

THE WORKING CLASS



MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

VOL I. No 12

AUGUST 1972

In This Issue

- Twentyfifth Anniversary Of Indian Independence
- Mockery Of Maternity Benefits In India
—Vimal Ranadive
- CITU Note To The Bonus Review Committee
- Newsletters/Tamilnadu And Kerala
- Semi-Fascist Terror In Durgapur Condemned
- Samyukta Trade Union Council Of Maharashtra Formed
- Stop Attacks On Workers And Trade Unions/CITU's
- Telegram To President
- Reports From Unions
- More On Wages/Legal Notes
- Plug The Loopholes Of The Mines Act.
- Report On Railwaymen's Struggles
- Working Class Struggle In Spain
- Other Regular Features

Editorial Board

B. T. Ranadive (Chairman)
P. Ramamurti Manoranjan Ray
Niren Ghosh Sudhin Kumar
M. K. Pandya (Editor)

Fight The Skyrocketing Of Prices

The West Bengal and the Maharashtra State Committee of CITU in alliance with the State Committees of other Central organisations, have correctly taken the question of the continuous price-rise and decided to fight against the new attack on the working class.

The CITU invites all other Central organisations, the unions and ranks of the AITUC, the HMS and the INTUC to join in this common fight, and prevent their leaders from collaborating with the Government in carrying through the new attacks against the workers.

The momentum which the price-rise has gathered reveals, as nothing else, the utter cynicism of the Government and the ruling party which controls it. The latter made profuse pronouncements about garibi hatao and even socialism during the elections. Before and after the elections it played with the slogan of drastic reduction in land-ceilings to entrap the peasant masses. And as late as June 1972 it announced what it called a new approach to the Fifth Plan in which it promised plenty of consumer goods and other amenities to the common people and the working class.

In reality it was at the same time undermining and eroding the miserable standard of living and wages that obtain today.

The wholesale price-level today has risen by 7.1 per cent compared with a year ago. The accentuating process is further seen in the fact that in the month of June alone this year the wholesale index rose by as much as 3.5 per cent—higher than the index for the entire preceding year.

This time official policies cannot establish an alibi for themselves by pointing to shortages, especially in the basic necessities of life. The Government has been advertising the results of its "Green Revolution". The lowest estimate of foodgrains output this year puts it at 106 million tons. The Government has a buffer stock of 9 million tons. The Government itself is a strong force in the foodgrains business.

Despite this foodgrains prices shot up by 15 per cent in a single year. The rise at the retail level is still more. Is one to believe that the authorities with the nine million buffer stock at their disposal were unable to prevent the rise. It is plain that they did not want to intervene and in fact used their hold over the buffer stock to fleece the people through higher prices.

The prices of milk and milk products, fish, eggs, meat, vegetables, sugar, oil, as well as liquor and tobacco, have also gone up considerably.

In mid-June compared with a month earlier cereals rose by 3 per cent, pulses by 12 per cent, edible oils 8 per cent, fish, eggs and meat 10 per cent and sugar and allied products 6 per cent, raising the wholesale price index for food articles by 5.1 per cent.

Cloth, another article of common consumption, has also shown a steep rise. Varieties in common use have registered a rise ranging anywhere from 15 to 50 per cent, making a mockery of the living standard of the people.

Amazing

The most amazing part of this story is that, notwithstanding the continuous rise in the necessities of life, the working class cost of living index has remained immobile, transfixed and paralysed as if by some superior force. The official manipulators of the index have surpassed themselves in their usual jugglery at the expense of the workers. In this period when working class budgets were shrinking due to shooting prices the official cost of living index went down or remains virtually steady.

In Ahmedabad the index was 183 in September 1971, 182 in October, 186 in November, 185 in January, 185 in February and 184 in March. In Bombay it was 192 in September, 193 in October, 194 in November, 190 in January, 191 in February and 193 in March. In Calcutta it was 194 in September, 198 in October, 200 in November, 187 in January, 186 in February and 185 in March.

By this manipulation thousands of workers have been defrauded of the legitimate rise in Dearness Allowance and robbed of crores of rupees. They have been forced to put up with privations and they have lost all the gains they secured

last year by compelling the employers to accept a minimum bonus rate of $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The inhumanity involved in this manipulation and cheating can be understood only if it is realised that during the last two decades the real wages of the workers earning less than 200 per month has remained stagnant despite all the heroic battles that they had fought. Whatever they secured through their struggle was spirited away by rising prices, and manipulated indices.

The index of real monthly earnings of factory workers (base 1951=100) was 108.4 in 1938, 117.7 in 1940, 113.8 in 1960, 103.7 in 1966, 96.3 in 1967, 102.6 in 1968 and 102.2 in 1969.

Now once again after last year's successful bonus and other struggles a systematic attack is in evidence to bring down the real wages level.

No doubt, traders, speculators, sugar barons and a host of other swindlers, the blood brothers of Congress Ministers, are also running wild under the patronage of the ruling party. But the main blame and responsibility must be placed at the door of the Government under whose economic policies and planning the common man must be continuously defrauded if that Capitalist economy is to run.

Deficit Financing

Deficit financing, accompanied by inflation and rising prices is the constant weapon of the ruling classes to attack the working class and forcibly transfer value from the workers to the capitalists. The Government only makes a show of controlling prices, but it is the arch criminal that deliberately unleashes a price rise to destroy the gains of the working class and bring it back to the original position. The

reason why real wage during the last three decades has not gone up, in fact it is lower than under the British rule, is to be found in the continuous manipulation of the weapon.

Deficit financing has been increasing with every five year plan. The total amount of Rs. 850 crores provided for the entire Fourth Year Plan was exceeded in the first two years itself and still more is coming.

The working class is thus face to face with the basic policy of the Congress rulers. So long as it lasts it means growing robbery and surrender of gains secured through hard toil and struggle. If the prices continue to rise what remains of the $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent minimum bonus? In fact the workers will be forced to demand a much higher minimum bonus, taking into consideration the big gap in real earnings made by galloping prices.

The salaried employees, the poor peasants and agricultural workers, the middle classes all are the direct victims of this price operation. They all must combine their forces with the working class to defeat the new menace to the living conditions.

The workers and their families today are compelled to forego many necessities and live on a starvation diet notwithstanding a full days' work. Every day they are losing ten to fifteen per cent of their earnings to this inflationary drive against their living standards. Unitedly they must demand that the Government abjure this policy of unleashing uncontrolled price rise to help the capitalists. They must demand an end to the fraudulent manipulation of the cost of living index and ask for compensation for the loss incurred. And they must also demand statutory guarantee of full neutralisation of

★ On Page Nineteen

EXCERPTS FROM CITU Note To The Bonus Review Committee

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions is deeply constrained to note the inordinate delay that is being caused in settling the question of bonus affecting the livelihood of millions of our workers. It is but natural that the workers are getting restive as a result of this. An indication of the workers mood is seen in the decision of the representatives of Maharashtra State units of INTUC, HMS and AITUC on 17th June 1972 in Bombay wherein they demanded withdrawal of their nominees on the Review Committee if it failed to submit the interim recommendation of 8 per cent minimum bonus by 15th July 1972.

The CITU would like to bring to the notice of the Committee its strong resentment at the refusal of the Government to nominate our representative on this Committee despite the fact that our organisation had over 1850 affiliated unions with 8,90,000 membership as per list submitted to the Government for the year ending 31st December 1970. We would therefore make it clear that our organisation would not be bound by even the unanimous recommendations of the Committee if they go contrary to the interests of the working class. This question has a special significance in view of the fact that the representatives of the INTUC and AITUC on the Bonus Commission let down the workers and gave their consent to the formula which was highly favourable for the employers. Taking advantage of this position the representative of the employers in the private sector was emboldened to

express his dissent even to this formula and ultimately was successful in forcing the Government to accept a formula still worse from the point of view of the workers. We are however happy to note that at least the INTUC in its note to the Review Committee has admitted, "The Commission's recommendations were even more reactionary than the formula of the Labour Appellate Tribunal."

The CITU is further of the opinion that the question of raising the minimum quantum of bonus to 8.33 per cent was formally accepted by the Government when Shri Chitta Basu M.P. moved a private members' bill purporting to raise the minimum quantum of bonus to 8.33 per cent. Shri Basu was persuaded to withdraw the Bill when the Union Labour Minister gave an assurance that the Government was thinking of bringing forward an amending bill on the subject. The Union Labour Minister Shri R. K. Khadilkar on several occasions admitted the justification in the demand for raising the minimum bonus to 8.33 per cent. During the Indian Labour Conference all the Central Trade Union Organisations demanded 8.33 per cent minimum bonus without any delay. The most reasonable course for the Government would have been to bring forward legislation in Parliament providing this minimum bonus. The Government however resorted to dilatory tactics under the pressure of employers and referred the matter to the present Review Committee. These tactics were seen in further

clear light, Government took 5 months to constitute a Committee after the announcement of its decision. Though 3-months have elapsed since April 1972 the interim recommendations of the Review Committee have yet to see the light of the day. This approach is only serving the cause of employers and is detrimental to the interest of the workers. Already, official statistics shows that more than 10 per cent of the industrial disputes during the recent years were on the demand of higher bonus.

We are restricting ourselves in this note only to the issues involved in the interim recommendations viz quantum of minimum bonus, the coverage of the new bonus proposals and the relevant year from which the recommendations of the Review Committee should be made applicable.

The need for raising the quantum of minimum bonus from the present provision of 4 per cent can hardly be exaggerated. The very concept of bonus arose in India out of extremely low level of wages despite high rate of profits. Even the Courts have accepted the concept of bonus as a deferred wage to meet the gap between the existing level of low wages and the living wage. It is on this ground that we are against fixation of ceiling on bonus till the workers attain a living wage standard. However, the gap instead of decreasing has only widened further as a result of the wage policy pursued by the Government. Even according to the Indian Labour Statistics 1972, the real wages of Indian workers taking 1961 as the base year stood at 98 during 1970. The 8.33 per cent minimum bonus will only enable the workers to maintain their 1961 standard instead of going in the direction of living wage standard.

The past experience is clear enough to show that the employers manipulated the balance sheets of companies in such a way that minimum bonus became maximum. However recently through united struggles the workers in many factories got more than 8.33 per cent bonus though manipulated balance-sheets of the employers did not show a sizable profit. The interim recommendations should give a stern warning to the employers against this tendency and suggest suitable steps to ensure that bonus higher than the minimum could be arrived at through collective bargaining.

The terms of reference of the Review Committee have given special emphasis on the question of productivity, since two sections out of six are devoted to the question of linking bonus with the productivity. We consider that the question of bonus has nothing to do with productivity and this aspect is totally irrelevant so far as the Review Committee is concerned.

The "Khadilkar Formula" on bonus evolved last year in the wake of strike struggles in major textile centres was an attempt to postpone the settlement of the question by arriving at an ad hoc compromise. In several centres however the workers got higher bonus than the Khadilkar formula through strike struggles or threat of strike actions. The employers in Bombay while paying bonus last year as per Khadilkar formula characterised the bonus above the quantum available under the Bonus Act as an advance and notices have been issued to recover the said "advance". This has made a mockery of bonus but the Government of Maharashtra has been behaving like a silent spectator. We hope the Review Committee would realise gravity of the situa-

tion and recommend that in no case the so called advance would be recovered from the workers.

The Bonus Act deprived a large section of the workers the right to bonus. The Government restricted the right of bonus only to a section of workers through the terms of reference of the Bonus Commission itself. The employers of public sector undertakings which do not compete with the private sector were thus excluded from the purview of the Bonus Commission. Similarly non-factory establishments employing less than 20 persons were also excluded from the payment of bonus. The Bonus Commission made the matters worse by excluding some more sections. Several strike struggles were successfully fought by the workers in public sector undertakings and small establishments not covered by the Bonus Act and won the right to Bonus though at times it was called "ex-gratia" payment. The case of 14 lakh railway employees in this regard is most glaring. Though the nature of their duties is similar to other industrial employees they have been denied the bonus payment so far. We therefore suggest that the Bonus Review Committee in the interim recommendations should make it clear that the new Bonus scheme would cover the entire working class irrespective of whether it is in public sector or in private sector, or in co-operative sector or in a semi-Government or quasi-Government departmental undertaking, irrespective of the size of employment or period of operations of a concern. The closed mills reopened after taking over by the Government should also not be excluded from the payment of bonus. The Shops and Establishments and undertakings employing less than

20 persons should also be ensured payment of bonus. The recommendations should also cover all the casual, daily rated workers and workers employed by contractors. It is also found that some unscrupulous employers deprive the workers from the payment of bonus by giving them less than requisite number of days work during the year. The interim recommendation should provide a clause to protect the interest of this section also.

Regarding the period from which the new rate of minimum bonus should be paid to the workers we are of the opinion that it should be made applicable from the year 1970. Normally the Government should have reviewed the bonus question 5 years after submission of the Bonus Commission report which however was not done. There is no reason why the workers should be penalised for the fault of the Government. We further suggest that the new scheme should be applicable to all the pending disputes prior to 1970 also,

All India Plantation Workers' Conference

The All India Plantation Workers Conference will be held at Darjeeling on 17th-19th November.

B. T. Ranadive President CITU will inaugurate the Conference. A preparatory Committee has been formed with Monorajan Roy as the Convenor. Unions not affiliated to CITU will also be invited to participate in the Conference.

newsletters

TAMILNADU

Reign Of Terror

The fanfare which greeted the so-called agriculturists movement in Tamilnadu recently has, in effect, been an excellent cover for some gory happenings in the State. A reign of terror has now been unleashed in the trade union front and all voices of dissent are being throttled in a manner recalling the days of the Gestapo.

R. Kuchelar, who not so long ago was elected the President of the Simpson Workers' Union by an overwhelming majority, is now in jail implicated in a murder case. Perhaps this was not good enough for the powers that be. On July 15 as he arrived at the Madras Central Station under police escort, a group of rowdies made for his compartment on the Bangalore Mail. His escorts, at one stage, threatened to open fire. In the melee, Kuchelar's Secretary, James, suffered multiple stab injuries.

V. P. Chintan, the Vice-President of the Union and Madhavan, the Secretary, both of the CITU, have also found themselves in prison during this period. There is no doubt that the authorities will not allow the Union to further the cause of the workers. A deputation of workers called on the chief Minister on July 17 and handed in a memorandum demanding security for union activists. The Simpson Plants, meanwhile, continue to be locked out.

The ransacking of **Alai Osai**, reported in our July issue, was followed by the ransacking of another weekly, **Kumudam**. Its sin was that it disapproved of the DMK's

ways and means. One cannot protest and live in Tamilnadu, not any longer. Following the murder of a DMK leader, an incredible number of suspects were roped in. But when Kannan and Ganapathy, two CITU activists, were killed, not a single person was arrested.

Another case has been reported from Ainavaram. Here transport workers led by the CITU were demonstrating against the sudden staggering of working hours when DMK rowdies, under the very nose of the police, swooped down on them and stabbed P. Selvaraj, one of the demonstrators.

Arasu Strike

The 2000 workers of the Arasu Rubber Plantation who had been on strike for over three months went back to work on July 23 following settlement of their demands. Hema-chandran attended, on behalf of the CITU, the conciliation meetings which were presided over by the Labour Officer, Nagercoil.

The Madurai Mills which have been the scene of a militant trade union movement in recent months have—like everyone else in the State—revised their modus operandi. The factory had laid off as many as 6500 workers, who then went on a hunger-strike from June 15. A few days ago, a group of armed rowdies, obviously with the blessings of the employers, mounted an assault on them in a bid to cow them down with violence. It is the same story all over again.

We shall conclude the newsletter, however, on a happy note. The Ennur Engineering Workers have, in their Annual General Meeting held recently, decided to sever ties

with the AITUC and to throw in their lot with the CITU. The CITU has scored another victory elsewhere. In the elections to Kaveri Mill Co-operative Sangham held on June 24, all its nominees were elected defeating an alliance of the INTUC and AITUC.

KERALA

Growing Resistance

The 50-day strike by 4000 workers of Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore (FACT), which was called off on July 6, has, apart from exposing a number of blacklegs proved conclusively that workers are now in a more militant frame of mind than many people think.

Once the suspension issue was referred for adjudication, it seemed that the authorities' patience was quickly running out. It was obvious that a movement which lost none of its thunder even after the shameless backsliding of the unions led by the INTUC and AITUC would not be easy to deal with. Once again the Achutha Menon Government came to the management's aid; it ordered the reopening of the factory from July 3.

On July 3, the FACT township took on the appearance of a vast police camp. Sec. 144 was promulgated all over the area and when workers picketed the gates, they were promptly put under arrest. But even this failed to work. The overwhelming majority of workers stayed away (-) in a spirit of defiance which could be a lesson to many people who claim to represent workers.

This was followed by the Government's declaration of the strike as illegal. The Unions, including the one led by the CITU, did a bit of stock-taking at this stage and deci-

ded, in view of the threats of Government action, to go back to work. To the sceptic, one can only say that the last has not been heard of the movement.

Defence Committee

Struggles in Kerala are beginning to show a good deal of vitality, and inspired by the impact made by what the newspapers call 'land grab movement,' democratic struggles are building up. Reports are being received of the formation of Trade union Rights Defence Committees on a broad base from places like Kottayam, Idikki and others.

A 100-member Action Committee of representatives from a number of employees' organisations was formed at Trivandrum recently with a view to assisting the heroic struggle by the ministerial staff of the Kerala State Transport who have been on strike since June 27. Employees are rallying alongside one another practically everywhere.

When, for instance, a Union Secretary in the Trichur Telephone Division was suspended and two other activists transferred, the entire staff of the Trichur Telephone Division launched a non-cooperation movement from June 23. They were followed suit by the Kerala Division workers. This solidarity made the authorities relent and the suspension order was withdrawn.

Meanwhile the Kerala Plantation Labour Federation (CITU) has succeeded in wresting substantial increases in the wages of Plantation workers in the negotiations held on July 12. This came after the other trade unions had agreed to settle for much less. A male worker in a tea estate will now be entitled to a basic daily wage of Rs. 2.61 while one in a rubber estate would get Rs. 3.37. The dearness allowance which will be linked with the Consumers' Price Index will stand, at the moment, at 88 paise and Rs. 1.18 respectively.

Stop Attacks On Workers & Trade Unions *CITU's Telegram To President*

Niren Ghosh, M.P., and Monoranjan Roy, M.P., Secretaries of CITU have sent a telegram on July 14 to President V. V. Giri drawing his attention to intensified attacks on workers and Trade Unions in West Bengal by rowdies of Congress (R). Since the submission of a Memorandum to the President on June 1, murderous attacks on T. U. leaders and workers, mass terrorisation of workers and forcible collection of money from workers by Congress (R) rowdies have been intensified. On July 5, Jaynarayan, a Jute Worker and leader of Naihati Jute Mill workers (BCMU) was murdered by these rowdies and K.B. Rai, a worker of Bagdogra Tea Estate (Darjeeling)

was murdered on July 8. On July 11, Santosree Chatterjee and Santi Dasgupta, office-bearers of the Hindusthan Motor Worker's Union (CITU) were attacked by Congress (R) rowdies and severely assaulted. Both of them were seriously injured and were sent to Uttarpara Hospital in unconscious state. Hundreds of trade union leaders are still being forcibly prevented from joining their duties. The police and administration are aiding and abetting the rowdies in their murderous attacks.

The CITU Secretaries have appealed to the President to immediately intervene and stop these attacks on workers and trade unions.

Semi-Fascist Terror In Durgapur Condemned

Monoranjan Roy, M.P. (CITU), Jatin Chakravarty (UTUC), Fatik Ghosh (UTUC-Lenin Sarani) and Prasanta Dasgupta (TUCC) have issued a joint statement on July 22, expressing serious concern at the situation created in Durgapur industrial area by rowdies of Congress (R) with the direct help from Police and local administration.

42 workers including office bearers of Durgapur Project Employees Union have been forcibly evicted from their quarters in the DPL township and are being prevented from reporting for their duties. In the Durgapur State Transport, 6 workers are being forcibly prevented from reporting for duties and 6 others have been forcibly evicted from their quarters. Eight workers were severely assaulted by the Congress (R) rowdies. In the AVB township, Durgapur, the workers and their family members are virtually living in a concentration camp and they are being harassed and tortured daily by the police. The rowdies are forcibly collecting money from the workers and terrorising them to join Congress (R) Unions. Repeated representations to the Chief Minister, Minister of State Undertakings and the State Labour Minister have failed to stop the semi-fascist terror.

The statement has condemned Government for deliberately continuing the terror and has demanded immediate action to stop this reign of terror.

MORE ON WAGES

A. P. Chatterjee

In the last issue, I had observed that, in determining wages, the Courts principally rely on the capacity of the industry to pay. But, again, that is not the last word. In cases relating to Industrial Disputes, the Supreme Court admits that they have no settled legal principles to apply. Everything is ad hoc there. As observed by them in **Delhi Cloth and General Mills Co. Ltd. vs. Workmen** (1969 (2) Supreme Court Reports page 307), "...the awards made by industrial tribunals are often the result of ad hoc determination of disputed questions, and each determination forms a precedent for determination of other disputes. An attempt to search for principle from the law built up on those precedents is a futile exercise," (underlining is mine).

The result is as was to be expected. One can never take the Courts for granted. Industrial Law is always in a flux and is determined at a given moment by the balance of class forces.

In the case of **Polychem Limited vs. Industrial Tribunal, Bombay**, the Tribunal had extended the vacation allowance of one month's salary even to those workmen who got the minimum of Rs. 300. The company used to pay such allowance to such of their employees who drew the minimum of Rs. 600. While extending the amenity, the Tribunal observed that "I, however, feel that this Company can afford to pay this allowance to its workmen and avoid dissatisfaction. In socialistic countries this is considered as an amenity to the workmen which should be provided such as subsidized free vacation at health resorts..."

In this case, there was no question that the Company had the capacity to pay. It was also beyond question that in that region the workmen had come into an agreement with several refineries and banks that such vacation allowance should be given to the employees.

In short, according to the criteria so long recognised by the Supreme Court, the workmen in the Company should have been given that allowance and the Tribunal award should not have been disturbed.

The Court for whom Mr. Justice Dua spoke discovered a new principle to defeat the claims of the

Legal Notes

workmen. While reiterating that "...if the financial capacity of the industry permits, the workers should, broadly speaking, be allowed their due share in the prosperity of the industry, to which they have contributed by their labour, so as to enable them, within reasonable limits to improve their standard of living" Mr. Justice Dua has given a new formulation, "It is accordingly not a purely economic policy in which the employer and the employee alone are interested. Besides the worker and the management, the consumer and the society at large and a fortiori the State are also vitally interested, and no wage policy can ever be applied in vacuum in disregard of the realities of the social and economic conditions in our country." Evidently the learned judge accepted the contention of Shri S. V. Gupte for the Company that "In India the living wage on standard prevalent in more

advanced countries is not possible in the present level of our national income", a contention to which the learned Judge refers with obvious approval. (**Polychem Limited vs. Industrial Tribunal, Bombay, 1972 (1) Supreme Court Cases at page 885.**)

It is unfortunate that the Supreme Court should be deviating from its own well-tested criteria of the capacity to pay and the principle of industry-cum-region. So long the claims of the workmen were being defeated if one or the other of these tests were lacking. Thus, in **Remington Rand of India Limited Vs. The Workmen** (Civil Appeal nos, 856 of 1968, 1475 of 1968 and 2119 of 1968 dated December 10, 1968) the case was disposed of on the ground that the industry-cum-region principle did not warrant the payment of lunch allowance demanded by the workmen. "...it is true that in the present case there was no question of the Company being unable to bear the additional burden lunch allowance. But the fact that an employer is able to bear the burden is not criterion. The foundation of the principle of industry-cum-region is that as far as possible there should be uniformity of conditions of service in comparable concerns in the industry in the region so that there is no imbalance in the conditions of service between workmen in one establishment and those in the rest." (ibid)

In the present case of **Polychem Limited**, however, the Supreme Court has brought in still another principle of "the worker and the management, the consumer and the society at large and a fortiori the State."

It appears that in the present state of judicial pronouncements,

the ideal of the living wage or even the fair wage may long remain unattainable. The "strangest and most inexplicable part of the judgments" of the Supreme Court is where the Court discovers principles for determination of wages that attenuates the chances of the workmen to get living or fair wage. These so called principles are not to be found in the Directive Principles of the Constitution, Article 43 whereof lays down that the State shall endeavour to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organisation or in any other way, to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities..." There was never any doubt also as to the meaning of "the living wage". In *Express Newspapers (P.) Ltd. vs. Union of India* (1969 Supreme Court Reports at page 12), the Supreme Court observed, "...there is general agreement that the living wage should enable the male earner to provide for himself and his family not merely the bare essentials of food and clothing and shelter but a measure of frugal comfort including education for the children, protection against ill-health, requirements of essential social needs and a measure of insurance against the more important misfortunes including old age."

In spite of these eloquent speeches however, the living wage is, alas, still beyond the grasp of the workmen. Further giant struggles of the working class on the economic front may be necessary to break the status quo.

Employment Exchange Statistics

(Number of Applicants on Live Register by Occupational Groups as on Dec. 31, 1971)

Occupational Group	Total Number of Applicants
1. Professional, technical & related workers	3,30,884
2. Adm. Executive & Managerial Workers	7,037
3. Clerical, Sales & related workers	2,16,803
4. Agricultural, Daily & related workers	18,153
5. Miners, quarrymen & related workers	3,995
6. Workers in Trans/Communications process & occupations	1,22,742
7. Craftsmen, Production process workers	2,02,933
8. Service workers (e.g. cooks, chowkidars sweepers, etc.)	26,684
9. Unskilled manual workers	15,18,582
10. Persons without professional or vocational training or experience	25,62,106
Total (all Groups)	50,99,910

Minimum Wages And D.A. In The Cotton Textile Industry

Town/ State	Minimum Basic Wages	Dearness Allowance as of March 1972	Total Emoluments
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Ahmedabad	38.00	197.30	235.30
Baroda	36.00	177.56	213.56
Bombay	40.00	210.30	250.30
Coimbatore, Madras	40.00	187.70	227.70
Delhi	40.00	185.59	225.59
Indore	38.00	161.81	199.81
Kanpur	38.00	160.56	198.56
Nagpur	34.00	150.31	184.31
Sholapur	34.00	158.60	192.60
West Bengal	36.17	147.33	183.50**

** As per tripartite agreement of May, 1972 the total emoluments have been increased to Rs. 200.

Plug The Loopholes Of The Mines Act

CITU Memorandum to Joint Committee of Parliament

The last session of Parliament constituted the Joint Committee on the Mines Act (Amendment) Bill to go in to the draft Bill presented to parliament by the Government. Monoranjan Roy, Secretary, CITU and Dinan Bhattacharya, Member Working Committee CITU are members of the Committee. The CITU submitted a Memorandum to the Committee characterising official amendments as highly inadequate and suggesting some more amendments. We give below relevant extract from the Memorandum.

Perhaps very few labour laws which seemingly impose certain restrictions on the employers are so blatantly evaded as the The Mines Act. The mine owners willfully use the loopholes in the Act and systematically deny whatever reliefs are provided therein. As a result of this despite several amendments to the Act the mine owners have found ways and means to avoid steps to ensure decent working conditions and adequate safety in the mines.

The Amendment Bill placed before the Joint Committee proposes to reorganise the Mining Board by providing a centralised apparatus to look into the operation of the Act. However, the machinery suffer from the same old defect viz. domination of the Board by the bureaucrats and highly inadequate representation to the workers. Out of 17 members of the Mining Board 7 will be nominees of the Governments while the workers will have only 4 representatives. It is strange that when lakhs of workers have

been granted only 4 representatives handful of mine managers have been given 2 representatives. In addition to which the mine owners are given 4 nominees thus making the nomination of management to the tune of 6 persons. It is our apprehension that such a Board will be highly incompetent to look after the interests of the workers and ensure proper safety of the mines. It has been the experience of the workers that the official nominees generally side with the employers which makes the entire machinery heavily loaded in favour of the employers. It is our opinion that since workers are mainly concerned with the implementation of the Act etc. they should be given more weightage than what is given to-day. We suggest the following alternate proposals.

- a) Eight representatives of trade unions working in different sections of mines and affiliated to all India Central Trade Union Organisations.
- b) Four representatives to the mine owners.
- c) One representative to the manager of mines.
- d) Four representatives nominated by the Government,

At present the Government is nominating the representatives of the workers. While doing so it picks up representatives of trade unions who are in favour of mine owners with the result that they do not effectively champion the cause of workers. We, therefore, suggest that the new Bill should provide for election of the workers represen-

tatives on the Mining Board through secret ballot.

We strongly disapprove the present practice of allowing the mine owners to employ persons without payment of any remuneration. This practice is highly detrimental to the workers and employees who are working on payment. We therefore request that Section 2 (b) should be suitably amended.

The present inspection machinery in the mines is extremely defective which is giving a free reign to the mine owners to recklessly evade the provisions of the Mines Act. Section 23 of the principal Act is being sought to be amended by the Bill by leaving a loophole favourable to the employers. The Amendment proposed by the Ministry of Labour permits resumption of work in the mine after the accident. The relevant clause states, "Provided that where the Chief Inspector or an Inspector fails to make an inspection within seventy-two hours of the time of the accident, work may be resumed at the place of the accident." This will result in several irregularities and there is every possibility of evidence being destroyed by the managements on the plea that the Inspector failed to visit the mine within 72 hours. The management can also bribe the Inspector so that he would not visit the mine under this or the pretext. Therefore we suggest that it should be obligatory for the Inspector to visit the mine after the accident. If necessary the inspection machinery can be strengthened. Otherwise this clause will lead to several abuses.

It has become a normal practice in the mines not to maintain registers of accident. Those who maintain registers just to

● On Page Twelve

Mockery Of Maternity Benefits In India

VIMAL RANADIVE

Under the Congress Governments, despite tall claims of respecting the motherhood of a woman worker, the maternity benefits have become a mockery. This is proved by the official data released every year by the Government in the name of Annual review of the working of the Maternity Benefit Act.

The present study does not cover the benefit paid to the women workers under the ESI Act. T. U. movement in industries covered by the ESI Act is in a better position to fight and get concessions from the employers available under the Act. However the establishments covered by the Maternity Benefit Act callously evade the provisions of the Act causing serious impact on a women worker's health. There is a tendency to evade employment of women to avoid payment of Maternity Benefit. An attempt is being made in this article to show how the non-implementation of the act has reached scandalous proportions.

The Maternity Benefit Act claims to regulate the employment of women employees in certain establishments for certain specified periods before and after child birth and provides for the payment of maternity benefits to them, at the rate of average daily wage for the period of their actual absence immediately preceding and including the day of their delivery and for six weeks immediately following that day. The maximum period for which any woman can be entitled to maternity benefit is 12 weeks, i.e. 6 weeks upto and including the day of her delivery and six weeks immediately following the day.

For this purpose the average daily wage of a woman is to be calculated on the basis of wages payable to her for the days on which she worked during this period of three calendar months immediately

preceding the date from which she absents herself on account of maternity, subject to a maximum of one rupee per day. The Act further provides for certain benefits in case of miscarriage, premature birth, or illness arising out of pregnancy. A woman claiming maternity benefit is further entitled to a medical bonus of Rs. 25 if no pre-natal or post-natal care is provided by the employer free of charge. No woman can, however, be entitled to maternity benefit unless she has actually worked in an establishment of the employer, from whom she claims maternity benefits, for a period of at least 160 days in the twelve months

immediately preceding the date of her expected delivery,

What is the present position with regard to cash benefit, women are entitled to receive in factories, in plantations or in mines? There are vast sections of women working in Mysore, Andhra, Kerala, Tamilnadu, their percentage being more than 70 per cent to the total number of workers in some industries. In West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, women constitute the majority in plantations. The following table showing the number of employed women and the number of claims of Maternity Benefit accepted will prove the hollowness of the present provisions of Maternity Benefit Act.

Table I

	No. of women employed	No. of claims accepted
Factories		
1966	293,072	7,978
1967	237,615	6,132
1968	405,330	5,211
1969	295,269	5,631
Plantations		
1966	320,805	25,144
1967	251,687	15,132
1968	288,973	11,559
1969	269,242	40,267
Coal		
1966	45,480	4,445
1967	41,800	5,365
1968	33,070	5,462
1969	29,923	5,342

The slight upward change in claims paid which appears in the figures of plantations is partly due to the organised trade union movement in plantations.

The question arises here that how is it possible that a woman worker who is entitled to get maternity benefit does not claim the cash benefit? Or how is it possible that if she claims it will be only one or two out of 100 women workers? The reasons for this disparity are found in the loopholes in the provisions of the Maternity Benefit Act itself.

How is the particular quantum of maternity benefit fixed in each State? As we have quoted in the beginning, it is based on the daily wages of vast sections of women workers, especially who are unorganised, and in backward states

are very low, from Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 2.00 or even less than that. Naturally the cash amount of maternity benefit the women worker is entitled to receive will be very small, Re. 1 only or a little more.

According to Indian Labour Journal during 1968 "there are no claims made for the maternity benefit" and "no claims were paid in Punjab, Haryana, Goa and Diu, etc." in the case of factories and Bihar in the case of plantations.

The same report quotes the number of women employed as 1093 in 1968 in Punjab, while Haryana employed 861 during the same year. The next three years also claims

Table II

Percentage of claims made and the average amount of maternity benefit paid in factories, plantations and mines

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
Factories					
Claims made per 100 women employed	2.6	3.2	2.4	1.5	2.2
Average amount of M.B. paid (Rs.)	117	107	115	102	96
Plantations					
Claims made per 100 women employed	18.7	17.2	15.0	15.1	15.2
Average amount of M.B. paid (Rs.)	120	115	131	130	137
Mines					
Claims made per 100 women employed	10.0	13.5	16.1	19.8	18.0
Average amount of M.B. paid (Rs.)	196	208	224	280	305

were not made. Can it be presumed that out of 1093 women workers not a single one was married and had a child?

Another point to be noted is that there are hundreds of small factories where a small number of women are employed. The women get very low wages. They do not come under the provisions of the Act.

Table III

No. of claims made and accepted

	Claims made	Claims accepted
Factories		
1966	9,314	7,978
1967	6,573	6,132
1968	6,099	5,211
1969	6,447	5,631
Plantations		
1966	55,163	53,623
1967	37,724	35,337
1968	43,672	43,132
1969	41,037	40,267
Mines		
1966	6,118	6,038
1967	6,748	6,648
1968	6,539	6,304
1969	5,388	5,342

How is it that the percentage of claims accepted goes down by thousands? As is stated earlier the provisions of the Act are made in such a way that large sections of women remain outside under some excuse. For instance, the maximum period of days for which a woman is entitled to benefit will not be on her account. Her services will be discontinued so that she is not on the register for 160 days consecutively.

Table IV

No. Of Complaints Received And Prosecutions Launched

	Complaint received	Prosecution launched
Factories		
1966	160	10
1967	150	3
1968	176	3
1969	135	17

The Mines Act

● From Page Nine
fulfil the legal requirement only do, so formally and do not mention all the details that would highlight the prevailing irregularities. Non reporting of accidents to the authorities is rampant with the result that the actual number of accidents is much more than what the official statistics shows. A large number of major injuries are characterised as minor. The dividing line between major and minor injury is so thin at times that it enables the owners to indulge in several irregularities on this account. In view of the special nature of work in mines it is necessary to make provision for maintaining elaborate records of all the accidents and reporting them to the authorities in time.

Mere observation of safety weeks and awarding of prizes does not help improving the matters. What is necessary is that the Inspectors should visit mines more frequently along with genuine representatives of workers and take immediate step to prevent accidents. Even the number of dead or injured workers is not always recorded correctly. Efforts are also made to underestimate the seriousness of the accidents resulting in avoiding penalty for violating safety rules. Therefore the negligence on the part of the inspectors should also be dealt by law severely if collusion between the unscrupulous managements and the inspectors is to be avoided.

It is the experience of the mine workers that despite provision of Section 29 of the Principal Act the employers by and large do not give compensatory leave in lieu of the work done by the workers on rest days. In the absence of adequate records the managements are in a position to evade this provision and workers also find it difficult to prove that they have worked on the

rest days. It is therefore necessary to compel the managements to maintain proper records in this respect. Similarly, though it is accepted that half an hour of rest should be given to workers after 5 hours of continuous work it is not implemented which is having adverse effect on the health of the workers. It is also found that workers are asked to do overtime work without adequate rest period. It is a serious matter and we request that a new clause should be added to the Bill providing for adequate rest interval.

In the absence of any documentary evidence that a worker was appointed on a particular date he finds it difficult to fight a case in the tribunal. Despite the fact that he worked in a mine the employers quite often plead that the workers was not employed in their mine. Besides the employers are supposed to maintain record only for 3 years as per existing law they do not produce old records in the Court or some time they take the position that they were stolen. The family members of a worker who died in accident quite frequently find it difficult to prove that he had actually worked in the mine. Therefore the Bill should provide a new section making it obligatory to the mine owners to give an appointment letter to a worker indicating his name, designation, date of appointment as well as wages and conditions of service. It should also be obligatory for the employer to give a token to a worker inscribing on it his name and serial number.

The Central Wage Board for Coal Mining Industry observed that the leave facilities under the Mines Act are not adequate and recommended that the miners may be given one month's leave without wages in addition to the normal earned leave available to them. The Wage Board

also recommended that the workers working below ground should get one day's paid leave for 12 days work and workers on the surface one days leave for 16 days work. However, the Government did not accept this recommendation. There was a prolonged agitation on this question and some of the colliery owners were forced to implement the recommendations which subsequently were not honoured. The working and living conditions of the miners are extremely shocking and absence of adequate rest is making their plight extremely miserable. A large number of the miners come from remote places, they cannot bring their families due to non-availability of proper housing facilities. If they have to visit their family members steps should be taken to extend their leave facilities.

It is indeed shocking that the miners are not supplied drinking water at suitable place. As if this is not enough, the employers do not supply water in latrines and urinals where the sanitation is in worst condition. It is therefore suggested that specific points should be mentioned where the water should be provided. Section 26 (3) refers to treatment given to a worker in case of a disease. However there is no provision for payment of any family allowance to a worker during his treatment. Therefore it is suggested that adequate family allowance should be provided to the worker during the period of treatment under this Section.

The present system of marking attendance is extremely defective and is depriving large number of workers from the payment of attendance bonus and Section 52 of the Act needs necessary amendment. We suggest that the total number of days worked on the rest days, leave granted or paid, sick leave granted or paid and unpaid leave granted should also be treated as days of attendance while calculating Attendance Bonus.

Mockery of Maternity Benefits In India

● From Page Eleven

Plantations

1966	534
1967	218
1968	174
1969	190

Mines

1966	75	12
1967	45	4
1968	35	3
1969	1	1

What is the argument from the Government side for not prosecuting the management for the failure in paying the maternity benefits? Here is the reply: "Since the breaches of the Act or the rules thereof which led to complaints were of 'minor nature' prosecutions were launched only very sparingly" (Indian Labour Journal, July, 1971).

Though there is a provision in the Rules that if the breach is confirmed by the Court, the management can be fined or imprisoned we have not heard as yet of a single manager or an owner of a factory who was sentenced for this breach.

The Indian Labour Journal also speaks of not receiving a single complaint from Bihar, Haryana, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, U.P., West Bengal, etc. Can we presume that the claims not accepted were not worthwhile as to make any complaints? And especially when we have shown earlier how a large number of claims were rejected by the management?

Plantations and factories in Jhala reported the "highest number of complaints" in 1967 but not a single prosecution was launched. Tamilandu reported the "highest

number of complaints in 1968, and Assam reported 155, in 1968, with not a single prosecution launched.

The unscrupulous employers used the backwardness of the women workers to deprive them even of whatever benefit available under the Act. The lack of organisation among the workers also is used fully by these employers in several places while false receipts are forcibly taken by many employers. The official machinery is fully siding with the managements.

What however is unfortunate is that the trade unions have not paid adequate attention to this important problem facing the women workers. It is therefore necessary that this neglected problem is taken up by the trade unions in right earnest and a powerful movement is built up in the country in order to amend the present Maternity Benefit Act on the following lines.

1. Every women worker must be paid maternity benefit without any preconditions like size of the establishment or period of service.

2. Payment of maternity benefits equivalent to full wages to full wages to workers for a total period of 16 weeks.

3. Free medical treatment for a woman worker till she is able to resume duties.

4. Stringent action against employers including imprisonment.

5. Proper inspection machinery with supervisory authorities for trade union representatives re-implementation of the Act.

6. Comprehensive maternity benefit legislation applicable to all the states.

Unemployment Soars Higher As Job Get Scarcer

According to the figures published in the June 1972 issue of the Indian Labour Journal, the total number of unemployed on the Live Register of Employment Exchanges reached 5.25 million at the end of March 1972. It was 5.2 million at the end of February and 5.15 million at the end of January 1971. Thus, the increase in registration was 0.3 million or 8.2 per cent, in one month. Compared to the corresponding figure at the end of March 1971 (4.2 million) the total increase works out to 24.3 per cent. Needless to mention that these figures reflect only a part of the huge army of unemployed in the urban sector.

According to the provisions of the Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959—all establishments employing more than 25 workers are required to compulsorily notify their vacancies to the Employment Exchanges. According to the same source during March 1972 a total of 69,152 vacancies were notified by the employers, about 80 per cent of which were accounted for by Central State/Quasi-Government Establishment and Local bodies. It means that private sector employers are by and large ignoring with impunity their statutory responsibilities regarding notification of vacancies.

As against the total number of 5.25 million registered unemployed at the end of March, 1972, the number of unemployed placed in jobs during March, 1972 was only 42,661 i.e. less than 1 per cent of the total number of registered job-seekers.

Consumers' Price Index Numbers

(Industrial Workers—Base : 1960 = 100)

States/Centres	1972		
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Andhra Pradesh			
Gudur	207	204	196
Guntur	204	192	192
Hyderabad	197	196	196
Assam			
Digboi	190	189	190
Doom Dooma	168	164	168
Labac	176	179	178
Mariani	170	170	171
Rangapara	184	179	185
Bihar			
Jamshedpur	187	184	188
Jharia	187	187	187
Kodarma	212	213	216
Monghyr	201	206	208
Noamundi	198	195	196
Gujarat			
Ahmedabad	185	185	184
Bhavnagar	199	197	200
Haryana			
Yamunanagar	203	204	205
J & K			
Srinagar	178	181	184
Kerala			
Alleppey	206	201	202
Alwaye	205	204	205
Mundakayam	202	198	197
M. P.			
Balaghat	198	199	201
Bhopal	193	193	193
Gwalior	199	197	201
Indore	202	199	203
Maharashtra			
Bombay	190	191	193
Nagpur	196	194	194
Sholapur	205	197	194
Mysore			
Ammathi	211	210	208
Bangalore	197	197	197
Chikmagalur	196	198	195
Kolar Gold Field	191	193	193

Orissa			
Barbil	192	191	189
Sambalpur	202	202	207
Punjab			
Amritsar	203	204	206
Rajasthan			
Ajmer	198	196	199
Jaipur	200	199	203
Tamilnadu			
Coimbatore	185	179	180
Coonoor	193	191	190
Madras	194	186	186
Madurai	200	197	193
U.P.			
Kanpur	199	200	197
Saharanpur	203	201	204
Varanasi	214	215	220

West Bengal

Asansol	195	194	198
Calcutta	187	186	185
Darjeeling	172	171	171
Howrah	191	190	194
Jalpaiguri	171	173	176
Raniganj	196	193	195
Delhi	213	212	213

All India Consumers' Price Index

(Working Class/General Index)

	1972			
	Base 1960	Mar 1960	Apr 1960	May 1960
	194	194	195	196
	236	236	237	238

Report On Railwaymen Struggles

Convention of Railwaymen (Southern Railway)

A convention of railwaymen, including casual labour, of the Madurai Division of southern Railway was held on June 18 under the auspices of Dakhsin Railway Employees' Union. Attended by a large number of railwaymen, the Convention adopted resolutions in support of demands like need-based minimum wage and bonus, early publication of Third Pay Commission's Report, absorption of casual labour in permanent vacancies, decasualisation and ending of discrimination in wages of permanent and casual labour etc.

Conference of Railwaymen (Southern Railway)

The Annual Conference of the Nandyal Branch of South Central Railway Employees' Union was held on May 28 under the presiden-

tship of Com. G. Janaardhana Rao. The conference demanded, among others, upgrading of Nandyal to class 'C' city and house rent allowance for railwaymen without quarters, minimum wages of casual labour, protective equipment for night watchmen and patrolmen, etc. The conference elected a Committee of 21 including Com. K. Naganna as President and C. Bullibhai as General Secretary of the Branch.

Burdwan Locomen win demand through united struggle

On June 18, Jawala Prasad, a worker of Loco shed at Burdwan (West Bengal), was murdered by anti-socials on his way back from duty. Railway workers of Burdwan of all categories, including the Locomen, demanded ad hoc relief of Rs.500 and full compensation for the family of the deceased which the Railway authorities refused.

Thereupon all railway workers of Burdwan decided to stop work unless the demand was conceded within 8 A. M. on June 20. As the authorities refused to budge, the workers stopped work and railway services were completely paralysed. The strike was withdrawn after 10 hours when the authorities climbed down and accepted their demand.

Loco Running Staff Association on the move

The Central Committee of the All India Loco Running Staff Association is scheduled to meet at Katihar on August 21-23 to consider the problems arising out of growing attacks by the authorities on the living and working conditions of Loco Running Staff, delay in publication of Third Pay Commission Report, rising prices, etc. The annual conference of the AILRSA (N. F. Zone) will also be held at Katihar at the same time. The Central Committees of AILRSA (Eastern & South Eastern Zones) will also meet on July 30 and August 3 at Sahibganj and Adra respectively.

AIRF Convention at Calcutta

The annual convention of the All India Railwaymen's Federation is scheduled to be held in Calcutta between August 28-31. It is hoped that the Convention will give lead to railwaymen in their fight for longstanding economic demands' against the attack on the living and working conditions of railwaymen by the Government and against the growing attack on T.U. workers by Congress (R) hoodlums.

Chittaranjan Workers Continue to Fight Victimization

The workers of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works are continuing their united struggle against all forms of repression and victimisation by the Police and Railway authorities. Recently they have won some important victories in their struggle. Two of the Office-bearers of the CLW Labour Union, including its General Secretary, S.R. Das, who were earlier arrested by the police under MISA, were released by an order of the Calcutta High Court. Interim injunction was also granted against the transfer order of another office-bearer of the Union. The police rearrested the Assistant Secretary of the Union on July 3.

Undaunted by these attacks, the workers are continuing their struggle unitedly. On July 6, they held a massive demonstration and submitted a Memorandum to the Chairman of the Railway Board demanding cancellation of transfer orders on the Union leaders. The struggle of Chittaranjan workers has received fraternal support from various other Railwaymen's Unions including the S.E. Railwaymen's Union and the United Committee of Railwaymen (N. F. Rly) who have adopted resolutions demanding withdrawal of transfer orders on CLW Union leaders.

Samyukta Trade Union Council Of Maharashtra Formed

The formation of the Samyukta Trade Union Council of Maharashtra is a significant step forward in building up united T.U. movement in that State. On July 18, 65 representatives of three Central T.U. organisations—Hind Mazdoor Panchayat, CITU and UTUC—met at Bombay under the presidentship of S. Y. Kolhatkar and unanimously decided to form the Samyukta Trade Union Council of Maharashtra to fight the anti-working class policies of the Government. A 15-member Committee has been appointed by the meeting, with P. K. Kurane (CITU), B. R. Dandavate (HMP) and Pushpa Mehta (UTUC) as Conveners, to carry out the decisions of the Council.

The Council will launch united movements on issues concerning the working class, such as Bonus, rising prices, unemployment, closure of mills, etc. As a first step, the Council has planned a joint "march" of workers on the Bonus issue from the Azad Maidan to the Sachivalaya on July 25, when the representatives of HMP and CITU will submit their memoranda before the Bonus Review Committee. The Council has also decided to observe August 14 as "Anti-Price Rise Day" by holding mass rallies, marches and demonstrations throughout the State.

The meeting of the three Central T. U. organisations (CITU, HMP and UTUC) expressed strong opposition to the formation of the National Council of Trade Unions and warned the other T.U. Organisations not to fall a victim to its machinations. It also expressed

● On Page Nineteen

Working Class Movements In Spain Despite Repression

Despite repression by Franco's police and other forces of repression, the working class in Spain is waging resolute struggles for Trade Union and democratic rights and higher wages. Recently some massive working class movements took place.

On May 24, three thousand workers at Shipyards Farreras in Vigo (Galicia) held a mass meeting in support of their demands. The forces of repression attacked the workers and the plant was locked out. The workers demonstrated in the streets of the city on May 25 to 27. There were several violent clashes with the police and several workers were arrested. Workers in most other metal working plants in the city went on strike in support of the shipyard workers. The management of the Barreras Shipyard suspended most of its workers in reprisal. The Executive Committee of the Workers' and Technicians' Union of the Metal Syndicate has denounced the lock-out as illegal. On May 29, the workers of the shipyard went back to work as the firm had accepted some of their demands.

Trouble again started in another plant in Vigo where workers of the firm AS Tilleros Barreras went on strike on a demand for 15 per cent wage rise. The management had offered a wage increase of only 3.75 per cent which, at the present rate of inflation, amount to a reduction of 10% in real wages. The strike by Barreras workers was soon supported by nearly 15000 metal workers of Vigo.

On May 27, several thousand miners of Hunosa pits went on strike to protest against a work accident in which two miners of

Santiago pit lost their lives. The management suspended 400 of them and the miners decided to continue the strike. Strike by miners of Minero-Siderurgica-De Ponferroda of Leon has continued for almost two months.

On May 30, workers of IBELSA at Alcala de Henares went on go-slow strike to protest against management's attempt to annul some benefits of workers. The police threw out the workers. On May 31, the slow-work action continued and again they were thrown out by the police. The workers tried to hold a mass meeting in the village square, but the Civil Guards charged them out. The plant is now closed and the management have sent lay-off and transfer notices to several workers.

The workers of RENFE (National Railways), the largest employer in the country, are also on the move. According to an analysis, 90 per cent of the workers of the RENFE earn less than \$3 per day, and 80 per cent of them are forced to hold another job to earn a living wage. The Government is attempting to set the Railway workers against the road transport workers in order to impose reduction of RENFE manning table. For the last few years operation have been conducted to diminish the profitability of the railways by having repair works done at private plants owned by US and other foreign capitalists. Massive lay-offs and forced retirement of railway workers above 45 years are going on. The workers are getting organised to increase collective struggles, to hold mass assemblies and reinforce the activities of Workers' Commissions to effectively press for their demands.

United Bonus Morcha In Bombay

A big morcha of workers demanding 8.33 per cent bonus was organised in Bombay on July 25. The morcha was participated by unions belonging to CITU, AITUC, HMS, INTUC, HMP, UTUC and other organisations. The morcha culminated in a rally addressed by leaders of all organisations.

P. Ramamurti, S.Y. Kolhatkar, K. T. Sule and P. K. Kurane appeared on behalf of the CITU before the Bonus Review Committee and explained the Note submitted by the CITU.

Earlier on 28th June Maharashtra State Committee of CITU organised 5000 strong demonstration in Bombay when the Bonus Review Committee held its first meeting. Workers from cotton textile, engineering, Plastic, hotel and other industries participated in the demonstration. The CITU's appeal to INTUC, AITUC and HMS for demonstration was rejected by the leadership of the three organisations.

A deputation led by Madan Phadnis, Secretary Maharashtra State Committee of CITU presented a Memorandum to the Committee demanding 8.33 per cent minimum bonus.

A meeting was held at Oval Maidan which was addressed by Yeshwant Koli, Madan Phadnis, Ahilya Ranganekar, Prabhakar Sauzagiri and others.

Now Available :

Speech delivered by Com. B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU at the CITU Working Committee Meeting held in New Delhi on April 24-26, 1972.

(In Bengali)

Price : 25 Paise

To be had from :

Centre of Indian Trade Unions

172, Lenin Sarani,

Calcutta-13

Reports From Unions

Four Central T. U.s Protest Against Arrest of T. U. Leader

In a joint statement issued on July 15, Monoranjan Roy, M. P. (CITU), Jatin Chakraborty (UTUC), Fatick Ghosh (UTUC-Lenin Sarani) and Dr. Kanai Bhattacharjee (TUCC) strongly protested against the arrest of Robin Chatterjee, General Secretary of Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India under MISA on July 14 at Raniganj (West Bengal).

Robin Chatterjee attended a meeting convened by the Union Labour Minister at New Delhi on July 4, in the wake of the proposed colliery strike, and was to have attended the tripartite meeting called by the State Labour Minister on July 14. But curiously enough, the July 14 meeting was postponed at the last moment and Chatterjee was arrested on the same day and that also at a time when coal mine workers are on the path of struggle for realisation of their long-standing demands.

The statement condemned this naked attack on the T. U. rights by the State Government and demanded immediate release of Robin Chatterjee.

Demonstration by Calcutta Dock Workers

Sponsored by the Dock Sramik Association (C I T U), about 400 watchmen of Calcutta Docks staged a demonstration before the office of the Labour Commissioner (Central) on July 12. They submitted a memorandum to the Labour Commissioner demanding, among other things, security of service, decasualisation of watchmen, etc. They also demanded a tri-partite meeting of shipping Agents, Central Government and workers to settle these issues

and warned that they would be forced to go on a strike if action was not taken in the matter within July 20.

Trade Unions of HAL Complex Plan Direct Action

The representatives of all recognised Trade Unions of the Hindusthan Aeronautics Ltd. units at Bangalore, Kanpur, Nasik, Koraput, Hyderabad and Brrackpore held a meeting at Bangalore on July 10 to consider their stand consequent upon the failure of talks held with the HAL Chairman on the question of increase of the minimum bonus to 8.33%. At the meeting the Trade unions of the HAL Complex adopted a joint declaration which urged upon the HAL management, the Minister of Defence Production and the Union Labour Minister to immediately intervene and settle the demand of the HAL employees for minimum 8.33% bonus, failing which they will be forced to proceed with direct action to realise their demand.

Demands Day Observed by India Fire Bricks Workers

The workers and employees of India Firebricks and Insulation Co., Ranchi Road, observed "Demands Day" on June 10. All the workers and employees wore Demand badges, demonstrated before the factory gate and held a meeting there under the presidentship of Ramsevak Singh, Vice-President of the union. Chandi Prasad, General Secretary of the Firebricks and Ceramic Kamgar Union (CITU) and the Secretary of the Bihar State Committee of CITU explained the demands. The meeting unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon the management to accept their demands by July 15, failing which the workers will go on direct action.

Strike by Motor Bus Workers of Baroda

Motor Bus employees of the bus service of Charutar Vidya Mandal, Vallabh Vidyanagar (a University town in Baroda) observed a day's strike on June 15 to press for their demands for revision of pay scales, D.A., gratuity, line allowance etc. at par with other employees of the Vidya Mandal. Despite attempts by the police, backed by the management, to create disruption, the strike was completely successful. The management was ultimately forced to agree to open negotiations with Harikrishna Shah, General Secretary of the Maha Gujarat Goods Transport Employees' Union (CITU).

P. & T. Employees Plan Action

A meeting of P & T employees, under the auspices of the All India (P & T) Administrative Offices Employees Union, was held recently in the PMG Office, Madras. While addressing the meeting, K. G. Bose, President, NFPTTE, warned the employees against harbouring any illusion about the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission. Explaining the Central Government's unsympathetic attitude towards its employees, he called upon the P & T employees to organise themselves effectively to get justice at the hands of the Government. It was also announced that the Central Working Committee of the major P & T Unions will meet at Madras in the first week of August to chalk out a programme of action to give pressure on the Government for early publication of Pay Commission's Report and to achieve the sectional demands of the P & T employees.

Intimidation of Oil Mill Workers by Congress (R) Hoodlums

The workers of Agrihotra Oil Mill and Sundarka Oil Mill of Calcutta, both under the same management, are being threatened by Youth Congress hoodlums armed with bombs, pipe guns and swords in an attempt to force them to leave the Union of Oil Mill Workers (CITU) and join a Congress Union yet to be formed. Curiously, enough the activities of the Congress (R) hoodlums started after the Workers Union had submitted a Charter of Demands to the management. The Union has drawn the attention of the State Labour Commissioner and has urged upon him to intervene immediately so that the workers may exercise their lawful T.U. rights.

Annual Conference of Barsua Mines Mazdoor Union

The Eighth Annual Conference of the Barsua Iron Mines Mazdoor Union was held on June 17-18 at Tensa (Orissa) attended by a large number of delegates from all the mines of Rourkela Steel Plant. Fraternal representatives from Rourkela Employees, Union, Ferrochrome Employees' Union and other democratic organisations also attended.

The Conference unanimously adopted resolutions in support of the fighting millions of Vietnam, the struggling democratic people of West Bengal, against semi-fascist repression, the fighting workers of Ferrochrome Plant and the Kalinga Press, against closure, etc. Resolutions were also adopted on food scarcity and unemployment in the State and against the betrayal of the working class by INTUC, AITUC and HMS.

The Conference unanimously elected a 33-member Executive Co-

mmittee and the new Office-bearers including Niren Ghosh, M. P. as President, Sivaji Patnaik and Appa Rao as Vice-Presidents and A. V. Sabapathy as General Secretary.

Management and Police Joint Offensive in Ludhiana

A management and police joint offensive on peaceful trade union activities has been reported from the York Hosiery Mills, Ludhiana, Punjab. When the workers of the factory were pointing to various irregularities of the management and were demanding the implementation of the labour laws they were subjected to severe harassment. Several of the workers were taken to police custody and harassed and threatened with dire consequences.

Against these nefarious acts of the police, representations were made by T.U. Leaders to the senior Police Officials right up to Chief Minister of Punjab. But no action was taken. The Chief Minister of Punjab has even refused to make any appointment on this score with the Secretary of the Punjab and H.P. State Committees of CITU.

Central Government Employees Demonstrate at Shillong

Central Government Employees, led by the Regional Co-ordination Committee, held a big demonstration at Shillong on July 12 which they observed as "All India Demands Day". They demanded the publication of the 3rd Pay Commission's reports and the award, pending publication, of interim relief.

Employees wore demand badges in the morning and staged a sit-in in front of the Raj Bhavan when a memorandum was handed over to the Governor's office. Later, in the afternoon, braving inclement wea-

ther, a mass rally was held as scheduled. The rally was addressed by, among others, A. C. Bhagati and A. Bhattacharya, President and General Secretary of the Regional Co-ordination Committee.

30 Percent Bonus For CEAT Workers In Bombay

According to an agreement between the Mumbai Sramik Sangh (CITU) and CEAT Tyre Company, the workers will be getting 30 per cent bonus for the year 1971. On an average each worker will get Rs. 1500.

Earlier, the management refused to pay higher bonus and the negotiation dragged on for over two months. The Union thereupon called upon the workers to stop working overtime and started preparing for a one-day strike. The management then came down and the agreement was signed.

The CEAT workers in 1970 participated in a 4-months' strike. In 1971 they won 33½% per cent wage rise and now they realised their demand of 30 per cent bonus.

Cinema Employees Of West Bengal Observe Token Strike

Cinema employees of West Bengal, led by the Bengal Motion Picture Employees' Union, observed a day's token strike on July 15 in support of their long-standing demand for higher payscales.

According to Shibnath Chatterjee, General Secretary of the Union, the strike was a complete success. At the Chitra Cinema, Burnpur, an attempt was made to run the house by summarily laying off ten employees, but with the Asansol Branch of BMPEU rising in united protest, the management of the Cinema wisely retraced its steps.

Workers Held Off And Dismissed

An ingenious method of firing an unwanted employee is now in the process of being worked out in West Bengal—that is, when all other methods have failed. A worker who does not enjoy the affection of the employers is, initially, threatened by a group of outsiders and, subsequently, prevented from reporting to work for days on end. After a period arrives the management's notice of dismissal—on grounds of absence!

The latest to adopt this technique has been the management of Dooars Transport. Its Calcutta Offices re-opened only on June 7 after having been locked out for nearly fifteen months. But several leading activists of the Union (CITU) were never allowed to go back to work. Even when they obtained an interim order from the Calcutta High Court, the hooligans did not budge. With the police unwilling to intervene, the workers have been served with job termination notices.

Workers in the Transport Industry are preparing for a united protest action.

State Transport Workers Still Facing Attacks by Congress (R) Goondas

The semi-fascist attacks by Congress (R) rowdies on workers and employees of Calcutta State Transport Corporation is still continuing.

At first 183, and later on 110, workers and employees were forcibly prevented by Congress (R) goondas from joining their duties. These events were ventilated to different T.U. organisations of the country as well as abroad, including the I.L.O. The Calcutta High Court had also issued Rules against the Government and the State Transport authorities. The Government has ultimately been forced to take steps to allow these workers to join their duties. But even now 15

workers have not been able to join due to the attacks by Congress (R) goondas and 3 workers have been retrenched by the authorities for their forced absence.

At a meeting of the representatives of leading Road Transport Unions in India held in Madurai on July 1, it has been decided to observe August 27, 1972 as "Solidarity Day" in defence of Road Transport Workers in West Bengal.

Skyrocketing Of Prices

● From Page Two
the rise in the cost of living with the automatic and point to point linking of the DA. with the cost index. Only then will the Government be cured of the temptation to use price rise to beat down the workers.

The CITU once more calls upon all organisations to come together to meet the new offensive and save the workers' standard of living. Let all remember that negotiations for bonus or wages will lose all meaning if this atrocious attack is not defeated. Let there be united demonstrations in all factories and plants. Let there be united protest of employees and workers in all places.

Let the Government of India and the State Governments know that the working class will not tolerate the attack on its hard-earned earning.

T.U. Council Formed

● From Page Fifteen
regret at the attitude of the leadership of the AITUC and HMS, who were signatories to the May, 1971 Joint Declaration, for giving up the path of T.U. Unity and called upon them to reconsider their stand even now.

While inviting all other Trade Unions in Maharashtra having faith in Socialism to join STUC and participate in the united movement launched by the council, the meeting fully endorsed the statement adopted by the Central T. U. organisations in Delhi in May 1971 and suggested that the

Bihar State Committee of CITU Meets

The Bihar State Committee of CITU met for two days on July 24-25 at Ranchi. Com. B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU presided over the deliberations of the meeting.

The Committee considered the working reports of its various units and expressed concern at the repressive policy being increasingly adopted by the Central and State Governments against working class movements. It also condemned the semi-fascist attacks on trade unions and democratic movement in West Bengal.

The Committee expressed concern at the rapid growth of unemployment in the country and demanded of the Government unemployment reliefs to the jobless and jobs for them. It also decided to observe an "Anti-Unemployment Day" on August 9 in co-operation with other left and democratic forces.

Resolutions were adopted by the meeting criticising the formation of National Council of Trade Unions, demanding 8.33% bonus for all categories of employees and removal of the ceiling of 20% bonus etc. In another resolution it condemned the brutal firing by police on peaceful striking workers of Bird Sirka Colliery and demanded punishment for guilty officers and compensation for the families of the victims.

The Committee also decided to hold the next Annual Conference of State CITU by the end of November 1972.

three-man Conveners Group appointed by that Conference should take initiative to convene the Conference once again. If the Conveners belonging to INTUC and AITUC refuse, then P. Ramamurti, the Convener belonging to CITU, should convene such a Conference.

TWENTYFIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

On 15th August, India will complete 25th year of her independence. Working class and other toiling masses of our country will no doubt remember the heroic freedom fighters who laid down their lives in the struggle against British imperialism. On this day they will pay their tributes to the valient struggles conducted by the toiling people for the fulfilment of the hopes and aspirations roused by political independence, which is being misused by the ruling party to bolster the vested interests during the last 25 years.

The ruling party and its Government are planning to celebrate the silver jubilee anniversary with great pomp, fanfare and publicity. The CITU and other left and democratic trade unions cannot join this show of the Government which is responsible for the prosperity of handful of capitalists both Indian and foreign and landlords and for the plight of our toiling people.

How can the working class rejoice with the Government on this occasion when real wages of workers and other sections of the people are falling, new taxes are being imposed every year, prices of essential commodities are soaring higher and higher, unemployment has reached alarming level while closures are still haunting the country; though all this is done in the name of Garibi Hatao and Socialism.

When the the people fight to preserve their standard of life they are mercilessly jailed, maimed or killed. Their trade union and democratic rights are brutally suppressed. In West Bengal semi-fascist reign of terror continues

unabated and the civil liberties are almost non-existent. Handful of gangsters have been allowed to hold the society in ransom. It is certainly not for this that the freedom loving fighters laid down their lives.

The CITU will therefore observe this day in co-operation with other trade union and democratic organisations and take a pledge to carry forward the glorious traditions of the freedom fighters and martyrs under the Congress Raj. It will express its determination to strengthen the united struggle in defence of democratic regime of the people for genuine socialism on this historic day of our independence.

CITU Nominee On The Cement Negotiating Committee

The strike of all India Cement workers which was to commence from July 12 in support of their longstanding demands was averted after a decision in a tripartite meeting held in New Delhi on July 11 to constitute a bipartite negotiating Committee to settle the dispute.

The CITU representatives were neither invited to this meeting nor its nominee was taken on the Committee.

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU issued a Statement to the press opposing the exclusion of CITU from the negotiations. He wrote a letter to Union Labour Minister Khadilkar after the withdrawal of the strike protesting against non-inclusion of CITU nominee on the negotiating Committee. Earlier

West Bengal Trade Unions To Wage Joint Struggles

Monoranjan Roy, M.P. (CITU), Jatin Chakravarty (UTUC), Fatick Ghosh (UTUC-Lenin Sarani) and Prasanta Dasgupta (TUCC) have issued a Joint Statement on July 28 declaring their firm resolve to unitedly continue struggle against rising unemployment, high prices and taxation, terror and repression, for release of political prisoners, against eviction of peasants and attacks on workers and trade unions, and for restoration of trade union and democratic rights.

The Statement has called upon the working class of West Bengal to take a bold lead in uniting the peasants and all sections of the democratic people to effectively build up a broad based united struggle to realise the demands.

The four Central T.U. organisations have decided to observe "Anti-Repression Day" during the first week of September. It has also been decided to organise a Central rally and demonstration during last week of November, 1972 in Calcutta on the demand for jobs or unemployment benefits for the unemployed.

the Government included only the nominees of INTUC, AITUC and HMS.

The Government however had to include the CITU nominee on the Negotiating Committee and the CITU has nominated K. Ramani, President, Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU as a member of this Committee. The first meeting of the Committee was held in Bombay on July 27.