



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Strike in Public Sector on 11 March

Countrywide Demonstrations on 3 March

A meeting of central trade unions and national federations was held on 22 February in North Avenue M.P.'s Club, New Delhi, to review the recent attacks on the working class and the trade union movement and to chalk out a programme of action. One hundred and five representatives participated in the meeting which was the first since Mrs. Gandhi came to power.

Shanti Patel, General Secretary, HMS, presided over the meeting. About 20 speakers who spoke in the meeting dwelt at length about the growing attacks on the working class and stressed the need for unity to face the challenge. They discussed the two month long strike of the workers of Bangalore based industries, Ordinance on LIC, Gazette Notification on GIC, the brutal attack on the loco running staff agitators and the wage freeze offensive.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, moved the resolution calling upon the working class to observe one day token strike on 11 March, united demonstrations all over the country on 3 March and dharna in front of the Prime Minister's residence on 27 February. The resolution was supported by O.P. Aghi, Secretary, BMS.

Among those who spoke in the meeting were Indrajit Gupta, General Secretary, AITUC, Saroj Choudhury, General Secretary, All India Insurance Employees Association, Prabhat Kar, President, All India Bank Employees Association, S.K. Vayas, Secretary General, Confederation of Central

Government Employees and Workers Associations, Yashpal Kohli of All India Loco Running Staff Association, S.M. Banerjee of All India Defence Employees Federation, Bal Dandavate, Vice-President, HMS, Michel Fernandes, Convenor, Joint Action Front, K.G. Srivastava, Vice President, AITUC, and Chitta Basu of TUCC.

The following is the full text of the Resolution adopted in the meeting.

THIS meeting of the AITUC, HMS, CITU, BMS and TUCC and National Federations of Workers in Banks, Insurance, Railways, Defence, Oil, Fertiliser, Coal, Steel, Newspaper, Port and Dock and other industries expresses grave concern at the deliberate policy of confrontation adopted by the Government of India towards the working class and the trade union movement of the country which has necessitated a review of the developments by the entire T.U. movement in order to protect the interests of the working class.

Though the Government spokesmen talked about throwing Bhoothalingam Panel Report into the dust bin, the Government has already taken several steps to implement the same notorious report, rejected by the entire working class. The Government has non-chalantly disowned the commitment contained in the agreements made with the trade unions in Bangalore-based industries which left no other alternative for them but to go on indefinite strike since 26th December last and the strike is still continuing. The Government adopted a high and

ALL INDIA KISAN RALLY ON 26 MARCH

mighty attitude during the recent negotiations with the trade unions and the most reasonable proposals made by them were rejected by the Government in the most arrogant manner. The longdrawn strike of the 1,25,000 workers in the ITI, HMT, HAL, BEL, BEML, ECIL, MIDHANI and other establishments in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kalamassery, Nasik, Koraput, Kanpur Lucknow, Barrackpur etc. has thus become a challenge to the entire T.U. movement in India. This meeting sends its greetings to the heroic workers of Bangalore and other centres and congratulates them on their exemplary spirit of unity and solidarity.

In several other public sector undertakings such as BHPV, HCL, Hindustan Teleprinters the Government agreed to pay the wages at par with BHEL, yet although one year has passed after signing of this BHEL agreement, the Government failed to implement it. The workers of Hindusthan Cables are on indefinite strike since 5th February 1981 on the demand of implementation of a similar clause in their agreement, but the Government refused to pay any heed to it.

The Ordinance on LIC is an open subversion of the Supreme Court Judgement and makes mockery of the judiciary in the country. The Ordinance which empowers the Central Government to unilaterally determine the wages and service conditions of LIC employees, shuts out collective bargaining, a fundamental right of trade unions. The Notification already issued by the Government reducing D.A. and withdrawing employees' right to Bonus bears eloquent testimony to the Government intentions. In a similar move the Government, by a Notification, has already unilaterally and adversely changed the service conditions of GIC employees with effect from 1.1. 1979.

The National Security Act has also been recklessly used against the trade union leaders and workers during several struggles despite categorical assurance that it would not be used against them.

The vindictiveness of the Government during the workers' struggles is on the increase. In the recent loco running staff agitation about 500 workers were summarily dismissed from service while an equal number was compulsorily retired. A reign of terror was let loose by arrest of large number of workers while several were forced to go underground. Even wives of workers were arrested and kept in police lock-up. Workers of Bharat Electronics, Ghaziabad, have been brutally lathi-charged and arrested on February 19 even before they had gone on strike. HAL workers at Lucknow were also lathi-charged injuring 35 workers.

Under these circumstances, unless the trade unions come together and launch a powerful movement to repeal these growing attacks on the livelihood of the working class and on the T.U. and democratic rights, the conditions are likely to worsen considerably in the forthcoming days. The Central Trade unions and national federations therefore call upon the trade unions of all affiliations to unitedly resist the offensive and immediately prepare for actions in support of the demands :

- For reopening of negotiations with the representatives of unions in Bangalore-based industries.
- For withdrawal of Ordinance on LIC and scrapping of the gazette notification on GIC.
- For reinstatement of all victimised Railwaymen and immediate release of all arrested railwaymen under various Acts.
- For restoration of unfettered T.U. rights including right to collective bargaining and
- For putting an end to the wage freeze offensive.

This meeting, therefore, appeals to all trade unions to observe the following programme of actions so that the Central Government is forced to reverse its policies and the livelihood of our working class is properly protected.

1. 27 February 1981—Dharna before the Prime Minister's House in New Delhi by the leaders of Central Trade Unions and representatives of Delhi Unions and Members of Parliament.
2. 3 March 1981—Joint Demonstrations, meetings, badges wearing etc. by unions of all affiliations in all industries and establishments in public and private sectors.
3. 11 March 1981—One day All India Strike in public sector undertakings in support of the above demands.

This meeting appeals to all the unions in India to contribute funds liberally to the striking workers in Bangalore-based industries so that they can continue their struggle till they achieve their demands.

For further reviewing the situation and deciding the programme of action this meeting decides to hold an All India Convention of trade unions of all affiliations in New Delhi before the end of April. This meeting hopes that the workers will respond to this appeal magnificently and make the convention a grand success. □

CITU Condemns LIC Ordinance

The claim for bonus of the LIC employees having been upheld by the Supreme Court, the Government has taken an unprecedented course of acquiring arbitrary powers through an Ordinance to revise the terms and conditions of service of LIC employees with retrospective effect from 20 June, 1979. This measure will sea at naught the judgement of the Supreme Court and contravene all provisions of Industrial Disputes Act while cutting at the roots of collective bargaining. This is an authoritarian measure to police the wages of salary earners in the name of protecting the interest of the policy-holders, said B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, in a statement on 1 February.

The CITU condemns in unequivocal terms this measure adopted by the Government when the Supreme Court judgement favoured the employees. The CITU warns the Government that the organised working class movement cannot in larger interest of the working people, remain a silent spectator when such draconian measures are taken by the Government.

The CITU appeals to the people not to be taken in by the attempt to pit the policy-holders of the LIC against the employees. It also appeals to all central trade unions and the democratic mass organisations to raise their powerful voice of protest against this draconian measure.

CTUs Demand Withdrawal

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, Indrajit Gupta, General Secretary, AITUC, Shanti Patel, General Secretary, HMS, and

Ram Naresh Singh, General Secretary, BMS, in statement on 8 February strongly condemning the LIC Ordinance said, it strikes at the very root of collective bargaining and seeks to subvert the judiciary which upheld the interests of the employees.

Central trade unions leaders demanded immediate withdrawal of the Ordinance. Congratulating the LIC employees for their united struggle, they called upon to the working class of all affiliations to rise in protest against this draconian Ordinance so that the Government is forced to withdraw these measures.

CITU Opposes Increase In Rail Tariff

B. T. Ranadive, President: CITU has issued the following Statement on 20 February:

The CITU strongly opposes the stiff increase in the railway fares and freight charges announced by the Railway Minister while presenting the railway budget in Parliament on 19th February. Only on the 16 June last year there was an increase of Rs. 204.24 crores. Even at that time, the CITU expressed concern that, this was but an interim increase. The fears have come true. Another increase of Rs. 356.26 crores has now been imposed while the apprehension of further increase is openly hinted by the Press. The Railway Minister has not spared this time the items of daily necessities like food grains, sugar, pulses, kerosine, edible or hydrogenated oils, chemical manures etc. which were traditionally kept out in order to check an increase in prices of daily necessities of the common man. The multiple push to an already high inflationary trend of our economy cannot now be denied by any one, except the

Countrywide Strikes by LIC Employees

To protest against the Ordinance, the LIC employees all over India observed 48 hours strike on 2 and 3 February under the leadership of AIIEA and other associations of the LIC employees, and on 5 February the employees observed strike to protest against Gazette Notification. On 24 February again the employees resorted to strike protesting against introduction of LIC Bill in Parliament. On 23 February, all opposition members in Parliament except DMK and Muslim League walked out of the House against the Bill. □

Chairman of Railway Board who impudently describes it as 'minimal'. In reality this would act as a double edged sword which will cause a sharp fall in the real wages of the working class and neutralise the hard earned gains of the peasantry who have recently secured, through bitter struggles, some increase in the prices of their crops.

These burdens are imposed to subsidise an inefficient and anti-labour administration, whose vindictive attitude towards loco-workers shows that it has no desire to run the railways with the co-operation of workers.

The CITU calls upon the entire working class and the peasantry to oppose the rise in railway tariff and appeals to all General T.U. and Kisan Organisations to come together to force the Government to change its policy of heaping burdens on common man instead of mobilising resources by taxing the multi nationals big business, monopoly houses and the landlords. □

Locomen's Struggle Withdrawn, But Fighting Spirit Not Quelled

The heroic struggle of Loco Running Staff which started in Khurda Road Division 46 days back, in Central Railway a month back, through out S.E. Railway 35 days earlier, 31 days back in Sourthern Railway and for 27 days all over the country was withdrawn on 24 February and the Loco Running Staff were asked to resume duties from 25 February 1981. The fact that the strikes started in different zones from different dates and probably against attacks clearly shows that a pre-planned attack was launched against the locomen and they had to stand up in defence of their struggling comrades. For example, what could the railwaymen do, if their womenfolk are molested as in Talcher and the officers callously refuse to take proper steps. On the other hand when the workers protested, they resorted to victimisation. No organisation can keep silent if three out of nine Zonal Railways are forced to resort to agitation. In calling of the struggle S.K. Dhar, Secretary General of the AILRSA said in a statement that as a demand for special debate has been raised in Parliament and the Central Trade Unions and National Federations have taken up a country-wide programme against victimisation, the struggle is being withdrawn.

Unbridled terror was let loose against the locomen. By the time the struggle was withdrawn, more than 1,500 workers were removed/dismissed/compulsorily retired from service, 500 were put behind bars more than a score of the under National Security Act, the office of the LRSA was seized and properties worth Rs. 50,000 were taken

away by police and several were evicted from their railway quarters. The Driver who was beaten by the Police at Sampla (Northern Railway) by SHO-Rohtak which incident had caused the strike in June, 1980 last was made a special target of attack. At some stage workers were always kept under Police Surveillance, not for their protection, but to extract forced labour from them under threat of arrest under N.S.A. The locomen continued the struggle braving this repression. Shri Venkateswaraloo, a Driver of South Central Railway expired due to police terrorisation.

The authorities first stated that the strike call had flopped as only 2 per cent had responded. Then they not only deployed untrained staff but also retired staff. To use the Territorial Army and to break strikes has been a long practice although the objectives for setting up of the said Army was entirely a different one. The Railway Minister made a statement in Lok Sabha on February 17. All subsequent questions on the subject on February 19 and 26 were parried either referring to the statement or by stating that information is being collected. It was however admitted that 240 pairs of passenger trains remained cancelled on 16.2.81, which is roughly about 25% of the passenger that ply daily. So the claims of the Association that over 50,000 locomen participated in the struggle and about 30,000 were still on strike on the day the strike was withdrawn appears to have some basis.

During the struggle there had been many accidents, many of which are due to the fact that

untrained and unqualified persons were driving the trains and safety measures are thrown to the winds. There were 5 such accidents in Sealdah Division and 3 in Alipur Duar Division, as stated that the goods train which had caused the tripple accident at Vaniyambadi was also being manned by such staff. Many facts would come to light, if a special debate as demanded in Lok Sabha is held too.

The locomen had resumed duty, though more than 1500 are still out. But their fighting spirit has not flagged. At many places they joined duty in procession, shouting slogans. This shows that the finale has not come yet. □

AIRF Working Committee Meets

THE AIRF Working Committee which met at Moghulsari from 5 to 7 February last, warned the Government that unless negotiations are started on the 10 point Charter of Demands, a struggle is inevitable. They have appealed to various organisations including LRSA for building up united organisations to achieve the demands. □

Continuous Strike in Hindustan Cables

UNDER the leadership of the CITU, AITUC, HMS and INTUC unions, about 4,000 workers of Hindustan Cables Ltd., Rupnarayanpur Unit in West Bengal, are on indefinite strike from 5 February in support of their 10-point charter of demands which includes promotion as per 11 February, 1980 settlement, increase in minimum wages, bonus, housing and medical facilities and other longstanding demands. Earlier, the negotiations on 3 and 4 February in presence of Additional Labour Commissioner broke down due to the adamant attitude of the management which forced the workers to resort to indefinite strike. □

Pfizer Workers Force Multinational Company for Settlement

The indefinite strike of 1,500 workers of Pfizer Limited, a multinational giant in drug industry, which continued for three and a half months, forced the management to arrive at an agreement in favour of the workers which was signed on 31 January.

The strike precipitated as the Company tried to instal sophisticated machines in their Thane factory displacing a large number of workmen and threatened to resort to further mechanisation. The Company is having 76 per cent equity holdings in USA. The Company increased its turnover of 14 crore rupees in 1968 to 46 crore rupees in 1979 with the rise of profit from 3.7 crores to 7.59 crores during this period. But during the same period the workforce in office and factory remained static numbering 1180. In 1968, the Company employed 80 temporary workmen and continued to increase the strength of temporary workmen every year which reached 517 in 1979. However, in 1978, the Company retrenched all temporary workmen which was possible through mechanisation only.

The Company not only reduced the employment potential but also gradually reduced the workforce increasing the per capita production manifold. Simultaneously, the Company is getting their products manufactured in unknown small scale industries through loan licences with the stamp of Pfizer and without mentioning the name of actual manufacturer. By this process, the Company is deceiving the Government also as the price has been fixed on specifica-

tions given by Pfizer but actually being manufactured in small scale industries according to whose specifications the prices should have been much lower.

The management made every efforts to deprive the workers of their legitimate claims of dearness allowance by imposing a ceiling on it.

On these two issues the workmen of the Company resorted to indefinite strike on 15 October, 1980. In support of the striking Pfizer workers, 5000 workmen of drugs and pharmaceutical industry in Bombay-Thane staged a demonstration in front of the residence of Chief Minister of Maharashtra on 12 November last. But the Government of Maharashtra openly supported the Pfizer management.

The management in connivance with the Government formed a parallel paper union named 'Mazdoor Congress' to disrupt the unity of the workers. The peaceful striking workers were harassed and arrested on false charges. Protesting against such actions of the police authorities a huge demonstration was staged in front of Company's factory at Thane and the Morcha marched to the DIG to demand an immediate transfer of police officers and to protest against police repression.

In support of the striking workers the pharmaceutical industry bundh was organised on 9 December at the call of All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation, Maharashtra Branch. A 10,000 strong morcha reached Company's Head Office culminating in a rally which was addressed by the leaders of various trade unions including CITU.

The Government of Maharashtra and the Central Government failed to compel Pfizer Limited to reduce the foreign equity holdings below 50 per cent as required under FERA.

In the meantime the Company started production of some life saving drugs like tetracycline, streptomycin, INH, PAS, etc. with the help of contract and temporary workmen, without proper quality control and usual production norms, endangering the life and health of the people. So far no investigation has been made by the drug control authority in this regard.

On 23 January, hundreds of workmen assembled in front of the factory gate at Thane to commemorate their glorious struggle which crossed 100 days. At about 7.30 in the morning when workmen were coming to join others were attacked by the police as a result of which a large number of workmen were injured. Even the woman workers were not spared, with their mangal sutras broken. Six woman workers were arrested in addition to others. After that a huge rally was organised which was addressed by Ahilya Rangnekar, member of the Working Committee of CITU, and S.Y. Kolhatkar, Vice-President, CITU, who condemned the police atrocities and later met with the police authorities against police repression. The management had connived with the police was clear from the fact that the management had given its car (No. MMF 5710) to police officer to do official work.

Despite atrocities the united struggle of the Pfizer workmen all over India continued which ultimately forced the government to settle the demands. The workers have resumed work from 2 February and have organised victory rallies all our country. □

Plight of Woman Construction Workers

NEARLY 3,000 woman construction workers, constituting 24 per cent of man labour force are working at various construction sites under different contractors, who have taken government-contracts, in Warangal district in Andhra Pradesh. Most of them are engaged in unskilled jobs as casual labourers at as low wages as Rs. 4 to 5 per day, for lifting earth-loads, cutting stones, mixing cement concrete, crushing bricks and for menial work.

Majority of these women workers belong to scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and backward sections of the society. Some workers belong to that strata also which had land for cultivation but was snatched away by the money-lenders and the landlords to whom they were in debt. These workers have been working since their childhood. The question of education does not arise at all.

The large scale unemployment prevailing in the country in general and in construction industry in particular has strengthened the brutal clutches of the contractors who reduce the wages exploiting the menace of unemployment. The contractors employ children also who are paid lesser wages. For survival the woman workers have to accept the lower wage rates compared to male workers. The contractors lure the young women of better jobs and in the process they become the victim of the sexual harassment.

The work is not of permanent nature and the workers have to go back to their villages to work as agricultural labourer on meagre wage rates. Even this work is available only in rainy season and that too with great

difficulty. But mostly the workers are not allowed to go back to their villages since they are forced to remain under debt to the contractors who deal severely with the worker trying to run away.

These construction workers work overtime but do not get overtime wages. With no housing facility, they have to take shelter under trees or jhuggies. Facilities provided under the contract rules are denied to them. Even a pregnant woman has to work till her delivery for fear of losing the job. Maternity benefit is unknown to them. Child death rate is high among contract labour.

Almost identical condition is of 600 women workers working at Pachampad canal since 1973. The only difference is that they are on continuous job and are less worried compared to the construction workers. They get Rs. 3 and two meal consisting of merely 200 grams of rice and tamarind water, which is harming their health. Most of the labourers are suffering from diseases like diarrhoea, intestinal problems or muscular pain. Medical facilities are seldom seen at the construction area. For want of money the workers on their own can not buy medicine. But they do get hutments for living with no facility and not worth living. Here also the woman workers are enticed and molested by the contractors.

This case study is not a unique one. Thousands of thousand such cases are available in the country. The workers in this sector have to unite and fight for better living and working conditions and trade union and democratic rights, and demand for abolition of contract

labour system along with entire trade union movement of the country. □

Working Women Convention

The convention of the Kamgar Mahila Samiti, Faridabad, was held on 16 February which was participated by 108 delegates who were machine operators, packers, helpers etc. Vimal Ranadive addressed the convention.

The report focussed the current economic crisis, growing struggles against the deteriorating living conditions and open repressive policies of the Government. Several speakers highlighted the exploitation faced by the woman workers and lack of facilities like sanitation, transport, water, creche etc. and insecurity of service.

Through a resolution, the convention condemned the NSA and LIC Ordinance and demanded take over of wholesale trade in essential commodities and its proper distribution, end to retrenchment of women workers, Rs. 500/- as minimum wage, abolition of contract labour system, adequate training facilities, end to the repression on woman workers and other local demands. □

CITU Nominations

Minimum Wages (Central)

Advisory Board : R. Umanath, M.L.A., General Secretary, Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU.

Coffee Board : C. Nanjundappa, General Secretary, Karnataka State Committee of CITU. □

For Survival Workers Forced to Choose Work Which Kills

HERE are some facts about continuous exploitation of child labourers of Mandasaur district in Madhya Pradesh who are suffering from deadly disease silicosis and facing certain death. In this area, to sustain their lives the workers are forced to join the slate pencil factories or mines to ultimately die a premature and cruel death.

There are about 85 officially recorded slate pencil factories whereas the number of unregistered ones is very high. The slate pencil industry in the area brutally violate the labour laws. There is no safety of workers from silicon dust and they become victim of silicosis and like diseases. The industry employ about 4,000 people both in mines and factories. About three-fourth of them are temporary workers while rest work on peace-rates.

The cutters in the factory are the worst sufferers and those who have died at an early age have mostly been cutters. The silicon dust of the raw material, which is the plates of shale, enters their lungs and coat it to block the process of purification of air. According to doctors, there is no solution for such diseases and the workers ultimately have to die. No body is able to give the figure of actual casualties as a result of silicosis and like diseases. Some people say that more than 2,000 workers have died due to this. When the workers get affected by this deadly diseases they develop heavy cough and are then mercilessly shunted out of the factories. To continue to earn their livelihood their children are forced to take up the same jobs.

And the munshis of the industry keep on searching the young boys and girls of the area to employ them in the industry. The hereditary employment thus goes on.

Old workers in the factories are seldom seen. Rarely one can find any person of the age of nearly 50. People look much older than their age. Almost every third woman is a widow. The area is full of dust. One comes across cases after cases of brutal exploitation, humiliation, slavery, sickness, destitution and death.

The raw material mine for slate pencil is like a ditch of about 20 feet depth and is usually exhausted within two three months. The horrible scene of mine depicts the inhuman working conditions. Even the pregnant women are forced to work till their delivery while their children lay naked near the mine-head without any care and catch the germs of deadly diseases. That is why the child rate in the area is abnormally high. Those who could grow to childhood have never seen the school. Instead of working at slate pencil mine or factory, if the children go to school, how can they survive ?

It is found that most of the workers in this industry joined the work in early childhood at the age of about 12 to 14 years. The industry employ the workers for a variety of jobs. Some sharpen the slate pencils while others round off the edges. Some do finishing and packing while others are engaged in cutting. Working hours are not fixed. Many have to stay very late in the evening. No weekly holiday except in a few cases. They get

merely Rs. 3-4 per day for digging and loading, while the cutter's wage for one peti of slate pencil is just Rs. 1.10. In one peti there are 20 boxes each containing 50 pencils. Rounding the edges of 1,000 pencils earns them one rupee only.

While such low wages are paid to the workers, the profit to the owners is very high. For one peti of pencils, the workers are paid just Rs. 3.10. With a meagre overhead expenses, one peti of pencils is sold for Rs. 22.50. The owners never spend money on medical facility. Bonus and dearness allowance are unknown to them. Trade Union and democratic rights are foreign terms for the workers. No one works willingly. They do not enjoy their life. No one can free oneself from the clutches of such inhuman and brutal circumstances.

Any body who tries to organise the workers is immediately removed from employment and beaten up mercilessly. All efforts of workers have failed and now they have become used to the exploitation to live for few years and let their children join the queue of those who will vanish in course of time.

The slate pencil industry gets government aid to instal machines to remove silicon dust but no one instals it despite the fact the State Assembly made it compulsory in January 1980. For the owners it is the profit which is more important than the health and the life of the workers.

The bureaucracy and the legal system are big hurdles in case the workers or their families claim compensation. The court comes to Mandasaur once a week from Ratlam. No body knows when 58 cases pending before the court will be settled. In the meantime the families of the workers face destitution and starvation. But for joining the main-stream of the trade union movement and fighting against the exploitation and for better living and working conditions, and democratic and trade union rights, there is no way out for these workers. □

RAILWAY BUDGET

THE Railway Budget presented this year not only reflects the utter fiasco of the Planning in our country but also is bound to add to the miseries of the common people including railwaymen. The Government was unable to speak in the same voice. What the Railway Minister said in his budget speech was virtually repudiated by the Finance Ministry through the Economic Survey. The utter callousness that was displayed while placing the budget was never witnessed before.

While the accidents were but a daily occurrence, the Railway Minister had naively chosen to ignore this in his speech. He did not even had the common courtesy to say a few words of condolence, even hypocritical, for the hundreds of lives that were lost. While the loco running staff were continuing their agitation and several hundreds of station masters were burning the misfit uniforms, the Minister was blandly stating that the labour relations were cordial. Stupid claims for the railway operation being back on the rails were being made while in reality there were more derailments and accidents. Boastful claims were being made by the Railway Minister which were neither realistic nor realisable in the near future. Capping all for the third time in a row, the rail tariff was increased to fleece the common man. The cost push effect cannot be denied by any one with the result that the real wages of the workers would fall and the paltry gains which the peasantry secured through blood and travail would be wiped out due to increase in the cost of inputs. The Minister this time did not spare even the items of daily necessities like food grains, pulses, sugar, kerosine, edible or

hydrogenated oils, chemical manures etc. This is the inevitable result of the deepening crisis in our economy, which the ruling class wants to pass on to the shoulders of the Common man, if necessary, through ruthless suppression of the struggles.

Fiasco of Planning

The Economic Survey Presented by the Finance Ministry Says :-

“At a time when the demand for rail transport has been expanding with changing traffic configurations, the railways have suffered from a prolonged period of under investment during the past decade.” (Para 3.41 Page 16)

Now the Janata Government is not being blamed. It is the Congress Policies that are being assailed upon. The summary of statistics for the year 1979-80 furnished with the budget paper shows that while during the period from 1950-51 to 1965-66 new wagons were added to its fleet at the rate of 10 thousand per year, all these years from 1966-67 onwards only 2,500 wagons per year were acquired, throwing the entire engineering and wagon building industry in the crisis. There were series of lock-outs and closures in this field during the past 15 years. Now 13 thousand wagons will be acquired this year, while it is proposed to acquire 50 thousand wagons during the Sixth Plan though the requirement is of 100 thousand wagons. This is the major defect for which the railways are unable to lift the freight which is offered to them.

Only a fortnight back, this Railway Minister had admitted that a working group had assessed that the need-based

minimum requirement for the railways during the Sixth Five-Year Plan (of course excluding need based minimum wages for railway workers who are the lowest paid amongst the organised sector of workers today) would be Rs. 11,817 crores. But the Planning Commission had only allotted Rs. 5000 crores for which the Plan targets would have to be pruned down. But while presenting the budget the Minister said that the outlay would be increased from Rs. 762 crores last year to Rs. 980 crores this year which reflects a 29% increase. But he conveniently forgot to mention that oil prices have been increased, coal prices are being increased and the Government has sanctioned a 46% increase in the prices of wagons. These were done very recently and as such is not included in the rise of wholesale prices which has registered nearly 14 percent between April 80 and January, 81. The sum total of all these would therefore tantamount to a reduced outlay in constant prices, than increase as is being claimed.

So-called Innovative Steps

The Minister trotted out figures of increased loading during the past three months, which he gladly claimed as achievements.

What good are the figures of loading of wagons furnished by the Minister when the Economic Survey points out that for Steel and Cement Plants the average loading declined by 4 and 7.6% respectively? (Para 3.18 Page 13). Even it is claimed that loading of coal for Power Plants has increased, in reality three thermal power plants in Haryana

are closed for want of coal. It is admitted in Parliament on 19.2.81 that till 16.2.81, as many as 240 passenger trains remained cancelled due to shortage of coal.

The Business Standard has reported that by close-circuit method, coal was dumped in many industries even more than their normal requirement, while many sectors suffer from inadequate supply of coal. There had been series of complaints in press that wagons are not being made available to small sector at all.

This is one aspect of the defect in planning which has stunted the growth of Indian Railways. There are other aspects

power, vacuum certificates, resulting in serious accidents like that of Vaniyambadi. Both the Loco Running Staff Association and the Station Masters' Association had warned the authorities about the dangers of these so-called new innovative measures, but these warnings were callously ignored. The Minister did not mention a single word about accidents in his speech at all. Rather he wanted the house to appreciate that efforts are being made to create an infrastructure for running heavier goods trains upto 4500 even 7500 tonnes hauled by multiple engine consists, while the heaviest freight train in Great Britain is only 3304 Tons with multiple Engine consists.

risen from 4918 in 1970-71 to 12189 in 1979-80. The incidence per million train kilometres has risen from 10.5 to 24.27 during the same period. The figure must have been much more during 1980-81 and hence the conspicuous absence of the same in the budget speech.

Squeezing Job Potentiality

This innovative measures together with the drive for 3rd/4th generation computers and other forms of mechanisation would have a devastating effect on employment potentialities in the railways. It is on record that after installation of IBM 1401 computers in railways during 1966-67, the number of posts

To Subsidise a Corrupt, Inefficient and Anti-Working Class Bureuacaracy

also in this regard. The Economic Survey points out "By contrast, the existing capital stock of the railways is inadequate in total quantity and much of it is worn out and in need of replacement. Track renewals have not been carried out to the extent necessary and there is inadequacy in line capacity in many sectors." (Para 3.41, Page-16).

The Railway Minister has also discovered a remedy to this. It is "Jumbo Special". As the quacks often hawk 'cure-all medicines', this innovative measure is supposed to cater to the needs of the people and release line capacity. He seems to consider the backlog in replacement of worn out rolling stock and track renewals as no impediment at all. On the other hand, he had abolished the intermediate train examining points etc. Safety measures like adequate brake

This boastful claim is being made when the average gross load of goods trains in BG has increased from 1068 tonnes in 1950-51 to 1694 tonnes in 1979-80 i.e. an increase of about 60 per cent in 30 years. To talk of 300% or 700% increase may appear to be the ravings of a mad man, unless of course the Minister thinks that the worn out rolling stock would be eliminated and the track renewals made only after several more accidents. Oh yes! Some more lives may be lost. But has not Malthus said so. Hence a true discipline of Malthus is once again re-born.

Rise in Accidents

There was perhaps not a single day during the past three months when the Press did not report railway accidents. The total number of accidents had

were reduced by 11,000 during the next three years while there was an increase of 10% in rolling stock holdings as well as passenger and freight traffic. With more sophisticated machines to come and the proposal of replacing the present computers by 3rd/4th generation computers, which are 1600 times more powerful, there would be practically no employment in railways in the near future. The number of job-seekers in the live register of Employment Exchanges at the end of August 1980 was 15.64 million of whom nearly one million is matriculate or above. The Railway Minister appears to have no sympathy for the unemployed also.

Self Reliance Thrown to Winds

The Minister, while claiming
[On Page Thirteen]

Successful Protest Strike Against LIC Ordinance

THE undemocratic and authoritarian steps of the Central Government in promulgating the black Ordinance unilaterally changing the wages and service conditions of LIC employees evoked countrywide protests from LIC employees as well as Trade Unions and other democratic people. Along with employees in other parts of India, LIC employees all over West Bengal observed protest strikes on 2 and 3 February last and condemned this anti-employee and undemocratic step. LIC employees all over the country observed a successful protest strike on 5 February at the call of the A.I. Insurance Employees' Association when the Central Govt. issued a notification giving effect to the obnoxious provisions of the Ordinance.

The strike was observed successfully throughout West Bengal. In Calcutta, the striking LIC employees demonstrated before all the offices of the LIC and, in the afternoon, a big rally was held before the Jeevan Prakash building which was attended by thousands of LIC employees in processions. The rally was addressed by Sunil Maitra, M.P. Joint Secretary of the AIIEA and other Trade Union leaders including the President of the BMS. The rally demanded immediate withdrawal of the hated ordinance and voiced the determination of the LIC employees to wage a relentless united struggle to resist this offensive against the employees.

The wage-freeze offensive of the Centre against the LIC employees has also evoked strong protests and condemnation from Left political parties and Trade

Unions. Jyoti Basu, Vice-President CITU and Chief Minister of West Bengal has protested against the promulgation of the Ordinance which was done unilaterally without consulting the employees. Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary, CITU-West Bengal Committee in a statement, protested against the ordinance and called upon all workers and employees to come forward in support of the struggle of the LIC employees. Naresh Das, General Secretary, Bank Employees Federation, West Bengal condemned the wage-freeze offensive of the Centre against salaried employees and pledged that the Federation will join the united struggle of other sections of the working class to resist this offensive. Earlier, on 3 February, a protest rally joined by over 5000 Bank employees was held at Calcutta at the call of the Bank Employees Federation, West Bengal to protest against the LIC Ordinance. Addressed by Santi Bhattacharya of the LIC Employees Association and Naresh Pal and Naresh Das, President and General Secretary of the Federation, the rally demanded immediate scrapping of the Ordinance.

ITC Workers Observe Successful Strike

AT the call of the All India ITC Workers' Federation, workers and employees of the Indian Tobacco Company observed a successful strike all over India on 5 February last demanding re-in statement of 58 retrenched workers of the Bangalore unit, recognition of the Federation, scrapping of all rationalisation and automation measures, settlement of charter of demand of different units etc. All the workers of the Kidderpore unit of the ITC joined the strike which proved a complete success.

Trade Unions Pledge Support to Locomen's & LIC Employees' Struggle.

AT a meeting held in Calcutta on 6 February last, representatives of twenty Trade Unions and mass organisations condemned the anti-worker and anti-employees policies of the Central Government and the repression let loose on the Locomen. They pledged all-out support to the mass casual leave movement by Locomen for their just demands. They condemned the repression let loose on them by the Central Government and Railway authorities and demanded immediate withdrawal of victimisation measures against the Locomen and settlement of their just demands through negotiations with the leaders of the movement. The meeting also condemned the recent LIC Ordinance and the offensive against the striking employees of the Bangalore-based Public Sector Undertakings. The meeting called upon the working class to build up a united movement to resist the authoritarian offensive of the Central Government.

The meeting was attended by Niren Ghosh (CITU), Bhowani Roy Chowdhury (AITUC) P. Maitra (BMS), Prasanta Dasgupta (TUCC), Arabinda Ghosh (12th July Committee), Dipen Ghosh (Co-ordination Committee of Central Govt. Employees), Sukomal Sen (Co-ordination Committee of State Govt. Employees), Naresh Das (Bank Employees' Federation) Amiya Chatterjee (Mercantile Federation) and leaders of BPBEA, AIIEA, Central Fisheries Corporation Employees, LIC Workers' Union, Eastern Railway Workers' Union, A.I. Railway Employees' Confederation etc.

Engineering Workers Demonstrate Demand- ing Rre-opening of Closed Mills

AT the call of the Federation of Metal & Engineering Workers' Union (CITU), thousands of Engineering Workers assembled on February 11 last before the office of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta to demand re-opening of closed and sick factories. Addressing the rally, Santi Ghatak, General Secretary of the Federation and Rabin Mukherjee MLA explained how the Employers of Engineering factories were resorting to illegal closure and lock-outs on flimsy and concocted grounds to deprive the workers of their legitimate and hard-won rights and to impose more workload, and to reduce working complement through retrenchments. As a result, 30 to 40 Engineering factories are now lying closed in the State throwing out more than 30 thousand workers, Besides more than a thousand workers have become jobless due to the closure of many small factories in Howrah. They charged that most of these factories obtained huge loans from Banks and financial institutions on the basis of wrong and inflated figures of production, which has been squandered by them on unproductive purposes. On the other hand, in most cases they do not deposit their shares of the workers' ESI and P.F. moneys and have even misappropriated the workers' share of the contributions.

After the rally, a deputation met the representatives of the Association of Indian Engineering Industry and submitted a memorandum demanding immediate lifting of the lock-outs and closures and withdrawal of layoffs.

For the First Time Pay Scales Recommended for Jute Workers

AS per the terms of Tripartite Settlement arrived at on 22 February, 1979, the Government of West Bengal constituted a Committee to go into the question of grade and scale of pay and for restructuring of piece rate wages in the Jute industry. The Committee's recommendations have recently been circulated to all concerned. For the first time pay scales without ceiling have been recommended for the workers.

Earlier attempts of the unions to secure a time-scale of pay for all jute workers had failed. Though most of the jute mill workers never enjoyed a time-scale, their wages were of course revised from time to time with lumpsum rise in wages. Pay scales were available to only clerical staff.

In respect of time and piece rated workers, the Committee has recommended that all interim increases made from time

5-Month Long Closure in Life Pharmaceutical Factories

THE management of the Life Pharmaceuticals have kept their three factories in West Bengal, the Head Office-closed for the last five months inflicting untold hardships on the workers and employees. Last year the workers could realise bonus at the rate of 16.5 per cent. But this year the management refused to concede more than 10.1 per cent inspite of larger production and sales. The workers led by the CITU Union refused to accept the lower bonus and demanded a negotiated settlement. The management, without going in for negotiation, declared an illegal closure of the factory. □

to time in wages including the suggestion for merger of a part of dearness allowance with the basic wages by the Wage Board and the succeeding Tripartite Agreement of 1969, 1972, 1974 and 1979 should be merged with the existing basic wage of workers in order to arrive at a reconstructed new basic wage. These basic wages will be subject to 208 hours of work in a month and will form the basis for his eligibility to a particular grade and scale suggested hereinafter by this Committee. In the case of monthly rated employees also such increases have been absorbed in the initial basic wages.

The Committee recommended compression of existing 37 wage rates to seven and suggested appropriate fitment in scales. It also recommended that all the grades and scales of wages be kept open so that absence of promotional possibilities do not lead to stagnation at the ceiling of a grade. In the case of piece rate workers, the Committee has recommended that a piece-rated worker should be paid full back wages at his revised basic wage rate for the hours he remains idle for no fault of his.

Primary teachers possessing requisite qualification will be entitled to the grades and scales of pay approved by Government of West Bengal.

The Committee recommended that its recommendations should be effective from 1 March, 1980. This is the first time since independence that such recommendations have been sent for Government approval. The Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union is studying the pros and cons of the recommendations. □

Indian Seamen Win Their Just Demands

In Calcutta Port, despite barbaric attacks by the owners of Greek Flag Vessel m. v. "AGHIOS GERASSIMOS" and the authorities, its ten Indian Seamen, fought unitedly, launched strike struggle on board, detained the sailing of the vessel for 10 days under the leadership of the Forward Seamen's Union of India (CITU) and successfully earned all their unpaid dues and benefits of about Rs. 1.5 lakh including Railway fare and Victually Allowance.

All these years, despite repeated vindictive attitude of the Government of India, NUSI's gangster attacks, coercion and victimisation, Indian Seamen have carried on many heroic strike struggles, detention and stop sailing of vessels both in foreign and Indian ports protesting against sub-standard wages, sub-human living conditions aboard vessels and at shore, under-manning and excessive work-load, ill treatment and no safety of life at sea, no service and social security, no pension and unemployment benefit, no medical as well as family benefit, lack of supply of hygienic food and water at sea and in ports etc.

Recently on 30 December 1980, the leadership of the Bombay-Based NUSI shed crocodile tears for payment of ILO Minimum Wage of 115 pounds (over Rs. 2000) to Indian seamen and criticised the anti-seamen statement of Union Minister of Shipping & Transport.

Unfortunately the said leadership of NUSI, Bombay, pitilessly allowed to be victimised all the striking Indian Seamen because of their earnings of "International Rate of Wages and Benefits" in foreign ports with the assistance of foreign

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	1980			State/Centre	1980		
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.		Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa			
Gudur	388	410	418	Barbil	369	379	390
Guntur	429	436	431	Sambalpur	443	438	422
Hyderabad	109	417	414	Punjab			
Assam				Amritsar	437	442	425
Digboi	421	414	416	Rajasthan			
Doom Dooma	359	367	357	Ajmer	423	432	433
Labac	344	344	325	Jaipur	445	448	443
Mariani	346	359	356	Tamil Nadu			
Rangapara	370	370	362	Coimbatore	420	429	435
Bihar				Coonoor	408	411	422
Jamshedpur	379	389	379	Madras	388	398	404
Jharia	386	392	382	Madurai	413	429	435
Kodarma	427	430	426	U.P.			
Monghyr	448	444	426	Kanpur	405	402	405
Noamundi	389	391	377	Saharanpur	419	419	414
Gujarat				Varanasi	467	470	475
Ahmedabad	379	381	377	West Bengal			
Bhavnagar	410	418	408	Asansol	421	428	423
Haryana				Calcutta	39	397	379
Yamunanagar	436	445	432	Darjeeling	350	352	343
J. & K.				Howrah	385	383	375
Srinagar	415	427	421	Jalpaiguri	353	349	332
Karnataka				Raniganj	408	414	410
Ammathi	426	434	419	Delhi	438	436	430
Bangalore	439	453	449	Other Centres*			
Chikamagalur	410	420	422	Berhampur ('49)	583	594	579
Kolar G.F.	415	420	425	Cuttack ('49)	505	512	525
Kerala				Jabalpur ('49)	532	541	539
Alleppey	413	416	414	Beawar ('51-52)	511	516	514
Alwaye	404	416	419	Tripura (1961)	355	357	364
Mundakayam	408	419	428	H.P. (1965)	299	303	308
Madhya Pradesh				Goa (1966)	292	296	301
Balaghat	414	419	424	Bhilai (1966)	275	275	282
Bhopal	410	410	413	Bhilwara ('66)	262	264	264
Gwalior	432	430	423	Chhindwara ('66)	232	232	228
Indore	422	428	428	Kothagudem ('66)	268	271	273
Maharashtra				Rourkela ('66)	289	293	293
Bombay	400	402	408	All India ('49)	493	500	496
Nagpur	401	405	404	-do- ('60)	406	411	408
Sholapur	408	419	422				

Figures in bracket

indicate base year.

Seamen's Unions, affiliated to International Transport Workers' Federation. In a statement on 4 February General Secretary of the FSUI, Ashutosh Banerjee remarked, if the NUSI's stand is so much pro-Indian Seamen, then why have they not called for world wide united struggles It is because, he said, basically their stand is pro-shipowners and not for united struggles of seamen to eliminate wage-discrimination. □

Coffee Workers Conference

THE 12th All India Conference of the Coffee Board Labour Union was held in Madras on 11-13 December which adopted several resolutions on their demands.

The Conference elected an Executive Committee with E. Balanandan, MP, as President and M.A. Jaffer as General Secretary. □

Railway Budget

[From Centre Pages]

laurels for the two subsidiaries RITES and IRCON and the technological advance by RDSO, had no words for self-reliance. On the other hand he admitted that World Bank Loan of 190 million dollars has been accepted for modernisation of workshops. The press reports indicate the negotiations are on for another loan of Rs. 1,200 crores for electrification of rail traction. Even today nearly one third of the Diesel Loco parts and fittings and one fourth of Electric Loco parts are imported from foreign. Even forms and stationery worth Rs. 1.1 crore are imported. Such is the sorry state of affairs of the railway Ministry.

Proposed Increase in Rail Tariff

It is in this background that the Minister has proposed a heavy dose of increase in rail tariff to the extent of Rs. 356.26 crores. This is third in a row and the highest on record. In freight charges items of daily necessities like foodgrains, pulses, sugar, kerosine, edible or hydrogenated oil, chemical manures etc. have not been spared. The cost push effect as a result of this cannot be denied by anybody. This would cause a fall in real wages of the workers because full neutralisation of rise in prices by grant of D.A. is not given to the workers. Consequential rise in the cost of inputs will virtually wipe out the gains which the peasantry secured through bitter struggles very recently.

As far as passenger fares are concerned, the Second Class passengers have been treated shabbily as the reservation charges have been increased by 300% for sitting and 700% for sleeping accommodation and

supplementary charges for superfast trains by 200% while on these items the increase virtually amounts to subsidise the rich at the cost of poor. It is all the more pronounced because while the out lay for 1st class coaches is 75% more than the second class, the revenue is just between 10 and 20 percent more, curiously a traveller in Janata Express has to pay more than one travelling by superfast trains in second class. This is the attitude of the Government though it never stops shedding crocodile tears for the poor.

Labour Relations

One is amazed to note the statement of the Railway Minister on the subject. On the day he presented the budget more than 500 loco running staff were dismissed with an equal number having been retired compulsorily and another 500 in jail. While about 30,000 locomen were in mass sick live movement. Initially over 50,000 had joined the struggle. On the next day hundreds of the station masters, despite ban on leave, reached the Boat Club to burn the misfit uniforms and press their demands. Through out 1980, there were series of agitations for

which the Economic Survey had to say that "there has been a significant decline in industrial discipline with persistent agitations and go-slows affecting work". This start reality is sought to be ignored. The fact is that out of 15.51 lakh permanent and about 3 lakh casual labourers, the two recognised Federations, AIRF & NFIR have claimed a membership of 12.2 lakh which has not been verified by the labour department at any stage. The remaining 6 lakh and more railwaymen are organised in various unions and category-wise associations who do not have any opportunity to present their demands at all. This is the root cause for which the unrest among railwaymen is spreading. The "Freedom of Association" and "Right to Organise" is not available to the railway workers. So if they press for any demand they are ruthlessly suppressed.

The Industrial Disputes Act, the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act and various other laws are but dead letters to the Railway Ministry. Even the AIRF has expressed dissatisfaction over the functioning of permanent negotiating machi-

[On Page sixteen]

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News in Brief

Firing on Farmers Condemned :

The Bihar State Committee of CITU has condemned the firing on farmers on 6 February who had organised a dharna near Project Manager's office in Central Coal Balrampur Project near Hazaribagh. These farmers were forcibly evicted from their land in Urimari village and they were demanding employment. They were left with no work after eviction. In the firing nearly ten farmers were killed and several injured.

The Bihar CITU in a statement on 12 February demanded immediate dismissal of the Chief Security Officer of CCL and the General Manager of the Project along with the suspension of other officers responsible for firing. It also demanded adequate compensation to the families of the deceased and injured farmers and judicial inquiry into the incident. It appealed to all trade unions to fight against mechanisation in coal industry so that evicted farmers are able to get employment.

Rickshaw Drivers Demonstrate : The rickshaw drivers in Patna demonstrated on 27 January against police repression. The police lathi-charged and injured many peaceful demonstrators and arrested many of them. The Bihar CITU, on 28 January condemned the lathi-charge and demanded an end to repression on the workers.

Hunger-Strike by Hard Coke Workers : The Workers of Continental Hard Coke in Hazaribagh District are on relay hunger strike from 1 January protesting against the termination of services of 107 workers. The Bihar CITU has demanded the reinstatement of all the workers.

Bihar State Electricity Workers Convention : Bihar State

Vidyut Parishad Field Kamgar Union in its Working Committee meeting decided to hold its 4th Annual Convention on 8-10 March at Patna. P. Ramamurti, M. P., General Secretary, CITU will inaugurate the Convention. On the last day of the Convention a demonstration will be organised at Vidyut Bhawan to press for their long standing demands.

Contract Workers on Strike : More than ten thousand workers of Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) are on strike from 12 February demanding abolition of Contract Labour System and implementation of Tripartite agreement in steel industry. All the contract workers under the leadership of CITU and AITUC in a joint struggle opposed the anti-workers policies of the management.

Earlier, the workers had brought out a torch light procession and women workers organised a dharna on 6 February. On 16 February the workers, demonstrating peacefully were lathi-charged and arrested. Chandi Prasad, the General Secretary, Bihar CITU, in a statement on 16 February supported the demands of contract workers and condemned the lathi-charge and indifferent attitude of labour commissioner and authorities.

UDH Workers' Demands Settled: The workers of Universal Drugs House (P) Ltd., Patna, under the leadership of Universal Drugs House Workers Union (CITU) have won a long drawn battle against the management through a Settlement on 24 January. The workers were struggling for a year in support of their charter of demands. The struggle including work to rule and one day token strike compelled the management to sign the agreement.

As per settlement, the workers got four grades, Rs. 70 as rise in wages, Rs. 1.50 as tiffin allowance and all casual workers have been made permanent from 1 February, 1981.

Mismanagement in Haryana Concast : The Haryana Polysteel Workers Union in its meeting on 10 February has urged upon the State and Central Governments to order a CBI enquiry into the functioning of Haryana Concast Ltd (A State Government Undertaking) at Hissar.

The Union also condemned the anti-worker policies of the management which has resulted into termination of about 6 workers, suspension of 15 workers and charge-sheets against about a dozen workers. It demanded immediate withdrawal of all the termination and suspension orders.

Cases Pending with Labour Court : More than 500 cases have been lying unattended to at Rohtak Labour Court for the last two years. The Haryana State Committee of CITU in a statement on 11 February expressed its concern over it and said that the appointment of political persons as Presiding Officers of Labour Courts have added further misery for the poor workers.

It demanded appointment of permanent Judicial Officers for heading labour courts and arrangements for clearing arrears by appointing additional officers.

Murderous Attack on CITU Leaders : The General Secretary of the U.P. State Committee of CITU, Daulat Ram, in a statement on 19 January condemned the murderous attack on CITU activists in J.K. Jute Mill, Kanpur, Raghunath Pandey and Hausala Singh Tiwari on 18 January by the hired goondas of the management and of the Congress (I). Protesting against this

the workers of the J.K. Jute Mill went on a day's strike on 19 January. He appealed to trade unions to fight unitedly against these tactics of the management and the Congress(I) Government.

Strike in Raja Textile Continues : The indefinite strike of Raja Textile Workers in Rampur is continuing from 24 November, 1980. Harasahay Singh and Daulat Ram, the President and the General Secretary of the U.P. State Committee of the CITU, in a joint statement on 27 January condemned the management for their anti-workers attitude and demanded immediate settlement of the just demands of the workers.

Trade Union Actions in Faridabad : More than 300 workers belonging to CITU and HLU unions organised a dharna on 9-13 February in front of the office of the Deputy Commissioner in Faridabad to press for their demands including judicial inquiry into the firing on 17 October, 1979 and full compensation to the families of the deceased, Rs. 500 as minimum wage and reinstatement of the employees, etc. On 13 February, a memorandum was submitted to the Deputy Commissioner and a rally was also organised.

Earlier, on 2 February nearly 3,000 workers organised a cycle rally in support of these demands.

DMC Workers Demonstrate : Delhi Municipal Corporation employees under the leadership of Municipal Workers Lal Jhanda Union (CITU) organised demonstrations and dharnas from 20 to 23 January at Corporation Headquarter protesting against anti-people and anti-worker policies of the authorities and for their 22-point charter of demands which included bonus, promotion

based on seniority, etc. Instead coming to the negotiation table, the authorities suspended two workers and dismissed one. The Union has demanded immediate bipartite negotiations on their demands and withdrawal of the suspension and dismissal orders.

Growing Influence of Lal Jhanda Union in Delhi

UNDER the banner of General Mazdoor Lal Jhanda Union (CITU), the workers have carried out a number of victorious struggles. Only recently the employees of the Vishal Binding House and Ram Book Binding House won 50 per cent wages for lockout period, continuation of service and three years bonus after two month long struggles.

The workers of Allied Publisher after a month long struggle won 10.5 per cent bonus and other facilities. The workers of Hindustan Eliminators and Indian Pipe Industries are struggling for the reinstatement of their colleagues who were suspended by the management. A number of victorious struggles have earlier been published in these columns.

To stall the increasing influence of the General Mazdoor Lal Jhanda Union, the managements and authorities connived and with the help of police let loose the reign of terror in various industrial areas in Delhi. To protest against the increasing police repression nearly 300 workers demonstrated on January in front of Motinagar Police Station and demanded withdrawal of all false cases against the workers.

On 25 February, a demonstration was organised in front

of the Labour Commissioner Office protesting against rising prices, inadequate ration and police repression.

But a few anti-union workers are trying to disrupt the unity of the workers by publishing false reports which have been countered by the Union General Secretary Puran Chand. However, the influence of the Union is continually growing and more and more workers are coming in its fold.

Assam CITU Meets

A meeting of the Assam State Committee of CITU was held on 13 February of Kokrajar which was presided over by Suren Hazarika, President Assam CITU.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, while inaugurating the meeting, narrated the growing struggles of the working class. Outlining the managements' and government's offensives, he highlighted the growing resistance of the workers against these attacks.

In this meeting, several resolutions were adopted in support of loco running staff and LIC employees' struggles, on trade union and democratic rights and against price rise, etc.

The Assam Tea Workers' Convention was held on 14-15 February which was also presided over by Suren Hazarika. The Convention adopted the resolution against police firing, etc. On 15 February a well attended mass rally was organised.

The Working Class

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AINEF to Fight Back Wage Freeze Policy

THE Central Working Committee of the All India Newspaper Employees Federation held in Bombay on 25-26 January, expressed its strong resentment against the proposals made by the Government of India under Section 12 (2) of the Working Journalists Act to introduce dearness allowance of Rs. 1.30 per point and a cut for 34 points between 329 and 363 index points resulting in a drastic wage cut in the emoluments of the newspaper employees.

The meeting observed that the proposed scheme of D.A. is a politically motivated one and is a violation of wage law determined by the Supreme Court and is brought about with a view to enforcing its wage freeze policy on the Indian working class.

The meeting expressed its grave concern on the implementation of the wage order issued by the government under Section 12 (1) regarding wage scale, house rent allowance and night shift allowance.

The meeting called upon the employees to launch country-wide and continuous struggle to fight back the wage freeze policy of the government and its attacks on the newspaper employees. It also authorised the President and the General Secretary to give a call for strike if the government fails to do justice on the question of D.A., H.R.A. and night shift allowance.

The meeting extended its whole-hearted support to the public sector employees of Bangalore who are on indefinite strike since December last and

condemned the firing which killed four workers on the day of Bundh.

The meeting strongly condemned the disruptive tactics adopted by the newspaper employers all over the country.

The meeting also expressed its concern over illegal closure of Bharat, a Hindi daily, and Bharti Bhandar of Allahabad throwing out nearly 100 employees on the streets. □

Railway Budget

[From Page Thirteen]

nery. The railway workers, being the lowest paid amongst the organised sector, the AIRF had served a 10 point charter of demands by observing a "Demands Day" on 28 November 1980 last. So not only the unrecognised unions or category-wise associations who are aggrieved, the resentment amongst those following the recognised Federations also is gathering momentum. The anti-working class attitude of the railway ministry shown during the struggle of locomen, means that the increase in rail tariff is not only to subsidise the rich at the cost of the poor but also to keep a thoroughly corrupt, anti-working class bureaucracy in office. □

FORM IV

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Place of Publication | 6, Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110001 |
| 2. Periodicity of Publication | Monthly |
| 3. Printers Name | M.K. Pandhe |
| Whether citizen of India ? | Yes |
| Address | 6, Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110001 |
| 4. Publishers's Name | M.K. Pandhe |
| Whether citizen of India ? | Yes |
| Address | 6, Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110001 |
| 5. Editor's Name | M. K. Pandhe |
| Whether citizen of India ? | Yes |
| Address | 6, Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110001 |
| 6. Name and Addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shoreholders holding more than one percent of the total capital. | Centre of Indian Trade Unions,
6, Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110001. |

I, M.K. Pandhe, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/—M.K. Pandhe
Publisher

Dated February 25, 1980

CITU Secretariat Meeting

A meeting of the office-bearers of the CITU will be held in CITU Central Office, New Delhi, on 17 March, 1981 at 10.30 A.M.

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