയുന്ന വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളെ നേർവഴിക്കു നയിക്കുകയും, പ്രതിലോമകാരികളെ നിലയ്ക്കുനിർത്തുകയും, നിയമസമാധാനങ്ങൾ പരിപാലിക്കുന്നതിന് ഒത്തുചേരുകയും ചെയ്യണമെന്ന് ബോട്ടുക്കൂ അസോസിയേഷൻ ആഹ്വാനം ചെയ്യുന്നു.

ആലപ്പുഴ,
20-7-1958.

എം. റി. ചന്ദ്രസേനൻ,
ജനറൽ സെക്രട്ടറി, ബോട്ടുക്കൂ അസോസിയേഷൻ.

M.T. Chandyrasenan,
Gen Secy, Boat Crew Assn.

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ALL-INDIA SEAMEN'S FEDERATION
UNITED SEAMEN'S UNION
SEAFARERS' UNION OF INDIA

New Delhi address: 113, North Avenue.

The Chairman and the Hon'ble Members of the
Joint Parliamentary Select Committee
on the Indian Merchant Shipping Bill, 1958,
Parliament House,
New Delhi.

Sirs,

We, at the outset, thank you for the opportunity you have given us to place our suggestions and views before you on a bill which is so vital to the lives of our seamen. Now, Sirs, before going into the suggestions put forward by us, we beg to point out that we have dealt with only those portions of the bill, which concern the seamen directly.

Sirs, as we have indicated in our memorandum, we find the bill rather disappointing so far as the interests of our seamen are concerned. It lacks the provisions which we consider essential for the protection of these interests. Questions of wages, hours of work and overtime allowances, leave social security, nature of duty etc. have been left out of its purview. We presume that while the bill was drafted, it was considered that these questions would be settled through collective agreements between the shipowners and the seafarers or, may be, through the tribunals, for which there is a provision in the bill.

Sirs, let us first examine whether these questions can be satisfactorily settled through the collective agreements. The idea of collective agreement is no doubt a very good one and should be encouraged in all possible ways. But it is one thing to appreciate the idea and another to realise in practice. It is commonly admitted that the method of collective agreement has not worked very successfully in the Asian conditions because of the weak and undeveloped characters of the trade union organisations. We have to visualise the possibility of collective agreements for the seafarers of our country in this context and we know that this possibility is by no means a bright one. In his report submitted to the Asian Maritime Conference held in 1953 at Nuara Eliya, Ceylon, the Director General, ILO, could not visualise this possibility. He mentioned that it was only in Japan the method of collective agreement was successfully applied. In the discussion held during the Seattle Convention, 1946, it came out that it would not be wise to rely on the methods of collective bargaining alone for the enforcement of the conventions on wages, hours of work, social security etc. So the Convention envisaged governmental legislations also for this purpose particularly in respect of the Asian and African countries. It may be mentioned here that even in advanced countries like Scandinavia hours of work for seamen had to be fixed by governmental legislations.

Now, Sirs, considering the situation in India, in the context of which framing of satisfactory collective agreements to meet the urgent demands of seamen is envisaged, we can state with all conviction at our command that there is no such possibility in near future. Experiences of seamen are quite eloquent in this respect. A collective agreement framed in 1944 and it did not deal with the vital questions of hours of work, social security, food, accomodation, manning scale etc. and the way the question of wages was decided was patently unsatisfactory. Since that time, no proper body existed for collective bargaining. In 1955 the Government set up the tripartite Seamen's Welfare Board, but uptil now the Board has literally produced nothing. In 1956 a bipartite organisation of the shipowners and the seafarers came into existence, but so far it has only toyed with the demands of seamen. The reason for the failure of these bodies is not far to seek. In these bodies, the seafarers' side is represented by an organisation which is not only unrepresentative, but also does not appear to be loyal to

seamen - it seems to always dance to the tune of the shipowners. It now bases its activities on naked gangsterism and open looting of seamen's money. In course of registration of seamen at the Seamen's Employment Office at Calcutta, it was established that it had not a following of even 5% seamen, whereas the All-India Seamen's Federation showed a following of overwhelming majority, but still the Government granted ~~recognition~~ sole recognition to this union. The then Director General of Shipping assured us at that time that the question of recognition would be settled on the basis of the following of different seamen's organisations that would be revealed through registration at the Seamen's Employment Office. But this assurance has not been honoured. Perhaps I have been digressing, but I have to mention these things how unhelpful is the attitude of the Government in the matter of developing strong seafarers' organisations which ~~xxx~~ is an essential pre-condition for successful collective agreements. As a matter of fact, a strong organisation of seafarers was actually developing as was mentioned in the report of the Director General, ILO, to the Asian Maritime Conference held at Nuara Eliya, but it is the Government's unhelpful attitude which has thwarted the development. When this is the situation, you can well imagine Sirs, that ~~is~~ any hope of striking a successful bargain with the formidable British shipowners to obtain a fair agreement on seamen's demands is a swan song.

Now, Sirs, let us consider whether the seamen's demands may be settled through the tribunals as provided in the bill. It is the general experience of the workers of our country that tribunals are not set up in any trade unless and until the employees of that trade can create a crisis or at least produce a serious threat of it. Is it desirable, Sirs, that our seamen should create such a crisis in the vital shipping trade to obtain a tribunal? Otherwise, where is the assurance that they will get a tribunal for the settlement of their long pending grievances? Even if we assume that it would be possible for them to obtain a tribunal without creating any crisis, there is no guarantee that it would settle the major questions of principles in regard to their wages, hours of work, social security etc. It may be relevant to point out that in spite of the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, separate legislations on minimum wages, social security, hours of work etc. had to be made to settle the generally accepted principles underlying these legislations. Now as the seamen are denied the benefits of the Indian labour legislations, we think it imperative that internationally accepted principles guiding the conditions of services of seamen as embodied in the Seattle Convention, 1946, should be reliased in our country through an act of the Parliament i.e. the Merchant Shipping Act.

Sirs, we need not describe here the hellish conditions under which our seamen are compelled to serve. We are submitting here some papers for the kind perusal of the Chairman and the Members of the Committee. They will just give a glimpse of those conditions. It will be all the more clear to you Sirs, our seamen have been waiting these long years hoping continually that that the national Government would redress their grievances and it can brooke no further delay. We, therefore, earnestly hope that you, Sirs, would consider our proposals 1(a) to (e) in the light of what I have just stated and accept them to protect the essential interests of our seamen.

Among our other suggestions, I want to stress particularly on the following:-

- (1) provision for crew committees;
- (2) some more powers to the shipping master which would make his decisions ~~binding~~ in all disputes between a seaman and his employer or ships' officers binding on both the parties;
- (3) provision prohibiting ill-treatment of crews by the ship's authorities etc.

In our memorandum we have given our reasons for these suggestions and a perusal of the papers just submitted will, I hope, convince you all the more how justified these reasons are.

Sirs, for want of time, I cannot deal here with our other suggestions which we have given clause by clause, but they are not less important. We hope, you will consider them favourably and with this prayer & with your kind permission I am concluding my statement. Thank you Sirs.

A. Saleque.

which is not only unrepresentative, but also does not appear to be loyal to

The lot of India's 80,000 seamen must be considered an unfortunate one in as much as their case has received little consideration from the Government, still less, from the press and the public—a fact which is baffling in the context a very wide realisation in our country about the overriding need for a rapid expansion of our national sea shipping.

The importance of our seamen lies not only in the fact that it is upon them falls the responsibility of manning efficiently our expanding merchant navy, the second line of our defence, but also in their earning quite a handsome amount of extremely valuable foreign currency (to the tune of Rs. 5 crores annually) through their services on British and other foreign ships. It was, therefore, natural for them to expect that considering their vital and strategic role which is also one of unofficial ambassadors, the Government would introduce a rational service condition for them commensurate with at least what it has done in other labour sectors through various labour legislations. But, so far, they have been very rudely disappointed.

Seamen's service conditions are guided solely by the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923, which has undergone a few amendments only in respect of recruitment, medical examination and of some minor aspects. They have thus remained remarkably anachronistic. Our seamen have no fixed hours of duty and no overtime allowance is paid to them though not infrequently they are required work for 12/14 hours a day on board the ship. They can enjoy none of our national holidays nor they are financially compensated for it. They are deprived of elementary social security and their wages are far below the standard recommended for Asian seamen by a number of ILO sessions and conferences. The conditions of food and accommodation on board are as much unsatisfactory as the treatment they receive from the ships authorities. Though the performance of our seamen conforms to the highest standard of seafaring profession and compares very well with that of the seamen of leading maritime nations, the conditions of their services are one of the worst in the world. No wonder, therefore, the British shipowners are averse to employ them and bag an annual profit of the order of Rs.10 crores from their trade with our ports only.

However, recently the Government has introduced in the Parliament the Indian Merchant Shipping Bill 1958, which has just passed through the select committee stage. The bill meets none of the hopes of seamen. On the contrary, it seeks to impose a still harsher conditions upon them. The vital questions of wages, hours of hours of work, overtime allowance, leave, social security, food, accommodation etc. have been left completely out of its purview presumably to satisfy the British shipowners. In fact, the Minister incharge of shipping was heard to say that if the Government assumed powers to fix these conditions through legislation, the foreign employers who provided employment to 80% of our seamen, might shift their recruitment to other countries. This argument is as much misleading as removed from reality. The foreign shipowners cannot and will not abandon their recruitment from Indian ports for the simple reason of the insurmountable difficulties of embarkation of the crews recruited from other countries. Even leaving aside this aspect, it is evident that they cannot afford to antagonise the Government of India by transferring their recruitment in the vital interest of their trade with our ports, much the same way they did not dare, in the face of a Governmental threat, to increase the freight rates on the plea of congestion at Indian ports.

Government's preoccupation with its own unreal logic has led to another unreal assumption that the questions of wages, hours of work etc. would be settled through collective agreements. Condition of seamen's trade union movement being what it is, it is absolutely idle to think that they can secure favourable agreements from the formidable shipowners.

The seamen's trade union movement in India has been, since recently, up against a very difficult situation which is entirely a creation of the Govt's narrow, shortsighted and politically biased policy.

The All-India Seamen's Federation has been functioning as by far the most representative organisation of the seamen of Calcutta which was unmistakably borne out by a ~~series~~ series of successful struggle led and organised by it and its constituent unions since 1951 onwards. With the joining of the United Seafarer's Federation of Bombay in '53, which includes in its following the entire section of the new and educated seamen trained under the Govt. ~~services~~, the All India Seamen's Federation became the highest and most representative organisation of seamen on All-India basis. But strangely enough, when the seamen's employment boards were setup at Bombay and Calcutta, the Government granted the sole representation of the seafarer's side of the boards to the National Union of Seamen of India apparently for no other reason than that it included in its leadership some persons who professed allegiance to the ruling party. This union was formed in 1953 with a conglomeration of some of the old and discredited leaders who were given at their disposal a huge fund by the International Transport Workers' Federation, London, and were guided personally by the ICFWU chief's like, Omer Beou and oldbrook. It immediately received the Govt's blessing which was indicated by the presence of the high officials of the Transport Ministry and the State Labour Minister of Seamen's Welfare Board also like the Seamen's employment Board is statutory body. Encouraged by this attitude of the Government, the shipowners, who had hitherto hesitated to recognise the National Union for fear of inviting troubles, loose no time to recognise it and end form the National ~~Maritime~~ Maritime Board with its representatives alone. Thus the National Union of Seamen of India was imposed upon the Indian seamen in total disregard for the preponderant claim of the All-India Seamen's Federation to such a recognition. As a protest against this balantly undemocratic action of the Government, the Federation called a boycott of the Seamen's Employment Office as a result of which the registration of seamen at that office came to a complete standstill. In this situation, the Director General of Shipping came down to Calcutta in March 1955 and held a Press Conference where he categorically declared - he also assured the representatives of the Federation, in course of the interview with him - that the question of seamen's representation would be finally settled on the basis of the strength of different organisations that would be revealed through the registration of seamen at the employment office. On this assurance the boycott was withdrawn ~~but~~ but the Government never ~~ex~~ cared to honour it.

In spite of all the facilities of the Government and employers' recognition, the National Union diamally failed to win the confidence of seamen in general. This was not surprising because, as is to be expected, its activities have been devoted not ~~so~~ much to promote the interests of seamen as to destroy their militant organisation. In perfect consistence with this policy, they have been, since over a year, resorting to the tactics of force and violence to bring the masses of seamen within their organisation crushing their representative organisations with the help of a big gang professional rowdies hired from outside. They have been frankly and systematically terrorising the seamen, making forcible collection of big amounts money from them right inside the Government shipping office and attacking and assaul-

Bombay at the inaugural meeting. However, the Govt. also promised the sole representation to the National Union.

assaulting the representatives of other unions at the shipping office and on board ships. Thus not only the basic tradeunion rights of seamen and the principles adopted at the Nainital labour conference are being wantonly violated, but it has also become impossible for the other unions to function normally. This is all the more significant in view of the fact that the National Union launched this attack when seamen, who built up a brilliant unity through a series of victories struggles, against oppression on board and were preparing to start a determined struggle against the shipowners to realise their long pending demands.

Numerous protests from masses of seamen and their organisation apart, there has been a chorus of condemnation of these activities of the National Union of seamen of India from a very responsible sources. In July last year Sri Bhupesh Gupta, M.P. sent a telegram to the Minister of Transport, Government of India, pointing out these activities and requesting his personal intervention to stop them. In December last, a delegation composed of Sarvasree Sadhan Ghupta, M.P. Abdur Razzak Khan, M.P. Ganesh Ghosh, M.L.A. Somnath Lahiri, M.L.A. and Amar Bose, M.L.A. visited the Calcutta Shipping Office and in their very presence the seamen and their representatives were attacked by the rowdies of the National Union and these public representatives issued a press statement accordingly and also brought the matter to the notice of the Central and State Governments. The matter was also raised in the Lok Sabha and West Bengal Assembly. When the members of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee ~~was~~ on the Indian Merchant Shipping Bill of 1958, visited Bombay and Calcutta ^{in the} middle of July this year all section of seamen at both the ports spontaneously voiced their grievances against the ^{rule} ~~rule~~ of the National Union before them - a fact which also established the total isolation of the Union from seamen.

Despite of all these, there has been no improvement in the situation, on the contrary recent developments suggest that the Government is determined to impose a closed shop method in the seamen field. A few days ago the shipping master, Calcutta, categorically declared that the representative of no other union than the National Union would be allowed any entrance still less, to carry ^{on} any tradeunion activities inside the shipping office. It, therefore, seems that nothing short of a determined action by seamen would be helpful in restoring normalcy in seamen's tradeunion movement and in winning their fundamental rights unless the members of the Parliament take up the matter in defence of their rights. But any action by our seamen is bound to have a serious world wide repercussion and if such contingency arises the Government would not be able to escape the responsibility.

Apart from the urgent necessity of effectively suppressing the highly dangerous and provocative activities of the National Union of Seamen of India and granting of recognition to the really representative seamen's organisation like the All-India Seamen's Federation, the satisfaction of the long pending demands of seamen is also an equally indispensable condition for peace and progress in our vital shipping trade. The All-India Seamen's Federation had appeared before the Jt. Parliamentary Select Committee on the Indian Merchant Shipping Bill 1958 and suggested the amendment of the Bill ^{with} inclusion inter alia of the following principles:-

1. The wages of Indian seamen should be fixed on the basis of equal pay for equal work calculated according to the scales of wages of British seamen as has been recommended by the ILO.
2. Hours of work should be fixed according to the principles of 8-hour day and all work exceeding that time should be paid at the overtime rate which should be twice the rate of wage.

Works on Indian National Holidays as well as on Sundays should be ~~social security fund~~ paid at the overtime rate.

3. There should be social security for seamen in the form of pension and Provident fund.
4. Food Ration should be fixed with regard to the Indian food habits and nutrition, ~~on board.~~
5. Accomodation should be such as to afford the minimum comforts.
6. The Government should have ~~been~~ rule making power in respect of all the above matters in every ship. *on board*
7. There should be statutory crew committee, *like* work committee in factories.

Obiviously, the service condition of our seamen will depend upon to that extent the above principles are embodied in the new Indian Merchant Shipping Act for the proper enactment of which seamen naturally look to the members of the Parliament.

J. K. K. K.
3/9/58

(Copy for — "Trade union Record)