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## GLORY TO THE WORKING CLASS OF WEST BENGAL

### Historic Strike and Hartal of August 27.

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The General Strike and Hartal of over two million workers and other sections of the people of West Bengal on August, 27 was unprecedented in its magnitude and sweep. This militant action once again brought to the forefront the firm determination of the toiling masses of West Bengal to fight and defeat anti-working class policies of the Congress Government.

Despite fictitious claims of official spokesmen and the All India Radio that the Hartal and strike was only partial every one in Bengal knew that it was a complete success. The deployment of big force of army, police, CRP and other armed person, failed to deter the mass of people throughout the State from raising their powerful voice against the attacks on their living standards.

The Economic Times reported: “No long distance trains left either Howrah or Sealdah this morning. Only a few shuttle train services could be run with armed escorts. Dum Dum airport also reported lack of flying activity.

“Dalhousie Square, main business centre of Calcutta, wore a deserted look. Throughout the day it drizzled. Though Government offices were open, attendance was extremely poor. All factories, banks, post offices and railway station remained inactive.”

Despite the Government's ‘stern’ warning to the State Government employees that they must report to their duty on the Strike Day nobody turned up. The Statesman reported “Writers’ Building was deserted. The long corridors were empty and most of the rooms were under lock and key’. The Governor A. L. Dias who attended Writers’ Building on the day when questioned by the reporters tried to explain away the matter by saying that “the turn-out might have been better if the trams and buses had plied.”

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Hindusthan Standard reported, "Many State Government Secretaries, including the Chief Secretary travelled in Government vehicles, mostly in convoys with police escorts to reach the office." They indeed had to take so much pain to prove the official claim that the strike was only partial. The Chief Secretary of the West Bengal Government could only console himself by telling the newsmen that the attendance "was the highest in comparison with that on previous occasions of general strike."

The callous bureaucracy deliberately sabotaged the relief work in order to put the blame on the fighting workers. The trade unions had earlier made it clear that the strike would not affect the relief work in any manner. All the employees on relief projects were therefore exempted from the strike. If any inconvenience was caused to the refugees on that day it was mainly due to the sabotage of the bureaucrats.

Union Labour Minister R. K. Khadilkar tried to give sermons of patriotism to the working class of Bengal without taking any concrete step to solve their problems. In the tone of a pontiff he told the workers of West Bengal,

"Times are too serious, and history may not forgive us for creating chaos when the real need is one for order. Let not friends in West Bengal forget that our brothers just across the border are fighting for life and freedom. We cannot afford to let them down."

The Union Labour Minister did not mention about the fact that one of the demands for General Strike and Bundh was the recognition of Bangladesh which the Government has been evading since long. If the times are serious and the Govern-

ment was so keen to help the fighters of Bangladesh who prevented the Government from recognising Bangladesh?

The Union Labour Minister did not say anything about several other issues posed by the trade union organisations in West Bengal. As the Memorandum submitted by the CITU to the Conference of T.U. representatives convened by the Union Labour Minister on August 22 in New Delhi to consider the Bengal Bundh and situation in West Bengal made it clear :

"The Government of West Bengal has been systematically treating every industrial dispute as a law and order problem and resorted to brutal suppression with the help of police force and the C.R.P. Never before in any other state the armed police were so nakedly used to protect the interest of the employers." It further said.

"At the instance of the Government the police have taken law into their own hands. They shamelessly protect the criminals and anti-social gangsters to instal a regime of terror throughout the State. Recent mass-killings in Cossipore-Baranagar area by a section of the ruling party in collaboration with the police has shocked the democratic opinion in the State. Despite promises the culprits have been allowed to remain at large and given every protection.

"In Durgapur, industrial township has been converted into an armed camp and every trade union and democratic right is trampled under foot. The CRP hoodlums are attacking workers' houses and threatening them with dire consequences. Important trade union leaders are arrested under PVA Act and if they are released by Court they are again arrested under Maintenance of Internal Security Act. Then the managements take

vindictive action against the leaders on the pretext that they are absent from duties for a long time. Even a member of the All India Steel Negotiation Committee could not escape this vindictiveness. Almost the entire Executive Committee members of Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union (recognised union) is either behind bar or warrants of arrests have been issued against them. This has made normal trade union functioning impossible. In Birla's Hind Motors, after combing operations the manager of the factory was asked to submit names of workers to be arrested. Imposition of Section 144 and curfew have become a routine affair. Hundreds of trade union activists are today behind bar and involved in several false criminal cases.

The Memorandum Continued "More than 400 factories have been closed down in West Bengal during the recent past and everyday more are being closed leading to accentuation of unemployment in the State. Even the official figures of registered unemployed in Employment Exchanges is higher in West Bengal than any other State in India. Several coal mines have also been closed down. Birlas have closed down their head-offices and factories which has resulted in loss of jobs of several thousands of employees. The textile industry is in a perpetual crisis in the State. The Government efforts to reopen the factories are just token.

The Labour Bureau under the Union Labour Ministry is playing havoc with Consumer Price Index which is being deliberately manipulated to bring down the dearness allowance of the workers and help the employers in boosting their profits. The Labour Minister in the

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# LET EVERYONE HELP "THE WORKING CLASS" TO DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES!

Our monthly paper "The Working Class" will fight for the policy of the CITU which has for its objective the bringing in of socialist society on the basis of the socialisation of the means of production and capture of political power by the working class.

The paper will further fight for the demands of the Trade Union Movement, for the rights of the workers and against repression on the working people and the democratic masses. It will urge the Trade Union movement to work in close co-operation with the movement of the Indian peasantry and other democratic sections against their common oppressor—the bourgeois-landlord regime.

Above all it will strenuously advocate unity of the trade union movement so that a common front is established against the increasing attacks of the capitalists and the Government. It is clear that in the absence of such unity neither the Trade Union movement nor India's working class has been able to exercise its full strength in the struggle for its economic demands or on the various political questions that face our country and our people. In spite of its growing numbers, the working class has been unable to use its strength in influencing the political decisions of the Government and has often played the part of a helpless spectator to the adverse decisions taken by the Government attacking its rights and democratic liberties. Even such an outstanding event as the great happenings in the Bangladesh has witnessed a passive attitude on the

part of the majority of India's working class.

This disunity and lack of common action is not accidental. It is the direct product of the poisonous growth of reformist and revisionist influences on the Trade Union movement which have corroded the class consciousness of sections of Indian working class. These influences have dimmed the awareness of class-struggle and have prevented the workers from directing their frontal blows against their class-enemies. They have also prevented the working class from understanding its responsibility towards the democratic movement especially the peasantry and now threaten to turn the Trade Unions into narrow, sectarian, economic organisations concerned only with their trade or factory.

The struggle for unity in the Trade Union movement means also a struggle to overcome these weaknesses and turn the Trade Unions into the most important bastion of the democratic struggle of the Indian masses. "The Working Class" will devote itself to waging this struggle for unity in the Trade Union movement and seek the co-operation of all trade union workers to make it effective.

"The Working Class", besides, will serve as an instrument of education and information for our trade union cadres. The local trade union leaders deeply immersed in the day-to-day work of the unions get very little time to master official legislation or the changing economic situation or the many organisational problems that the trade unions are facing today. It will



be the endeavour of the paper to give them broad guidance on these issues so that their day-to-day functioning is rendered more efficient.

Apart from this there are the organisational problems pertaining to the functioning of the trade unions. In many trade unions democratic functioning is absent, the initiative of the workers is discouraged and unions become the concern of the bureaucratic leaders only. Such a state of affairs is completely inimical to the development of the trade union and political initiative of the working class without which all talk of socialism is meaningless.

"The Working Class", besides, stands committed to proletarian internationalism. It will fight chauvinism in the trade union movement and assert the solidarity of India's working class with the workers of socialist countries and the working class of the capitalist world. Fighting against the aggressive policies of U S imperialism "The Working Class" will support the valiant struggle of the people of Viet Nam and educate the working class of India on its historic role.

"The Working Class," following the line laid down by the CITU will mercilessly expose the danger

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# Repression on AVB and Graphite Workers

The British management of ACC-Vickers-Babcock Ltd. (AVB) and the management of American collaboration Graphite (India) Ltd. have set a new record in their ruthless attack on the workers at Durgapur. The AVB management retrenched 47 workers including all office bearers of AVB Employees' Union (CITU). Graphite management resorted to similar mass victimisation retrenching 27 workers and all union office bearers of Graphite (India) Ltd. Mozdoor Union (CITU).

The workers of these two factories joined the historic strike struggle of 60 thousand Durgapur workers in August '70. The strike continued for eleven days despite unprecedented repression let loose by 25 thousand CRP and armed forces. This struggle was in defence of workers' trade union rights and in protest against arrest of their leaders. The right CP and AITUC leaders openly joined hands with police moving in police-vans as

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## Samyukta Trade Union Andolanki Nayi Disha

Concluding Speech of B T Ranadive  
in the C I T U Foundation

Conference.

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strike-breakers helping arrest of the struggling workers. Unable to cowdown the heroic workers, the police stopped the workers families to purchase daily necessities or to draw ration and even stop of milk for the children during this struggle. District Magistrate and SP of Burdwan are inspirers of this policy of repression. Regular attacks are being made by police in the office of the unions. 90 false cases have been instituted against 27 militant workers and leaders of Graphite workers and in case of A V B about 49 workers have been implicated on false charges. The General Secretary of AVB Employees' Union and Graphite India Ltd. Mozdoor Union along with 3 other workers have been detained under the PVA Act. The township of the workers are virtually made police camps to terrorise the workers

The workers of AVB and Graphite are undaunted by carrying on their struggle. The labour directorate of West Bengal is completely indifferent on the demand for the reinstatement of the workers. The American Director of Graphite, Mr. Russel obtained confession from the workers at gun-point. This was brought to the notice of the Government but till now no action has been taken.

## Message From B. T. Ranadive

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from U S imperialism to our country and raise its voice against our growing dependence on the U S A, a dependence which is expressed in enforced exports at the cost of the workers and the people. The treacherous role that US imperialism is playing is seen in the military support it is giving to the Yahya regime of Pakistan which is massacring by thousands the workers, peasants and intellectuals of Bangladesh.

Let every one help "The Working Class" to discharge its responsibility and help forward the process of creating a unified militant Trade Union movement based on the initiative of the working class and capable of discharging its responsibility to defend the rights of the working class and of helping forward the democratic movement on its road to socialism.

**B. T. Ranadive,**  
Chairman,  
Editorial Board

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# Should Preference Be Given To Local Persons In All New Recruitments ?

## CITU Standpoint Explained

A committee appointed by the West Bengal Government to review the working of the employment exchanges recently submitted its Report to the Government. All the workers' nominees have recommended compulsory recruitment through employment exchanges which was opposed by the representatives of the employers. The workers representatives unitedly recommended unemployment relief for the unemployed workers which was also opposed by others.

Shri Kali Mukherjee, President, West Bengal branch of INTUC was President of the Committee.

Biren Ray, Member, Working Committee of CITU who was also a member of the Committee appended a Note of Dissent to the majority recommendations of the Committee regarding recruitment of local persons. The following is the true text of the Note of Dissent.

### NOTES OF DISSENT

The question of employment of local people in factories and other establishments has been raised in many States with more and more insistence with the growing problem of massive unemployment. In many States for a fairly long time official or unofficial ban has been imposed by the Government or other authorities against recruitment of people from outside the States. In West Bengal despite the fact that the majority of the workers are non-Bengalis, and there is unparalleled unemployment no such policy has been advocated by the trade unions and democratic movement. Such a

policy has been advocated by the trade unions and democratic movement. Such a policy deflects the attention of the people from the real unemployment problem which is engulfing the the country and is designed to make one section of workers fight another instead of reuniting them for the struggle to expand employment opportunities. The main problem that is haunting West Bengal to-day is the dwindling job opportunities. Instead of generating new employment the policies pursued by the Central Government are actually reducing job potential in all most every major sector of economy in West Bengal. Even from the official statistics it is clear that during the last decade, employment in cotton textile and jute mills, tea-plantations, engineering factories, coal mines, port and dock and other industries has shown a steep decline. Hundreds of industrial units have been closed down leading to loss of jobs to lakhs of workers. Rationalisation without alternative jobs has also resulted in employment. There is no wonder that ratio of the number of unemployed workers in West Bengal to those in India has gone up during the last two decades. The slackening of the rate of industrial development in the State is the direct result of the policies pursued by the Central Government. Naturally the statistics of the Employment Exchanges clearly show that number of persons recruited through them has been going down every month. The Exchanges do not reflect the real employment situation as the overwhelming majority of the unemployed persons do

not find any utility in registering their names with the Employment Exchanges. According to me with over 20 lakhs of people unemployed in the State and hundreds being added every day, the unemployed youth does not feel at all confident of getting a job through Employment Exchanges. In such a situation how much of the problem of unemployment can be solved by advocating recruitment of 'local people' and defining such persons to be those who have residential qualification for a number of years to be arbitrarily fixed. It will encourage chauvanism and involve the Bengali and other workers in unseemly disputes in every factory and undertaking. It adversely affect the cohesion of workers speaking different languages throughout India. It will disrupt united struggles against the bankrupt policies pursued by the Government and the vested interests. It is obvious that in a particular State generally the local people should be recruited and at least not discriminated against. Fixing a period of domicile will not bring about any significant advantage. Citizens from outside the State have also a claim to jobs and cannot be excluded as the unity of India and the integration of its peoples speaking various languages are all important. The working class of India must play a leading part in strengthening such unity. In West Bengal unfortunately many of the non-Bengali employers have been deliberately excluding local people, particularly Bengalees from employment and discriminating against them, importing people from outside. Some

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# Repression on the Eve of West Bengal State CITU Conference

The Conference of the West Bengal State Committee of CITU is scheduled to be held at Kanyapur, Asansol on September 17, 18 and 19. Brisk preparations are going on all over the State to make the Conference a grand success.

Despite closure for a long time the employees of Sen-Raleigh have been enthusiastically working hard in the preparatory work of the Conference.

The Government of West Bengal however got nervous with this unprecedented enthusiasm of the workers in the entire Asansol region. On August 11, in the cover of darkness the police and the CRP arrested Bhaskar Chakravorty, Secretary, and twenty-two other activists of the Sen-Raleigh Employees' Union, from Sen-Raleigh Housing Project Quarters and the Sen-Raleigh Employees' Union office.

If the Government considers that it could put a break to activities of the CITU in this manner it is greatly mistaken.

A broad-based Reception Committee with Bijoy Paul as Chairman and Robin Sen M. P. and Sunil Basu Roy as Joint Secretaries has been formed. Campaign for membership of the Reception Committee is in full swing. With Rs. 2 as the fee for the Reception Committee the organisers hope to collect about Rupees One lakh. Quotas for the membership have been given to different areas and industries in the region.

More than 2509 delegates are likely to participate in the Conference. Five hundred Volunteers

have been organised by the Reception Committee so far.

Over thirty thousand posters of three varieties have been pasted on the walls to popularise the Conference.

## Recruitment of Local Persons

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of the Bengalee employers also have followed this practice. Apart from other reasons the object of this is to recruit people who would be subservient to the employers being far from home and who may be kept away for as long as possible from mixing with the Bengali workers and from trade union activities. It is also seen that a bias against Bengali workers has been shown by even public sector undertakings outside West Bengal. This attitude deserves strong condemnation by the Trade Union movement and it is necessary to take stern action against the perpetrators of such policies. However, to those who value the unity of India, solution to this problem does not lie in taking similar retaliatory measures by following the chauvinistic State Governments and Employers.

For instance the Government of Maharashtra has introduced a measure to recruit only local people and some other states have followed suit. Such measures directly hit at the concept of national solidarity and encourage provincialism. These measures have neither provided jobs for workers nor reduced the extent of unemployment in these states which can be seen from the increasing unemployment in such states even after introduction of these measures. Experience has further shown that after introduction of the Provision of 15 years residence in the State to enable a worker to get a job, it has proved

to be a hunting ground for corrupt officials who could arrange to give false certificates to a worker stating that he was a resident in the State for 14 or more years.

Central Government should force the Maharashtra and other State Governments who have introduced similar measures to withdraw these forthwith.

In West Bengal the private employers and others must be compelled to give up the policy of discrimination against the Bengalees and there must be compulsion on the employers and public sector undertakings to recruit only through Employment Exchanges strictly on the basis of seniority in registration with the Employment Exchanges, other things being equal. It is necessary to set up such Exchanges, to enable the unemployed to change the present bureaucratic set-up of the Employment Exchanges and ensure effective supervision of the work through representatives of trade unions. This to some extent can prevent the Employers from pursuing their disruptive policies and do some justice to the unemployed of the State and also not debar people from outside the State to get employment without any fixed residential qualification. The Employment Exchanges throughout the country will further be not meaningful without granting some allowance to the workers registering their names with the Exchanges. A scheme to this effect should immediately be put into effect.

A huge mass rally will be addressed among others by B. T. Ranadive, P. Ramamurti and Jyoti Basu.

# CITU Demands Need-Based Minimum Wage for The Central Government Employees

"The Central Government after independence has been consistently following a policy of depriving the Central Government employees of decent living standard. The First and the Second Pay Commission have invented ways and means to deny minimum human living existence to them. The interim relief recommended by the Third Pay Commission also followed the same policy. We therefore strongly demand that the Third Pay Commission should immediately recommended a need-based minimum wage asked for by the organisations of the Central Government employees," said P. Ramamurti while explaining the CITU's position before the Third Pay Commission.

The CITU presented its case before the Third Pay Commission in New Delhi on 30th July last. The other member, of the deputation consisted of Md Ismail, M. P., Samar Mukherjee, M. P., and M. K. Pandhe.

Ramamurti strongly condemned the policy of the Central Government of rejecting the norms for fixation of need-based minimum wages laid down by the Fifteenth Indian Labour Conference with regard to the Central Government employees. He referred to the statement of Finance Ministry before the Second Pay Commission and pointed out the "nonchalant attitude of the Government had only emboldened the private sector employers to follow the same anti-working class policy depriving need-based minimum wage to their own employees. The Wage Boards constituted after the

Fifteenth Tripartite have taken clue from the Finance Ministry's circular with a result that no Wage Board recommended wage, on the basis of need-based norms,"

Ramamurti further pointed out that the wages of the Central Government employees were always trailing behind the prices. It was the policy of inflation, deficit financing and taxation that led to price-rise for which Central Government employees are in no way responsible. However, whenever Government employees were asking for rise in D.A. the Government was always giving them sermons that rise in D.A. would lead to further inflation. The net result of the policies of the Government has been that the real wages of the Central Government employees are far below the wages they were paid on the eve of independence.

Despite tall talk of socialism the Government has not done anything to improve the lot of its 27 lakh employees. They were always giving lectures of patriotism by the ministers and top-heavy bureaucrats who lost no opportunity to obtain increase in their emoluments and other perquisites. The Government employee can no more be hoodwinked by such tactics.

To cover the failure of the Government the various experts are being utilised to support the Government's policies. Some experts have said that the daily intake of 2,700 calories recommended by Dr. Aykroyd is incorrect and efforts are being made to suggest that 2,200 calories would be enough to meet

the daily requirement of a worker. Attempts are also being made to change items of consumption to the detriment of interest of the working class. Some statisticians and economists have also come forward to help the Government with a view to bring down size of the family of worker. All these measures is only indirect way of rejecting the norms accepted by the Fifteenth Indian Labour Conference. P. Ramamurti expressed resolute opposition of the CITU to such tactics and asserted that Fifteenth Indian Labour Conference formula was a result of compromise arrived at between the workers, employers and the Government.

There were certain aspects of the Fifteenth Indian Labour Conference formula which are not in favour of workers. For instance, the miscellaneous group was given only 20 per cent weightage in the total minimum wage as per norms laid down. The Government does not think it necessary to go into this aspect and make it more favourable to the workers. The spokesmen of the Government are only trying to find out measures by which they can reduce the quantum of minimum wage of the employees. This trade union movement will never accept and continue to resist to the end.

Regarding the average size of a family Ramamurti pointed out that various studies conducted by the Government clearly show that the average size of family is much higher than 4 persons or 3 consumption units. The argument that a new entrant in service would be a

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batchelor and does not have 3 consumption units, totally ignores the present Indian conditions in which a young worker has to maintain his parents or widowed sisters. In the Fifteenth Indian Labour Conference the average family was considered as 3 consumption units as the package deal and any reduction in in the size of family will not be acceptable to the trade union movement.

P. Ramamurti emphasised the need to absorb all the casual and temporary workers employed by various Government establishments in regular services. Contract labour is also prevalent in several Government undertakings. He pointed out that railways have acquired the most notriety in resorting to these malpractices and denying whatever benefits are available to other sections of Government employees. This section is the most exploited strata of the Government employees and are thrown out of jobs at the sweet will of the officials.

P. Ramamurti stressed that in railways the firemen are forced to work for the 14 hours a day at a stretch which seriously affect their efficiency and causes irreparable damage to their health. Despite repeated agitations by the workers this practice is being doggedly pursued by the Railway Board. He demanded that such inhuman practices should be put an end to forthwith.

With regard to the conditions of Jawan's in armed forces, Ramamurti demanded a rise in the emoluments and other facilities to them. The present practice of paying them only 90% of the D. A. paid to other Central Government employees must be given up. Due to their paltry income the jawans are not in a position to remit ade-

quate amount to their families. He also pointed out the large facilities given to the army officials and demanded drastic reduction in the gap in living conditions of army officials and jawans.

Rebutting the charge that the Government cannot raise resources to pay need-based minimum wage to the Government employee the CITU representatives pointed out that Government can raise enough resources if it really takes measures against monopolists and landlords. They advocated more taxes on big business houses and landlords and plugging the loopholes of tax-evasions, nationalisation of foreign and Indian monopoly concerns, moratorium on foreign debt repayments, radical programme of land distribution. These measures will raise enough resources for further development of the economy and for payment of need-based minimum wages to Central Government employees.

Replying to the argument that when an agricultural worker is having extremely low income the Government employees should not ask for a need-based minimum wages, Ramamurti stated that the CITU also fights for a higher wage states for agricultural workers. However, it will not accept denial of minimum human living existance to the Central Government employees on the pretext that agricultural workers are paid lower wages. "It is the Government that is responsible for the lower rate of wages of agricultural workers. It has now suddenly developed sympathy for the agricultural workers when Government employees are asking for higher emoluments. Therefore we think this argument is only a cover to hide the policy of

the Government to oppose every demand of wage rise", he said.

The CITU representatives pointed out the deplorable conditions of the pensioners who are victims of price-rise. They demanded that there should be some arrangement for payment of higher pension to them with the rise in cost of living.

Elucidating CITU's viewpoint regarding minimum and maximum salary of the Central Government employees, Ramamurti suggested that the once the need-based minimum wage is worked out the maximum wage should not be more than 10 times the minimum wage. He did not agree with the proposal that the higher income bracket officials should be given tax-free income.

The CITU fully supported the demand of the Confederation of the Central Government employees and workers that the minimum wage of the Government employees should be Rs. 260 per month. The CITU completely agreed with the demands raised by the Government employees regarding improvement in their service conditions.

"The Government employees had to go on strike twice during the last decade despite heavy repressive measures. This only shows the deep discontentment prevailing among them due to steep decline in their standard of living. The Government, however, is refusing to learn from this experience and continues to follow the same old discredited policies in a new garb. It will have to face more bitter struggles of the Government employees for which none but the Central Government will alone be responsible. In this fight the entire trade union movement of India will rally behind the Government employees", Ramamurti concluded.

## Labour Minister's Evasive Replies

A meeting of Consultative Committee of the Members of Parliament for the Ministry of Labour and Employment held in New Delhi on August 12 has once again highlighted deliberate and dilatory tactics adopted by the Labour Ministry to keep the accumulated grievances of the workers unsettled for a long time and thus help the employers in tiring out workers.

Monoranjan Roy, Secretary, CITU and Md. Ismail, Vice-President, CITU raised several questions regarding the pressing grievances of the workers. However, the replies given by the Ministry were evasive and non-committal. Both Monoranjan Roy and Md. Ismail raised the question of large-scale victimisation of trade union leaders and workers in A V B and Graphite (India) Ltd., Durgapur, large-scale arrests of trade union Leaders under the P V A Act in West Bengal and termination of their services on the plea of their absence from duty during the period of detention, closure of Annapurna Cotton Mills, West Bengal for a long time and need to take over the management and delay in settlement in Tea Plantation and Jute Industries in West Bengal.

The replies given by the Labour Minister are however surprising. He brushed aside all the questions by merely making a bald statement that the matters referred to above fall in the State sphere and come within the purview of the State Industrial Relations Machinery. The Labour Minister conveniently ignored the fact that the Presidential

Rule was in existence in West Bengal and the Central Government was in charge of West Bengal affairs.

His refusal to take any action in the matter only emboldens the employers to continue prosecution and victimisation of the employees and the police to arrest the trade union leaders recklessly. Roy also raised the question of failure of the Government to amend the Provident Fund Act providing imprisonment to and attachment of property of the employers for defaulting Provident Fund contribution. The reply does not say anything about attachment of the property of the employers. Though the Government admitted that the existing penal provisions were ineffective in checking the defaulters and Courts took a lenient view and awarded inadequate punishment. Under the circumstance, it is difficult to understand how a more "enhanced and more deterrent penalties" would deter the employers from indulging in mal-practices.

Regarding irregularity in compiling data regarding Consumer Price Index Numbers for the working class resulting in bringing down the index in some centres, the reply of the Labour Minister is indeed shocking. He only restated the position taken by the bureaucrats in the Labour Bureau and asserted that "there is no irregularity in compilation of consumer price index number". The Jute workers in West Bengal faced reduction in D. A. to the tune of Rs. 9.20 and workers in engineering industries faced a more severe cut in D. A. due to the

fraudulent indices. It happened despite the experience of the workers that the prices of essential commodities were going up.

Monoranjan Roy also raised question of closure of cotton textile mills and other factories, coal mines, of offices and other establishments in West Bengal since January last. The reply of the Government only showed the callousness of the Labour Ministry in handling the question of closure. The Labour Minister said that the West Bengal Government was requested for information and "the requisite information has not yet been received". The reply given by the Government on this matter is so shallow that the Government appears to be totally unconcerned about the question.

Md. Ismail raised the question of non-payment of legal dues including ESI and PF benefits to the employees of closed and locked out factories. The inaction of the Government on this question has resulted in great hardship to the workers of such concerns and for a long time workers have been agitating on this question. However, the reply given by the Government only shows that the Labour Ministry is totally unmindful of the existing realities. The reply says "the enforcement machinery of the appropriate Government—Central or State as the case may be—continues to take proper action in respect of cases following in their respective spheres to secure payment of legal dues where called for and complains

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# Supreme Court on customary and festival bonus

The Supreme Court has given conflicting judgements on the customary and festival bonus paid to the workers.

In *Graham Trading Co. (India) Ltd. Vs. its workmen*, (1960-61 Supreme Court Reporter, page 107,) the Supreme Court laid down certain principles on which customary bonus or festival bonus are granted. The Court laid down three criteria for such a bonus, namely,

(i) whether the payment has been over an unbroken series of years,

(ii) whether it has been for a sufficiently long period (the period may have to be longer to justify an inference of traditional and customary festival bonus then may be the case with festival bonus based on an implied term of employment),

(iii) the circumstances that the payment depended upon the earning of profits would have to be excluded and therefore it must be shown the payment was made also in the year of loss.

In that case, the Supreme Court observed "the fact that the payment was called ex-gratia by the employer when it was made would, however, make us difference in this regard because proof of custom depends upon the effect of the relevant factors enumerated by us...."

The Court seems to have, however, shifted its stand, making the conditions stricter and more onerous for workmen in the case

of *Vegetable Products Ltd. Vs. their workmen* (A 1965 S. C. 1499). In this case the Court inferred from the settlement which was "inter alia" in the following terms—"30 days' wages will be paid as bonus (ex-gratia) for the accounting year 1957-58..." The Supreme Court observed from these terms that the payment for that year was ex-gratia. This is obviously different from the observations in case of *Graham Trading Company* where the Court observed that employer calling a bonus ex-gratia would make no difference because proof of custom depended

upon the effect of the three relevant factors enumerated in this case.

In a very recent case, namely, *Civil Appeal No. 752 of 1967, Jabalpur Bijlighar Karmachari Panchayat Vs. Jabalpur Electric Supply Co Ltd.* and decided on August 9, 1971, Mr. Justice G. K. Mitter and Mr. Justice P. Jaganmohan Reddy have reiterated the aforesaid principles. Certain other decisions were also referred to, namely, *Tulshidas Khimji vs. their workmen* (1962—1 SCR 675), and *Management of Churkulam Tea Estate (P) Ltd Vs. Their workmen* and another (1969—1 SCR 930).

A. P. Chatterjee

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## Labour Consultative Committee of M. P.s meets

( FROM PAGE NINE )

regarding non-payment of legal dues are brought to their attention."

Though Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act was passed in 1970, the implementation of the Act has not yet begun and the mal-practices of the existing contractors continue unabated. When this question was raised in the Consultative Committee meeting the reply given by the Government only shows how the Government is moving at a snail's pace to implement the Act. The note of the Labour Ministry on this subject reads, "the various authorities under the Act, namely Registering Officers, the Licensing Officers, the Appellate Officers and Inspectors have been appointed to implement the various of the Act in the Central spheres. Dates with in which

establishments must register and contractors must secure licenses will be notified shortly. The setting up of the Central Advisory Contract Labour Board is being actively proceeded."

The replies given by the Labour Minister on other question also shows the same attitude of either ignoring the grievances of the workers or delaying the settlement by raising some technical points,

The deliberations of Consultative Committee once again shows how the woodenheaded bureaucracy of the Labour Ministry is responsible for the present state of industrial relations in the country. They are totally inattentive to the legitimate grievances of the working class and listen only when they are forced to do so by the organised strength of the workers.

## CITU Greet The Japanese Workers

The one and a half lakh strong All Japan Day Workers' Union (ZENNICHIJIRO) held its 31st National Convention from August 16 to 20 at Muroran City, Japan.

The ZENNICHIJIRO, WFTU affiliate in its letter to the CITU stated: "In Japan, nearly 10 million organized worker have risen up again this year to fight for substantial wage increase, shorter working hours, the increase of working staff, the prevention of industrial accident, better social security, etc."

"In the serious and complicated situation in Asia, the working class and democratic forces of Japan have an important task. Because, as you already know, U. S. imperialism, which has got into a difficulty in the expanded aggressive war in Indochina, is manoeuvring the aggression in Asia in applying "Japan-U. S. Joint Operation' based on the Nixon Doctrine in aiming at "making Asian people fight each other."

"In parallel with the deceptive return of administration of Okinawa, Japanese monopolies are attempting to set up a Japan-U.S. mixed military system by promoting reinforcement and despatch to Okinawa of the Self Defence Army and making another serious step in the way to recovery of militarism. They aim at a system which would allow an open aggression with nuclear armament and overseas despatch of troops."

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU has sent the following message on the occasion:

"Greetings to thirtyfirst national convention. Assure solidarity in struggle for higher wages more jobs and against Japanese militarism. Long live friendship between Indian and Japanese workers."

## Labour Ministry Protects Contractors In Coal Mines

Despite the findings of the Labour Evaluation Officer (central) Baghmara, Bihar, that the work through Contractor was illegally done in a mine the Industrial Relations Machinery is keeping mum over it and virtually protecting the Contractors.

In a letter to the Assistant Labour Commissioner (Central) Dhanbad dated December 16, 1970 the L E O (Central), Baghmara stated;

"I visited Madhuband Colliery on 7. 12. 70 and stayed there from 10 A.M. To 12. 30. P. M. Though there was no union representatives during the period of enquiry, the matter was inquired from various sources and was learnt that 7/17 incline was being managed by two contractors—Shri N. D. Singh and Surajdeo Singh in partnership basis. Besides, Shri C. N. Mishra—another contractor is also working in a quarry. However, management is officially denying these contractors and hence these contractors appear to be secretive in nature. I tried to take some statements from the contractors' labourers but they showed their unwillingness to come forward to give any kind of statement and complaint regarding less payment etc. I was told by the management representative that these workers have already been paid on Sunday evening (6th Dec., 70) thus payment checking could not be made.

The letter further pointed out,

"I again made a surprise visit on next payment day i. e. on 14. 12. 1970, but the management avoided making payment in presence of these workers on some plea or other.

"In the circumstances, I feel that

the Contractors' labourers may be advised by the Union Secretary not to accept alleged less payment and insist for correct payment and in case of refusal by the management or contractors this office or your office may be informed for necessary action."

The L E O (Central) had also informed the Regional Labour Commissioner, Dhanbad to take legal action in the matter. However, no action has been taken so far by the authorities concerned.

As a result, the illegal contract system and payment to the workers at lower rates continues unabated in the said mines.

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## C I T U Supports American Dockers' Strike

Thousands of dockers went on strike since July 1, 1971 in response to the call of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union paralysing the entire loading and unloading operations at the entire west coast of the United States and Canada demanded higher wages and better working condition. Nearly 150 ships were lying idle in the Pacific.

Gerald Pereira, General Secretary, Marmagoa Waterfront Workers' Union, Goa sent a telegram to the President of the International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union, (ILWC), California and expressed fraternal solidarity of Indian waterfront workers.

Harry Bridges, President of ILWU in his reply to G. Pereira while thanking for the solidarity action stated, "Should we require any support from your union in the future we will contact you and avail ourselves of your kind offer."

# Railmen on the March

The bureaucrats of the Railway Board normally do not lose any opportunity to attack the railwaymen. The lowest depth to which they could sink was seen at Lumding (Assam) where workers were arrested in the cover of darkness even after they were assured that their grievance will be met. And what was the grievance? It was about drinking water, supply which was stopped in the Accounts Colony for over 72 hours. The only crime of the workers was that they went to the Divisional Superintendent in a mass deputation. The officer first refused to hear them. But later he was forced to assure supply of water. There-after a conspiracy was hatched with a section of leadership of recognised Unions and five employees were arrested.

The "United Committee of Railwaymen" however organised meeting, demonstrations and conventions. Curiously enough the PSP-led Mazdur Union refused to join the struggle. Recently the Union did not join the Barauni-Garhara. The 'U. C. R.' has been able to unite the militant workers and force the administration to take the arrested employees back on duty. But the Administration issued inter-zonal transfer orders on these four employees against which stay-order has been obtained from the court. The 'UCR' has decided to launch a campaign throughout the NF Railway and submitted a memorandum to General Manager and the Divisional Superintendent on demands of workers,

The same issue sparked another struggle at Jamabode Washery siding. For years, the workers had been making representations for

improvement of water-supply, electric supply etc., but in vain. So when the water-supply was stopped for over two days, the workers started a tool-down from July 21. A section of leadership of the AITUC affiliated S. E. Railwaymen's Union opposed the struggle and influenced a small section of workers to resume work. But the major section of the workers continued their struggle. The workers of neighbouring station Bhojudih went in a sympathetic tool down in support of the workers. The leadership of AITUC Union sent one of their office-bearers to call off the strike with a letter of assurances from the Administration which included threats of break-in-service applying to E. S. M. Act etc. The workers objected to this and a better settlement was made on July 30. The leadership of this Union is now busy threatening militant workers with expulsion from the Union. The workers have further realised that the leadership of this Union faithfully implemented the commitment given by the Union President, Shri Indrajit Gupta that wild-cat strikes will not be supported by this Union.

The workers of Head Quarters of South Eastern Railway, through their determined step have forced the police and the Government to release on bail one of the active workers of the Union who was being refused bail. When a mass squatting in front of the General Manager's office on July 13, 1971 was being continued, this worker was released from custody.

The workers of the Asansol Division under the leadership of the Co-Ordination Committee through a sustained campaign forced the

Administration to cancel the orders against three leaders of the Co-Ordination Committee issued earlier under Section 14 (2) of the D & A Rules. The Asansol Divisional Co-Ordination Committee, organised three thousand strong demonstration on August 3, highlighted the growing determination of the workers.

The casual labour of Panskura, (S. E. Rly) have won significant gains. The President of their Union Ashoke Ghosal went on an indefinite hunger-strike from August 6, when a conspiracy to throw about 1500 workers out of employment came into light. The railway workers of the entire area came in support. The students, youth, Kishan Sabha and other democratic organisations rallied round. The Head Quarters Action Committee of S. E. Rly. the S. E. Rly. Project Labour Union (CITU) lent firm support and at their intervention a favourable agreement was reached August 12, 71, and the hunger-strike was called amidst jubilation of workers.

When a worker of Ranaghat, Shri Pranab Bhattacharya was removed from service under the hated Rule 149 of the Establishment Code, the Joint Council of Action led a four thousand strong demonstration before the Divisional Superintendent Sealdah. A zonal convention of railwaymen has been called on the September 5, to plan for further action.

The workers of Khargpur workshop-moved against break-in-service of Diesel workshop staff. On August 13, when the General Manager visited the Workshop, workers prepared themselves for a mass deputation. He, however, left the Workshop much earlier cancelling a meeting with the local leaders

( On Page Fourteen )

# Facts For Agitators

## Administration of Congress Justice :

Chief Justice, eleven judges and a registrar of the Supreme Court of India draw together an annual salary of Rs. 6.19 lakhs while 386 assistants, clerks and class IV employees of the Supreme Court draw a total annual salary of Rs. 6.27 lakhs !

## High Cost of "Police Socialism"

The total expenditure on police by Smt. Gandhi's Government during 1970-71 was Rs. 102.21 crores though the budget provided Rs. 88.84 crores. According to the recent budget Memorandum the excess of expenditure was mainly due to "Provision for three CRP battalions for the periods they are not on SSB duties", "frequent movements of CRP battalions" from one place to another for maintaining law and order in various parts of the country and 'more expenditure on purchase of new vehicles for CRP, arms and ammunitions, stores and equipment, supply of rations" etc. The 1971-72 Budget has made a provision of Rs. 99.12 crores on police i. e. Rs. 10.38 crores more than provided last year. The actual expenditure is likely to be more than last year. As result of recent "police measures" the expenditure on police has exceeded the total expenditure on Education by the Union Government. The 1971-72 Budget has provided only Rs. 97.65 crores for education.

## "Garibi Hatao" in Prime Minister's Secretariat

A secretary and an advisor to the Prime Minister together draw a

salary of Rs. 81 thousand per year which is more than the annual salary of 75 class IV employees in Prime Minister's Secretariat who together draw annually only Rs. 74 thousand.

## Losses Galore in Public Sector Undertakings

According to the annual report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for 1969-70 the 78 Public Sector Companies in India have shown a net loss of Rs. 3.33 crores in the year. The net loss in the previous year was Rs. 2.84 crores which showed a rise of Rs. 49 lakhs in one year.

The total investments of all these public sector plants is Rs. 3798.17 crores.

Thirty-eight public sector companies showed a profit of Rs. 68.76 crores but rest of the 40 companies incurred heavy losses resulting in a net loss to the Government on account of these undertakings.

The total number of persons employed in 75 public sector undertakings was 446,832 as on March 31, 1971.

## Green Revolution—For Whose Benefits ?

After great fanfare and publicity and pumping of huge funds in the sector the green revolution has now come home to roots. The Government of Punjab in a memorandum to the Agricultural Commission in the third week of August last had to admit that the "wheat revolution has neither improved the economic conditions of small farmers nor benefitted agricultural labour. They still continue to live below the subsistence level." This admission has been

made in a State whose per capita income is almost twice the national average. All the benefits of the green revolution have naturally gone into the coffers of rich peasants and landlords.

## Austerity of the Ministers :

Recent 10 percent cut in salary of the Ministers has been a mere eye-wash. The facilities they are getting under various pretexts are indeed very high if we take into account the capacity to pay taxes of the common people. The total salary of Ministers, sumptuary and other allowances cost out tax-payers a total of Rs. 33.47 lakhs every year. The entertainment and hospitality expenses of the Cabinet exceed Rs. 3 lakhs while another Rs. 3 lakhs are provided for discretionary expenditure. This excludes other facilities given in kind to the Ministers for the consolidated fund of the Government.

## Believe it or Not !

When memorials of several Indian martyrs who laid down their lives during struggle for independence are allowed to remain in neglected condition and hundreds of ancient monuments are left in dilapidated condition the Government of India has provided Rs. 9.54 lakhs in 1971-72 Budget as a payment to Commonwealth War Graves Commission for the maintenance of war graves of the Armed Forces personnel belonging to the British imperialist Army who were killed during First two World Wars. This payment is being made every year since independence.

## Constitution of the C I T U

Adopted in the Working Committee Meeting at Jaipur, October 2-4, 1970

in English Rs. 0.40

in Hindi Rs. 0.40

# Railmen on the March

(From Page Twelve)

of the Union. The workers got enraged over the same and turned the mass-deputation to a continued demonstration. The Police were brought in the picture, but the administration was forced to give an assurance in writing regarding early settlement of the grievances.

In Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, the Railway Board, vindictively issued a wireless message to transfer seven out of eight office-bearers of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works Labours Union within 24 hours. The workers stood up to a man and forced the General Manager to commit that he would not serve the transfer orders and would move the Railway Board for cancellation of the orders. The July 12 Committee, the student, youth and mahila organisations as well as other trade unions of the area, have formed a Co-ordination Committee to support to the struggle. The township including the railway colony was earlier declared as a Protected Area which the United Front Government of West Bengal cancelled. The authorities have now embarked upon a plan of encircling the entire colony area by raising a wall but the workers have foiled the game. A convention has been called on September 6, to forge bigger unity with the organisations of Eastern and South Eastern Railways, as well as other Unions.

A convention of workers in South Eastern Railway was held at Adra on August 2 and a Divisional Action Committee has been formed. The General Secretary of the Loco Running Staff Association who was one of the convenors had invited the two recognised unions also to join

the struggle. But the leadership of these Unions refused to participate. A consultative meeting has been held in Chakradharpur Division on August 23 to build a united platform of struggle. Head Quarters Action Committee has called for a convention on September 5 at a Santragachhi. The South Eastern

Railway Loco Running Staff would lead a mass deputation to the General Manager on September 16. The South Eastern Railwaymen's Union (AITUC) has refused to join the united platform. However, the militant section is campaigning for such a united front and the response among the workes is quite encouraging.

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## West Bengal Engineering Workers on the Path of Struggle

The Conference of Federation of Metal and Engineering Workers' Unions (West Bengal) was held in Calcutta on August 28 and 29. Over 1410 delegates from 262 union representing a membership of 1.30 lakhs participated in the Conference.

A presidium consisting of Haridas Malakar, Shanti Chatterjee, Abul Hasan, Juran Ganguly and Harisadhan Mitra was elected to conduct the deliberations of the Conference.

Robin Mukhejee, General Secretary of the Federation submitted a report analysing the crisis in engineering industry in West Bengal and resistance of the workers to the offensive of the employers.

About 32 Comrades participated in the discussion on the Report which was adopted unanimously. Md. Ismail M. P., Monoranjan Roy M. P., Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury M. P., Kamal Sarkar and M. K. Pandhe addressed the Conference and spoke on problems of engineering workers movement in West Bengal. The West Bengal State Committee of the All India Kisan Sabha conveyed its greeting to the Conference through a message. A representative of MacNeill and Barry Co. Emplo-

yees' Federation also greeted the Conference.

The Conference adopted several resolutions including on repression, closures, condemning murders inside jails, solidarity with peasants struggle and on Charter of Demands. By another resolution the Conference demanded immediate recognition of the Government of Bangladesh.

The Conference elected Working Committee of 67 persons including Robin Mukherjee as President and Shanti Ghatak as General Secretary.

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# AITUC and HMS Giving Up Concept of Secret Ballot ?

According to press reports the AITUC and HMS leaders have given up their insistence on the principle of secret ballot for the purpose of recognition of trade unions. Patriot, a daily newspaper from the capital which always takes pro-AITUC position, has reported that on the question of recognition, "the AITUC is now stated to be prepared to meet the INTUC's objections 'half way' in the interest of trade union unity", and "it is prepared to accept a compromise formula' in view of the INTUC's insistence so far on the method of membership verification."

Patriot further reported, "A tentative formula envisages the ensuring of "on par" facilities for membership enrolment to all trade unions for one year before a fair verification is undertaken."

Various other newspapers have also published similar reports and neither AITUC nor HMS appear to have contradicted it.

The main objection to the verification procedure is that the officials are influenced by the employers to give report in favour of certain union. Even the AITUC in its memorandum to the National Commission on Labour had stated, "Recognition of unions through verification of membership by whatever machinery, cannot be the basis, as in existing circumstances, this process has no validity. It further noted, "It will suffice to point out at this stage that in a number of cases, unions recognised by verification of membership are different from those who command the loyalty of the workers and lead their struggle." (Problems of Industrial Relations in India, Page 67).

The INTUC leadership is against the principle of secret ballot mainly due to its fear of losing its present status. The artificial boost it has got due to the patronage of the Government would be seen clearly if recognition is determined by secret ballot.

The Conference of trade union representatives of Central Organisations and National Federations held in New Delhi on May 18 and 19 last once again reaffirmed the principle of secret ballot as the only basis of recognition of trade unions.

It is however unfortunate that when an unprecedented unity was achieved on common demands in New Delhi meeting, the AITUC and HMS leadership in secret parleys with INTUC leaders should have given their consent to the INTUC proposals with minor modifications.

If a broad-based movement is built up in the country for the principle of secret ballot INTUC will be the lone voice on the question and Government would be forced to listen to the voice of the Indian working class.

Instead adopting this course of action the leadership of AITUC and HMS are trying to meet INTUC "half-way" and give up the basic principles for which the trade union movement has been fighting since long.

It is only hoped that the AITUC and the HMS leadership will not make any final commitment in this matter without bringing the issue before the participants of the New Delhi Conference.

# Bihar State Committee Meets

The Bihar State Committee of the CITU held its meeting on August 5 and 6 at Patna in M. L. A. club. Sirajuddin Ahmed presided over the meeting which was attended by 15 members of the State Committee.

Chandi Prasad, Secretary of the State Committee gave report of the activities in the State since the meeting of the State Committee held in Ranchi in May last. After discussion on the Report the meeting took decision regarding improving the activities in the State.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU gave a report of General Council meeting of the CITU held at Coimbatore.

The meeting expressed concern at the serious flood situation in the State and demanded expeditious steps for relief to the affected people. It also adopted resolutions supporting N. G. O's' struggle, condemning repressive measures of the Government such as PVA, Maintenance of Internal Security Act, supporting demands of Barauni-Garhara railways workers, greeting the striking workers in Bokaro-Jharia etc. The meeting further condemned the cold-blooded murder of 5 Kisan workers of Champaran District.

The meeting decided to organise a demonstration of Beedi workers in the State demanding implementation of Beedi and Cigar Act for Bihar when the assembly session meets. A programme of local demonstration has also been planned to prepare for the Statewide demonstration.

The meeting condemned the repression on Gua mine workers and demanded withdrawal of all these measures immediately.

The State Committee decided  
( ON PAGE SIXTEEN )

# CITU Wins

## IOC Co-operative Election

All the four of the Indian Oil Workers' Union candidates (CITU) won the Co-operative Credit Society elections in the Indian Oil Corporation, Eastern Branch, Calcutta, held on 31st July last.

The big margin of CITU victory was seen in the figures officially announced :

	CITU	AITUC
I	251	205
II	283	174
III	312	178
IV	310	209

This victory of the CITU union once again convincingly proved the anti-working class character of the Black agreement signed in 1969 in which the AITUC and the INTUC leadership gave fullest right to the I O C management to close down any establishment on business ground or in the event of the employees going on strike on legitimate issues, to introduce casual labour, to discriminate widely wages and service conditions between the workmen and to curtail trade union and other democratic rights. The AITUC and its allies accepted also the onerous terms in the "Standing Orders" which were worse than the notorious "Model Standing Orders" and lent their support to automation measures of the management.

In order to pressurise the workers to accept this agreement the management with the connivance of the Employees' Union suspended six leaders of the Workers' Union telegraphically and without issuing any charge-sheet.

The I O C employees have been fighting since then under the leader-

ship of the CITU Workers' Union against the agreement.

These results thus dealt a heavy blow upon the class-collaborationist policies of the AITUC leadership.

## Recognise Bangladesh Here And Now

The Indian working class has resolutely supported the heroic struggle of the people of Bangladesh against military dictatorship of Yahya Khan. The united will of the trade unions was reflected in formation of National T. U. Committee of India for Solidarity with Bangladesh in the month of May last to popularise the struggle of the people of Bangladesh and to bring pressure on the Government of India to accord immediate recognition to the Government of Bangladesh. Dr. (Mrs.) Maitreyee Bose (INTUC) is the President of this Committee. P. Ramamurti General Secretary and Monoranjan Roy, Secretary are representing the CITU in the Committee.

The General Council of the CITU in its meeting at Coimbatore on June 11-14, 1971 took "serious note of the docile attitude of the Government of India in the matter of giving recognition to the Government of Bangladesh" and pointed out "The Government of India is paying lip-service to the struggle while making no effective arrangement to ameliorate the suffering of Bangladesh people. The General Council of the CITU condemns the attitude of

## Bihar CITU Meets

(FROM PAGE FIFTEEN)

to take initiative and convene a meeting of all the Central T. U.s and Federations.

Due to rains, a hall meeting was organised to explain the decision of State Committee meeting which was addressed by M. K. Pandhe, Chandi Prasad and A. K. Roy, M. L. A.

Government of India and demands immediate recognition to Bangladesh Government, all possible assistance including arms to the freedom fighters and effective arrangement to relief of the people of Bangladesh who have crossed over to India."

Bangladesh Solidarity Committee (80, Acharya Jagdish Bose Road, Calcutta-14) formed earlier in West Bengal with Jyoti Basu as Chairman has already collected lakhs of rupees for the cause of Bangladesh. Several CITU unions have sent their contributions to this committee.

A meeting of the National T. U. Committee of India for solidarity with Bangladesh held in Calcutta on August 31 decided to hold a Convention in Calcutta in October next to mobilise the workers for the cause of Bangladesh. The Convention will also demand recognition of Bangladesh Government without any delay and extend every assistance including the supply of arms to the freedom fighters of Bangladesh.

The Convention will once again express the united determination of the Indian working class for the struggling people of Bangladesh in their hour of trial.

# West Bengal Jute Workers Prepare for Another General Strike

The two and a half lakh jute workers in West Bengal are once again preparing for another General Strike as a result of deliberate policy of the employers to use the Wage Committee as a handy weapon to keep the Jute Unions engaged in negotiations without conceding any outstanding demand. The Jute Barons have not conceded a single issue so far involved in two general strikes of jute workers in 1969 and 1970.

The Wage Committee was formed during 1970 strike and in last ten months period 24 meetings of the Wage Committee were held without any result. The only point that was settled in this period was the question of defreezing the Dearness Allowance which gave every worker about Rs. 12. But as soon as the fraudulent index went down the employers took the opportunity to cut the D. A. by Rs. 9. 20. Only joint threat of strike by all the unions and protest action of workers inside mills brought employers to their sense and the cut was resorted.

Regarding the question of retaining allowance for Badli workers, permanency, wage-rise and fixation of wage structure for all categories, house rent allowance, night shift allowance, holiday and leave facilities the employers refused to budge. On the contrary, while in Wage Committee discussions they agreed to give 90 per cent workmen in permanent job and another 15 per cent as quasi-permanent for Badli work. However they retracted from the position before the ink of the settlement dried. The jute industry today has acquired monopoly position following the develop-

ments in Bangladesh and lack of supply of raw materials to European producers. Despite boom conditions the jute mill-owners are not prepared to come to any reasonable settlement with the unions. The Central Executive Committee of Bengal Chatkal Mazdur Union in its meeting on August 12 strongly condemned the attitude of the managements and called upon all the unions in jute industry.

This meeting calls upon the jute workers to immediately prepare for a strike to oppose this conspiracy and the D. A. cut and appeals to all Central Trade Unions in jute industry to "sit together in order to devise ways and means to unitedly fight against this attack and to prepare for a joint industrywide General Strike for immediate settlement of all outstanding demands of the jute workers." All the Central Trade Unions in West Bengal working in Jute Industry later have taken a decision of indefinite General Strike in the near future. Unless the Government moves immediately and compels the jute mill-owners to concede the just demands of the workers without any further delay another round of strike struggle is inevitable.

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## Indian Railwaymen Forge Ahead

by Nrisingha Chakravarty  
A Short Account of the Heroic Struggle of Indian Railwaymen for their demands and against brutal police repression.

in English Rs. 0.20

in Bengali Rs. 0.20

in Hindi Rs. 0.30

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## Kanpur Jute Workers to Follow Bengal Path

The fact that about 5,000 workers of the J. K. Jute Mills and Maheshwaridevi Jute Mills have been inspired by the gallant strike of West Bengal Jute workers in 1969 was witnessed in the well-attended rallies held at Kanpur on August 7 and 8.

Kamal Sarkar, Treasurer, CITU, General Secretary, Bengal Chatkal Mazdur Union addressed these meetings and told the workers about the situation in West Bengal.

Kamal Sarkar, in a gate-meeting at J. K. Rayon where the workers have recently withdrawn a strike after 76 long days after receiving an assurance from the State Chief Minister, told about the various struggles being launched by all sections of the people in West Bengal.

On August 8, Kamal Sarkar addressed a large meeting of workers from Maheswaridevi Jute Mill who had recently gone on strike successfully. In the evening another meeting was held in front of J. K. Jute Mill. The meeting was addressed by Kamal Singh (Democratic Youth Federation), Subhashini Shegal (IEL Employees Union), Bankey Behari (J. K. Jute Mill Mazdoor Panchayat), Ravi Sinha (UPCITU), Gangaram (Suti Mill Mazdoor Sabha), Ram Ashrey and Kamal Sarkar. Sarkar in his long elaborate speech reminded the Kanpur workers of their own glorious past of unity and struggle and said that once again they would have to adopt the path which had once earned the title of 'Red Kanpur' for their city.

# Reports From Unions

## Cannanore District CITU Conference

Three hundred and ten delegates and observers representing 48 affiliated and 12 non-affiliated unions participated in the Cannanore District CITU Conference held at Cannanore on August 7 and 8.

The Conference reviewed the activities of the CITU in the district during the last one year and adopted 24 resolutions on various national and international issues concerning the working class.

A District Council of 81 members and one Executive Committee of 25 members were elected with E. Ibrahim Kutty as President and E. S. Raghuvaran, Patiam Rajain and P. V. Balagopalan as Jt. Secretaries.

An impressive procession was taken on August 8 which ended in a rally addressed by E. Balanandan, Vice President, CITU, C. Kannan, President, Kerala State Committee of CITU and others.

## Kerala Cashew Workers Demonstrate

A big demonstration was organised at the main gate of Kerala State Government Secretariat at Trivandrum on August 12 by the CITU unions in Cashew industry in Kerala State. The Workers demanded reopening of all cashew factories and settlement of all outstanding disputes. Among the participants in the demonstration there were more than 2500 women workers.

The demonstrators paraded the main streets of Trivandrum which ended in a meeting addressed by O. J. Joseph, Member, Working Committee, CITU and E. M. S. Namboodiripad.

## Conference of Hindusthan Motor Workers' Union

The Twelfth Annual Conference of Hindusthan Motor Workers' Union was held at Bhadrakali on August 15. Over 400 delegates representing 11,250 members participated in the Conference which was inaugurated by Dinen Bhattacharya, M. P., General Secretary of the Union.

## Delhi Hotel Workers' Wage Longdrawn Struggle

Over a thousand workers in posh hotels and restaurants in Delhi went on strike in the second week of June demanding payment of arrears of Wage Board recommendations. The strike continued for more than two and a half months due to the open pro-employer attitude of the Jan-Sangh administration.

Seeing the blatant refusal of the Jan Sangh administration to settle the dispute on a simple issue the representatives of Hotel Workers' Union, Delhi (CITU) met Union Labour Minister Khadilkar and requested him to intervene in the dispute. The Jan Sangh authorities immediately protested against this and asked workers to surrender before the management.

The workers however jointly fought the struggle. A Co-ordination Committee of CITU and AITUC union was formed to fight the struggle jointly.

A settlement was arrived at on August 26 after a longdrawn and bitter struggle.

The CITU unions in Delhi collected funds and organised demonstrations during the strike.

## AITUC Leaders As Strike Breakers In Singareni Collieries

The clerical staff of Singareni went on strike in last week of June and continued it in August demanding increments in grade as given to overmen and sardars. The strike was led by the INTUC union. Parsa Satyanarayana, President, Andhra State Committee of CITU issued a statement in support of the strike.

Strangely enough, the AITUC leadership not only opposed the strike but actively helped the management in recruiting blacklegs on payment of Rs. 9.50 per day.

The employees however remained firm and united and foiled the game of the AITUC leadership.

## Kanpur Fertiliser Workers' Strike

About 900 workers of the Indian Explosives Limited, Kanpur resumed work on August 26 after a week long strike.

The I E L Employees' Union submitted its Charter of Demands over two months ago. The employees of I E L were striking to bring their wages to the level enjoyed by the employees of other companies of the I C I Group. But the management had been evading a settlement by its intransigence. Finally the employees decided to go on a continuous strike from August 20.

After a week-long struggle at last the management had to concede the demand of increased D. A. It was decided to release 51 workers who were arrested during the strike.

## Elvoc Employees' Union Calcutta

The Tenth Annual Conference of Elvoc Employees' Union Calcutta was held on August 7. C. K. Das, General Secretary submitted a report which was adopted after discussion. The Conference re-elected C. R. Banerjee and C. K. Das as President and General Secretary.

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Consultative Committee meeting has only dittoed the position of the Labour Bureau officials who are responsible for the fraudulent indices. When the prices of essential commodities are going up fast during this period the jute workers' D. A. was cut by Rs. 9.00 and workers in engineering and other industries faced similar cuts. The Government by refusing to rectify the error is only shielding the culprits in the matter.

The Bonus Act has virtually pegged the bonus of the workers to the minimum. The workers have experienced actual reduction of bonus after the Bonus Act. Several disputes have occurred on this question but the Government machinery is sticking to the legal position. The workers therefore have demanded introduction of 8 per cent minimum bonus as an interim measure to be followed by a comprehensive measure. Despite repeated promises in this regard the Government is using dilatory tactics to evade the issue.

The ESI bureaucrats, and PF officials have made mess of both the schemes and the Government failed to check the prevalent malpractices. Complains go on mounting every year but they fall on deaf ears of stony bureaucrats. There is absolutely no indication that the Government is taking serious steps to improve the matter. The recent Employees' Family Pension Scheme has become a device to cheat the workers in the name of social security and we had to ask the workers to boycott it."

### CITU's Initiative

Since the Conference of trade union representatives of Central Organisations and Federations held in New Delhi on May 18-19 the

CITU had been approaching other T. U. organisations in West Bengal to join in a state-wide struggle on common issues. However, representatives of other organisations particularly the leaders of the AITUC were not prepared for building a united front on the issues pressing the working class of West Bengal.

The Rashtriya Sangram Samiti of West Bengal, of which CITU is one of the constituents, held a convention in July 18 and decided that a general strike and Hartal should be organised throughout West Bengal in August. The Convention proposed that such an action should be organised on August 11.

Longdrawn negotiations that followed the Convention of Rashtriya Sangram Samiti and the atmosphere created throughout West Bengal for a militant action resulted in bringing all the trade unions together for a united action.

In a meeting of all the trade union centres in West Bengal held in Calcutta on August 2 under the Presidentship of Kali Mukherjee (INTUC) it was unanimously decided to go in for Bengal Bundh on August 25 which was later on postponed to August 27. A sixteen point charter of demands was also adopted in the meeting which included demands like immediate reopening of 400 closed mills factories and offices employing 1,25,00 workers or their take-over by the Government, unemployment benefit, end of political murders and assassinations, withdrawal of section 144, end of repression and assassinations, and release of all trade union and democratic workers, recognition of Bangladesh, election in West Bengal not later than February

1972, against wage freeze, fraudulent index numbers and D. A. cut etc.

The magnificent unity achieved of repression and release of all trade union and democratic workers, recognition of Bangladesh, election in West Bengal not later than February 1972, against wage freeze, fraudulent index numbers and D. A. cut etc.

The magnificent unity achieved by the trade union in West Bengal had electrified the atmosphere in the whole of Bengal but alarmed Central Congress leaders in Delhi. In order to disrupt the unity of the workers secret talks were held by Central Ministers with leadership of different Central T. U. Organisations with a view to bring pressure on their State units to withdraw from their commitment. Siddhartha Sankar Roy, Union Minister for West Bengal affairs hurriedly convened a meeting of representatives of various organisations in West Bengal on August 15 and tried to persuade them to withdraw the strike-call. Kamal Sarkar, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of CITU categorically told the Minister that unless the demands are conceded by the Government there was no question of consideration of withdrawal of decision of General Strike and Hartal. The other trade unions also did not find any ground for the withdrawal of the strike decision.

The Central Government continued its efforts to disrupt the unity of the workers. R. K. Khadilkar, Union Labour Minister convened another Conference in New Delhi on August 22.

On behalf of CITU Sudhin kumar and M. K. Pandhe attended the meeting while the West Bengal State Committee of CITU was represented

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by Monoranjan Roy and Niren Ghosh.

The CITU in its Memorandum recorded its strong protest for not inviting the organisations like 12 July Committee comprising of Central Government and State Government employees' Associations, Rashtriya Sangram Samiti and other organisations which have sponsored the strike. The Government, however, invited Bharatiya Mazdur Sangh which was not a party to strike and the National Federation of Trade Unions which was actually acting as strike-breaker by openly issuing statements against the Bengal Bandh.

In his opening remarks, Union Labour Minister, Khadilkar had lot of sympathy for the people of West Bengal but had only to offer a modified scheme of gratuity, 60 days notice for closure and a promise to restore cut in D.A. following decline in the price index.

Siddhartha Sankar Roy, Union Minister for West Bengal affairs also promised to enact legislation to take over more concerns which Government considered 'viable', but did not say what would happen to those who are already on streets.

The leadership of INTUC, AITUC and HMS expressed their readiness to withdraw the strike if the promises are implemented. Niren Ghosh, CITU spokesman however categorically asserted that the assurances given in the meeting were merely an eye-wash and there was no question of CITU withdrawing the Bandh call.

A joint statement issued in New Delhi by the representatives of the CITU in the meeting said, "It was

apparent from the course of the Conference that the only game of the Government was a persistent attempt to divide the Trade Unions without conceding a single major demand, except some vague assurances for a dialogue and future limited action on one issue."

It further stated,

"The obstinate and stubborn silence of the Government at the Conference on the democratic issues means that the Government won't stop political murders, almost near-fascist repression will continue with unabated fury, no election will take place unless opposition is crushed before and Bangladesh Government won't be recognised."

It therefore called upon the working class of West Bengal to stick to the strike decision and hoped that other trade union would join the united strike call on August 27.

During meetings in Calcutta on August 24 and 25 of eight trade union centres which jointly gave a strike call the CITU representatives remained firm while INTUC and HMS suggested that the strike should be deferred. Though no agreement could be reached in the meetings the CITU and the UTUC (B.B. Ganguly St.) gave call for strike on August 27. The AITUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) HMP and Trade Union Co-ordination Committee (Forward Bloc) gave a separate call for strike on the same day.

Just one day before the day of the strike the jute millowners announced that the cut in D. A. would be restored which however failed to confuse the two and a half lakh workers in jute industry.

Thus all the efforts of the Government failed to disrupt the unity of the workers from below and the total work was paralysed throughout West Bengal on August 27.

Niren Ghosh, M. P., Secretary, CITU congratulated the working class of West Bengal for a successful strike while Monoranjan Roy, M.P., General Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of CITU issued a statement welcoming the unity of the working class in West Bengal during Bengal Bandh on common issues.

As the resolution of the meeting of all the Central trade union organisations in West Bengal held on August 2 pointed out that the one day strike and hartal is a fore-runner of series of industrial united actions to achieve the sixteen point demands accepted by all the trade unions.

The struggle for the legitimate demands will continue with more vigour by building still more powerful unity. The confidence gained by the mighty action on August 27 will no doubt enthuse the working class all over West Bengal to redouble their efforts for more and more militant actions to force the Central Government to concede their long-standing demands.

The strike and Hartal of August 27, will also inspire greatly the working class in other parts of the country to wage similar struggles against the ruthless offensive of the capitalists and their Government and build unity of all sections of the workers on common issues which alone will protect their standard of life from further inroads.

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