



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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Fight the Wage Freeze

B. T. Ranadive, *President, CITU*

AFTER A LOT OF PROPAGANDIST TALK ABOUT A national wage policy, the Indira Govt. has at last come out in its true colours. On July 6, it issued an ordinance freezing wages and dearness allowances. All additional wages and allowances payable to an employee for one year in pursuance of any wage revision would be impounded in a compulsory deposit account. The ordinance also provides for the compulsory deposit of one half of the additional dearness allowances payable here after for a period of two years.

The workers and employees cannot enjoy any wage rise in this period ; they have to sacrifice 50 percent of the D.A. to which they will be entitled because of rising prices.

The Govt. undertakes no responsibility to control prices, keep them at constant level. On the other hand, it is certain that prices will continue to rise. There is besides no guarantee that the workers will be free to same wage increase or DA after a period of Two years. These Ordinances may continue like the DIR for years.

The ordinances therefore constitute a shameless attack on the workers and employees' wages and D.A. telling them that their earnings must be reduced because the Govt. is unable to control the prices and profits of the profiteers.

To appear impartial, the Govt. has passed another ordinance limiting the rate of dividends, appearing to strike at the capitalists. However, its real effect is to put more money in the hands of the big tycoon to expand their exploitative activities.

It is sheer hypocrisy on the part of the Govt, to parade the ordinances as an anti-inflationary measure. Have wages and D.A. been the cause of the rising prices ? For years now, notwithstanding the dearness allowances real wages of employees and workers have been going down spreading misery all-round. Helped by official policies, capitalist profiteers, traders, and speculators have been forcing the prices upwards and the dearness allowance is unable to keep pace with them. The rise in D.A. is the consequence of the price rise whose origin is elsewhere and which has now gathers its own momentum. It is plain for ordinary mortals to

see that if prices were controlled and the cost of living did not rise, where would be the occasion for D.A. rise. But in their base perversity the Congress rulers seek to present the D.A. and workers' wages as the cause of the price rise and declare the workers and employees to be the guilty party and exonerate the capitalists, the speculators and the Govt.

Every claim which the Govt. of India makes is a bogus claim. How much money do they expect to immobilise through this malicious attack on the workers and employees? The Govt. has decided to impound the dearness allowance of 18 million workers and employees; 6.1 million in the private sector and 11.9 million in the public sector, consisting of 3 million Central Govt. employees, 4.6 million State Govt. employees, 2.5 million employees in the Public Sector undertakings and 1.6 million employees of local bodies.

By attacking these millions of people who are unable to make both ends meet, who are a prey to disease and starvation, and who have not got the wherewithal either to feed their children properly or educate them, the Govt. hopes to immobilise Rs. 450 crores in one year.

Will it bring the prices down? What chance is there of prices coming under control when there are more than Rs. 10,000 crores in the parallel black-market economy which the Govt. dares not attack because its promoters are among the distinguished patrons of the ruling party?

The whole game is to transfer the burdens of the inflation

crisis to the common man; force the common man to reduce consumption of necessities of life; push him below the starvation line and forcibly redistribute the national income in favour of the monopolists, the capitalists and the landlords.

The steady increase in indirect taxes on all essential commodities of people's consumption; the deliberate policy of resorting to deficit financing as a way of finding resources for the successive five year plan, the liberal accommodation which the Banks are permitted to give the stockholders of the agricultural and industrial products have been leading to higher and higher prices.

This continuous deficit financing and speculation have created a parallel economy which holds the country to ransom. The inflation has been further intensified because of our country's close economic links and dependence on the inflation-ridden economies of imperialist countries

Every one knows that the landlords are earning rich returns through Govt. sanctioned increase of foodgrains and other prices. But the Govt. dares not mop up their excessive incomes as an anti-inflationary measure. On the contrary, it levies additional tax burdens on the rural masses.

The CITU denounces the new measures as the first official step towards a wholesale wage freeze and wage reduction.

The mass of people including the working class requires immediate relief from the rising prices. They require lowering of the prices of necessities of life and bring down the general price level.

To achieve this in the first

place a determined attack against the black money economy is required. Its capacity to play havoc with prices must be destroyed. It is futile to talk of fighting inflation unless deficit financing is done away with and heavy indirect taxation of the Govt. which forms a substantial part of the prices of some necessities of life and articles of common consumption, is drastically reduced. One of the basic sources of the rise in the cost of living is the price of foodgrains. To control this Govt. must compulsorily procure the foodgrains stocks of landlords and traders at reduced prices while attracting the peasants to sell their produce by offering special bonus rate. It is further necessary to smash the control of speculators, monopolists and landlords over raw materials and drastically reduce the huge profits of the monopolists.

The CITU calls upon all Central Trade Unions organisations of employees and other sections to join together in resisting this offensive on the wages and salaries of workers, employees, teachers, professors in short on the living conditions of the common man. It fully supports the call given by Central Trade Unions and National Federations to observe a week of protest from 9th to 15th August against the new ordinances. Only a united movement will force the Govt. to withdraw these measures and place the burden of fighting inflation on the exploiting interests.

Let the united movement raise its voice against this monstrous offensive against the toilers earnings. Let it develop sufficient strength to defeat the designs of the patrons of monopolists, landlords and black-marketeers.

Against Victimisation Of Railwaymen And Wage Freeze Ordinance

United Movement Of Entire Working Class Planned

OVER 60 representatives belonging to several trade union organisations and national federations who attended the meeting convened by the NCCRS in New Delhi on 20 and 21st July agreed on a joint programme of action to express active solidarity with railwaymen in their struggle for trade union rights and against victimisation. In another meeting held on 21st July, the Central trade unions agreed for a national campaign against wage freeze. The decisions of the two meetings constitute a landmark in the united movement of the working class in India.

The disruption in the Indian T. U. movement that acquired a new shape after the constitution of the National Council of Trade Unions continued for more than two years. The formation of the UCTU was a fitting reply to the disruption and a new unity emerged under its banner. While this unity continued to grow the National Council began to show cracks within itself each constituent speaking in different voices.

The meeting convened by the NCCRS brought several organisations together when the constituents of the UCTU and AITUC and other national federations came together to chalk out a common programme of action.

The constituents of the NCTU like INTUC did not join the meeting because of their open support to the repression on rail-

way workers and the wage freeze ordinance. The HMS also is up in arms against the leadership of AITUC for its treacherous role during the railway strike.

When the erosion in the standard of living of the working class was rapid and the attacks on the trade union and democratic rights of the workers were more ferocious, a new awareness of unity developed among the workers. The meeting at New Delhi was a reflection of that awareness.

Apart from the constituents of the UCTU and organisations friendly to UCTU, this time the representatives of AITUC, All India Bank Employees Federation, the Gupta group of the NFPTE, AIRF and other organisations participated in the meeting.

George Fernandes, Convener of the NCCRS who presided over the meeting explained at length the attacks on the railwaymen as well as Central and state Government employees.

Over 11 lakh railwaymen have been given a break in service, about 30,000 permanent and 50,000 casual workmen have been dismissed or removed from service, thousands of trade union activists transferred from the workplaces to distant centres, hundreds of railwaymen are still in police custody, cases are pending in several courts against 25,000 railwaymen and others for participating in the strike.

Never before such a vindictive action on a massive scale in a trade union dispute was resorted to in the past.

About 70,000 other Central Government employees who went on strike on May 10 in support of their demands and expressed their solidarity with the striking railwaymen and more than one lakh State Government employees in Maharashtra and West Bengal who joined strike on May 15 in support of railwaymen also have been given break in service. Dismissals, supersession and prosecutions are also galore against these employees and their leadership. Show cause notices have been given to several unions of Central Government employees for withdrawal of recognitions for the "crime" of supporting the railway strike. Employees in banks and several other establishments in public and private sectors and facing various forms of victimisation and court actions for going on solidarity strike on May 15.

Fernandes also referred to the Ordinance on Wage Freeze and proposed that all the trade unions should jointly campaign against the victimisation and Ordinance.

The representatives of the AITUC however objected for a joint campaign on both the issues. They raised several frivolous arguments to support their claims. The representatives of most of the Central trade unions and national federations however supported the proposal

of Fernandes. However, in order to preserve unity it was agreed that the meeting should discuss the problems of railwaymen and for the purpose of discussion on the wage freeze a separate meeting should be convened. The AITUC leadership however took care to see that their difference of opinion with others was published in Patriot.

After a detailed discussion the meeting adopted a resolution pointing out that the attack on the railwaymen was a "part of a planned attack against the country's working class movement launched by the Congress Government and the employers". It referred to the recent attacks on the employees of IAC and LIC as well as on doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers etc. which according was "nothing but a rehearsal in repression".

The meeting condemned the most brutal repression against the railwaymen and their families and the strike breaking role played by the NFIR leadership. It also denounced in strong terms the "rewards" conferred on the black legs by the railway authorities.

The meeting therefore demanded that the Government should immediately (a) start negotiations with the NCCRS on the railwaymen's demands; (b) condone the break in service imposed on the railwaymen and other Central and State Government employees; (c) take back in service all workmen removed, dismissed or discharged from service; (d) withdraw all pending warrants, release all arrested persons and withdraw all court

cases against railwaymen and others; (e) stop transfers and other forms of harassment and victimisation; and (f) withdraw all show cause notices served on recognised unions in the central services seeking to cancel their recognition and open negotiations with the Government employees on their demands.

The meeting further condemned the machinations of the Government in disrupting the NCCRS which was built by the railway workers with great sacrifices and resolved to strengthen the NCCRS as a forum of unity of all railwaymen.

The meeting called upon all trade unions in the country to organise "Defend Railwaymen's T.U. Rights Conventions" at the State and district levels. It decided to observe August 9 as Railwaymen's and Government employees T.U. Rights Day by holding meetings, rallies, dharnas etc. at zonal, divisional and principal centres of railway activity.

The meeting gave a call to all the workers to contribute generously to provide momentary relief to victimised railwaymen and to form legal aid committees wherever such committees have not been formed.

All the central trade unions were also called upon by the meeting to make representation to ILO "to send a fact finding mission to India to make on the spot study of the suppression of trade union rights in general and the repression against railwaymen in particular.

The meeting warned the Government of India that if it did not end its vindictive policy towards the railwaymen and the Government employees immediately, "the working class movement will have no other alternative but to launch a sustained struggle in defence of the trade union rights of the working people of the country".

The resolution concluded, "The historic and unprecedented strike by the railwaymen has created a new sense of unity in the ranks of the working class movement. The one-day nation wide general strike on May 15 in support of the railwaymen was a demonstration of this new sense of unity of purpose and action. It is necessary to consolidate this unity and move forward as only through bigger and wider united struggles the working people will succeed in defending their rights and improving their conditions".

Another meeting of central

LABOUR HANDBOOK

(A CITU Publication)

It is regretted that due to unavoidable reasons, the publication of the Handbook has been delayed. It is expected to be available for sale by the last week of August, 1974. (Price Rs. 5.00, Postage Extra).

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trade unions and national federations was held on 21 July evening in the same place to discuss the ordinance on wage freeze. The representatives of the AITUC who expressed their readiness to discuss the question with other central trade unions did not participate in the meeting. Though their representatives were present when the second meeting was fixed the letter sent by the AITUC mentioned that it did not know who convened the meeting.

After a detailed discussion, the meeting decided to organise an all India campaign to resist the wage freeze offensive. The resolution adopted in the meeting states, "For what the Government is doing is nothing short of a concerted bid to starve the workers and their families by a further reduction in their real earnings which have already been on the decline during the last several years. The entire trade union movement must immediately get together and chalk out an effective counter-offensive to defeat the Government's attack against the working people".

The meeting therefore decided to observe Anti-wage freeze ordinance week from August 9 to August 15 by holding meetings demonstrations, dharnas etc. It also decided to stage massive demonstrations before Parliament and State Assemblies and other Government offices on August 9.

The meeting further called upon the unions of all affiliations to organise with immediate effect continuous demonstrations before every factory, office and other

establishments protesting against the wage freeze.

All the participants enthusiastically welcomed the proposal of the All India Insurance Employees Federation to hold a National Convention against wage freeze in New Delhi on 28th August. The AIIEA has agreed to bear the expenses in connection with holding the Convention and assist in making arrangements for the Convention. The Convention will set up a National Campaign Committee to carry forward the movement.

The meeting decided to set up a Preparatory Committee consisting of representatives of all Central trade union organisations and national federations to organise the National Convention and to do all work incidental to it. George Fernandes was elected as a Convener of the Preparatory Committee which would hold the meeting in first week of August.

The meeting requested the AITUC leaders to reconsider their steps and join the campaign so that the Government is confronted with a common stand of the entire working class movement. It also appealed to INTUC "to make common cause with the organised trade union movement in the country".

George Fernandes met S. A. Dange, General Secretary AITUC who is stated to have given his consent to the resolution. However, the AITUC has yet to come out for an unequivocal support to the joint movement on these questions.

As per decision of the meeting

the All India Convention would "plan the details of the programme of massive struggles and strike action".

These decisions, if implemented fully will create a favourable atmosphere for building a powerful movement against the victimisation in railways and black ordinance on wage freeze. The success of this Convention will be an important step towards strengthening the unity of the entire working class movement which is the need of the hour.

Let all the central trade unions and national federations exert all their influence and strength to implement the programme and mobilise all their resources to make the Convention a grand success.

(The CITU was represented in these meetings by Samar Mukherjee, Niren Ghosh. Monoranjan Roy, Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury, Md. Ismail and M. K. Pandhe).

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Joint Trade Union Convention against Black Ordinances

AT a meeting of the representatives of five Central Trade Unions CITU, BPTUC, two UTUC's and TUCC, held on July 16 it was decided to Build up State-wide movement against the Black ordinance. As a first step, a joint Trade Union Convention will be held at Calcutta on July 31.

State Govt. Employees Plan Movement

To protest against the wage-freeze and anti-employee policies of the Government, the Co-ordination Committee of State Govt. Employees chalked out a programme of State-wide movement. According to this programme, meetings and Conventions were held in all units throughout the State on July 23 and 25; demonstrations were held at the office gates on July 26; and a Central mass rally and demonstration was held at Calcutta on July 27.

The National Executive of the A.I. State Govt. Employees Federation met in Delhi on July 20-21 to formulate an all India programme of movement on their own demands, as well as united movement with other sections of employees on common issues.

Bata Workers Win Demands

After a 18-day strike, led by the Bata Mazdoor Union, thirteen thousand workers of the Bata Shoe factory forced the management to concede higher wages and other demands. The workers have been agitating for

their 33-point demands including higher wages, D.A., Bonus etc. After all their attempts at a negotiated settlement failed due to the adamant attitude of the management, the workers gave strike notice on May 24, observed a day's strike on June 21 and, when even this failed to move the management, went on indefinite strike from June 28.

The strike was called off after a tripartite settlement was signed on July 15 conceding the major demands of the workers. As a result of this agreement, their wages will rise from Rs. 243 to Rs. 316.

State-wide Strike and Mass Deputation of Tailors on August 18

A state Convention of tailors was held in Calcutta on July 18 under the auspices of the West Bengal Tailors' Union. Presided over the veteran CITU leader Md. Ismail, M.P. the Convention was addressed by Niren Ghosh, Monoranjan Roy, Santi Ghatak, Abul Hasan and other CITU leaders. Com. Abul Baser, General Secretary of the Union placed a detailed report on the miserable conditions and intense exploitation of 3 lakh tailors of the State.

The Convention adopted a 5-point Charter of Demands and a programme of movement including observance of a 'Demands Week' from July 31, mass deputation and submission of Memorandum on August 7 and a one-day State-wide strike with mass deputation on August 14.

Mass Lay-off in Bengal Paper Mill

The management of Bengal Paper Mill at Ranigunge laid off one thousand workers from July 21 after a boiler went out of Commission. Earlier, for several days, the management resorted to lay-off of about 200 workers of different departments on one pretext or another. A tripartite meeting was scheduled to be held on July 25, but even before that Police have started arresting leaders of the CITU Union at the instance of the management.

Joint Movement of Teachers and Non-teaching Employees Planned

At a Convention held in Calcutta on July 14, under the joint auspices of all organisations and Associations of teachers and non-teaching employees of all sectors—College & University, Secondary and Primary, a programme of joint movement was chalked out to realise a 16-point common Charter of demands. Prof. Santosh Mitra, Vice-President of West Bengal College & University Teachers' Association presided.

The programme of movement includes—observance of 'Demands Day' on August 30; mass rallies and 6-hour sit-in at Calcutta and district head-quarters on September 20; collection of two lakh signatures in support of the Charter of demands' and Central rally and submission of memorandum to Chief Minister on November 30. Besides, meetings, conventions, public meetings etc. will be jointly organised at district, sub-divisional and lower levels.

CITU State Committees Meet

Tamilnadu

A meeting of the Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU was held at Coimbatore from 28th to 30th June. Comrade K. Ramani, presided and Com. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU guided the deliberations. 31 out of 41 members of the State Committee attended the meeting.

Com. Ramamurti reviewed the present economic situation vis-a-vis the Government's anti-people policies and the increasing attack on the working class and outlined the tasks facing the working class movement.

Com. R. Umanath, General Secretary of the Committee broadly reviewed the major struggles that took place in Tamilnadu since the CITU State Conference. He also pointed out the lessons derived from these struggles and drew the attention of the members to some weaknesses of the movement.

21 members took part in the discussions on the report, after which the Committee adopted the following programme of action :

(a) Three broad-based one-day Conventions of Trade Unions militants to be organised on 11th, 13th, and 15th August at Madras, Madurai and Coimbatore to give them the perspective and orientation towards organising agricultural labour.

(b) To organise unitedly with local NCCRS units, mobilisations for successful observance of the Protest Week (22nd to 29th) to organise a CITU Fund for Fighting Railwaymen; and to

raise a Relief Fund for Martyr Ramaswamy's family.

(c) To organise State-wide action against rising prices.

(d) To initiate campaigns against Index Fraud and for appointment of an Expert Committee, for full wages to workers for lay-off period due to Power-cut, etc.

Decisions were also taken on programme of action relating to separate industries like Textile, Electricity, Sugar, Beedi, etc.

In the end Com. Ramamurti, while summing up, drew attention of the Committee to the campaign by certain parties on the question of India-Ceylon agreement on Kachathivu and emphasised the need for the CITU Unions to explain to the people to view the issue from the point of friendship between India and Ceylon.

Gujarat

The Gujarat State Committee of the CITU met at Ahmedabad on June 23 under the presidency of Com. Vasant Mahendale. The Committee considered the written reports submitted by its Ahmedabad, Baroda and Bhavnagar units.

The reports pointed out the solidarity actions organised by the three units in support of Railwaymen. In Ahmedabad, a cycle procession on April 21 and several meetings were organised. In Bhavnagar, meetings were organised, handbills were distributed and road posters made in support of the railway strike. A number of meetings were held in Baroda and Godhra, addressed

by Com. Mahendale. At the initiative of the Baroda unit, the May Day rally was organised jointly by CITU, AITUC, HMS and Railway employees. A separate procession was organised by CITU in which agricultural labourers also participated.

The reports also pointed out that a Legal Aid Committee has been set up by the CITU at Ahmedabad with the Co-operation of some leading lawyers.

The State Committee decided to call upon all T.U. cadres in Gujarat to actively campaign in support of victimised Railwaymen. The Committee also decided to call local meetings of CITU militants in Ahmedabad, Baroda and Bhavnagar.

In separate resolutions, the Committee condemned the Central Government's wage freeze policy and warned the Textile workers against the reported move of the Major Mahajan to sign an anti-worker agreement. The Committee decided to hold a Conference of Textile workers to mobilise their opinion on this issue.

West Bengal

A meeting of the West Bengal State Committee of CITU was held in Calcutta on July 19. Md. Ismail, M.P., President of the State Committee presided. The main item on the agenda was the Ordinance on Compulsory Deposit of additional wage and D.A. promulgated by the Government.

While introducing the agenda Monoranjan Ray, M.P., General Secretary of the State Committee emphasised that this was the

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A New Orientation ?

IN the case of Gammon India Ltd. v. Union of India (1), five judges of the Supreme Court have virtually overruled the decision in Jalan Trading Co. v. Mazdur Union (2). In that case, Payment of Bonus Act was challenged by the Company. Some sections were declared ultravires. One of them was section 37 of the Payment of Bonus Act. That section authorised the Government to provide by order for removal of doubts or difficulties in giving effect to the provisions of the Act, but the majority struck it down because according to them it suffered from the vice of excessive delegation. It virtually amounted to abdication of legislative authority in favour of the Executive. Section 37 of the Payment of Bonus Act is in the following terms :

“If any difficulty or doubt arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order published in the Official Gazette, make such provision, not inconsistent with the purposes of this Act as appears to it to be necessary or expedient for the removal of the difficulty or doubt ; and the order of the Central Government in such cases shall be final”.

The majority held that “the section authorises the Government to determine for itself what the purposes of the Act are and to make provisions for removal of doubts and difficulties...If in

giving effect to the provisions of the Act any doubt or difficulty arises, normally it is for the Legislature to remove that doubt or difficulty. Power to remove the doubt or difficulty by altering the provisions of the Act would in substance amount to exercise of legislative authority and that cannot be delegated to an executive authority”.

Mr. Justice Hidayatullah and Mr. Justice Ramaswami dissented from the majority and held that Parliament has stated all that it has to say on the subject of bonus. “Apprehending, how however, that in the application of the new Act doubts and difficulties might arise and not leaving their solution to the Courts with the attendant delays and expense, Parliament has chosen to give power to the Central Government to remove doubts and differences by a suitable order”. According to these judges, therefore, there was no conferral of legislative power on the executive.

Section 34 of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act of 1970 makes comparable provisions to section 37 of the Payment of Bonus Act and reads as follows : “If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions not inconsistent with provisions of this Act, as appears to it to

be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty”.

In the case of Gammon India Ltd. v. Union of India (2) Chief Justice Ray repelled the contention advanced on behalf of the Company that this section was ultravires because it amounted to impermissible delegation of legislative powers.

It may be noticed that terms of this section are almost similar to section 37 of the Payment of Bonus Act. Yet the Chief Justice distinguished the earlier case and held that neither finality nor alteration is contemplated in any order under section 34 of the Act and, therefore, that section does not amount to excessive delegation.

It must be stated that here we find an advance in the attitude of the Supreme Court to social legislation. Analogy can be drawn with the situation in the United States under Roosevelt's New Deal. There, in the face of the mounting crisis and growing offensive of the working people against the economic crisis, Roosevelt initiated various legislations which sought to grant to the working people certain fringe benefits, keeping, of course the capitalist method of appropriation intact. It was a clever adjustment of the bourgeois with the changing times, but the conservative section of the capitalists would not have none of such flexibility and adjustment. The Supreme Court of those days, fell in line with this die-hard section of the capitalists and struck down social legislation on the ground that they violated the due process of law.

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The dynamics of agency led the U. S. Supreme Court beyond the permissible limits. Roosevelt uttered the warning that he would have to "pack" the Court with his nominees if the Supreme Court continued to flout the Congressional directives. Though the actual proposal of "packing" fell through, because it is in the interest of the capitalists to leave some independence with the Courts, the threat was not lost upon the Court. There was a change of attitude and the New Deal legislations began to receive the imprimatur of the Supreme Court.

We do not know as yet whether there has been a change of heart of the judiciary to that extent in India also, after the supersession of the three judges of the Supreme Court in the appointment of the Chief Justice. Some amount of 'plain talking' was also done by the members of the ruling party including the Prime Minister both inside and outside Parliament. The cumulative effect of all this may be felt in the proper quarters.

An important judgement in this new line is the case of Mangalore Ganesh Beedi Works and others v. Union of India and others (4). In this case, the majority repelled all the contentions of the appellants challenging the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966, and held that Parliament had legislative competence in making this Act, and the provisions of the Act are valid and do not offend any provisions of the Constitution.

The point of departure for the learned judges in this case was that the Act is for the welfare of labour and the reason-

ableness or otherwise of the provisions of the Act has to be judged against this standard.

The conditions of employment of Beedi and Cigar workers were so long bedevilled by the undergrowth of contractors and sub contractors under the Principal Employer. Sometimes the principal employer was hidden behind the facade of home-work and cottage industry. The legislation has sought to provide for all contingencies. The Supreme Court, in its former mood, was expected to pass its scissors through many of the provisions of the legislation. It is fortunate that it has not. Only one of the learned Judges, Justice Alagiriswami, has gingerly observed, after pointing out in order to show the difficulties that may be experienced in actual application of the provisions of the Act and he recommended early amendment of the Act to remove those lacunae

Critics may call this a sign of the Supreme Court toeing the line of the ruling party. But looked at from another angle, it is nothing but a restoration of the balance which was threatened to be upset by the cases of the Privy Purse (5) Bank Nationalisation (6) and Golok Nath (7) the last reinforced by the decision in Keshavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (8)

1. *A 1974 S. C. 960*
2. *A 1967 S. C. 691*
3. *In Supra*
4. *1974 (4) S. C. G. 43*
5. *A 1971 SC 530*
6. *A 1970 SC 564*
7. *A 1967 SC 1643*
8. *A 1973 SC 1461*

Arun Prokshh Catterjee

CITU MEETS

(From page seven)

first step towards wage-freeze and the working class must unitedly resist this attack and carry on a sustained and determined struggle.

He reported that at a meeting of the Central Trade Unions—CITU, AITUC, two UTUC's, TUCC and HMP, the following programme was chalked out to develop united struggle against the Ordinance: (a) issue of a joint leaflet; (b) a State-wide Convention on July 31; (c) a day to be observed throughout the State to protest against the Ordinance; and (d) implementation of the decisions to be taken at the Central Trade Unions meeting in New Delhi on July 20-21; Besides these joint programmes, the CITU has decided to publish a booklet and to organise area meeting and Conventions.

Members participating in the discussions stressed the urgent need of organising joint movement against this attack.

Com' Jyoti Basu, Vice-President CITU, while summing up the discussion emphasised the need to educate the working class about the significance of the Ordinance.

A resolution protesting against the Ordinance and endorsing the programme of movement was adopted. The meeting also discussed the need of organising a movement against lay-offs and wage-cuts imposed on the worker as a result of the power crisis. It authorised the Secretariat to draw up a concrete programme of movement on this issue.

Unite All Workers! Develop Fraternal Relations With The People!

(Extracts of the inaugural speech given by Comrade B. T. Ranadive, President CITU, at the A. I. Road Transport Workers Conference held in Calcutta, July 28-30, 1974)

THE All India Road Transport Worker's Conference was held at the A. B. T. A. Hall, Calcutta from July 28th to 30th.

While delivering his inaugural address at the Conference, Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU greeted the Convention on behalf of the CITU and wished its deliberations success. He pointed out that the road transport workers are experiencing the same conditions of distress and misery experienced by other sections of the working class, and said "Our problems are part of the big problems which face our entire class, the working class, and the entire Indian toiling humanity. We confront the same opponents and enemies, the capitalists, employers, landlords and their Government. With the forces of wealth and power arrayed against us, our only weapon is our unity, the class unity of the working class, democratic unity of our fighting people."

Repression

Referring to the repression directed against the railway workers during the recent strike, he said "It is to the honour and glory of the Rly. workers that they unitedly faced this terror and created a new example of working class solidarity and courage. They fought for all of us. They fought on behalf of

the entire trade union movement. I am sure, comrades, you will join me in sending our warm fraternal greetings to the heroic Rly. workers and assure them full support in their struggle."

He continued to add, "Today, in almost every struggle our workers have to face immense repression...The gangster attacks in West Bengal against trade union leaders continue and offices of more than hundred unions affiliated to the CITU are still under the the occupation of these hired anti-socials. And yet the Red Banner marches forward, the workers refusing to bow before terror. The trade union struggle has become an intense class struggle and every section of the workers has to face and defeat the enemy's attack."

Importance in the Economy

Emphasising the vital importance of road transport workers in the country's economy, Ranadive said "By 1969, our strength was estimated to be 11 lakhs and we must have added to it since then. Compare this with the 15 to 17 lakh strength of the railway workers and you will see the weight of our own numbers."

Explaining the important role played by road transport in sustaining the economy, he said—"In 1960-61 road transport carried 17 million tonne kilometres of goods traffic compared

with 88 million carried by the Railways. Road Transport carried 16.2 per cent of the goods traffic when railways carried 83.2 per cent. By 1973-74, road transport carried 65 million tonnes-kilometer or 30.7 per cent compared with Railways 147 million or 69.3 per cent.

In 1960-61 road transport carried 57 million passenger kilometers or 42.2 per cent of the traffic compared with railways 78 million or 57.8 per cent.

By 1973-74 Road transport carried 130 million passenger kilometers or 49.1 per cent of the traffic compared with railways 135 million or 50.9 per cent.

It is clear that had our organisation been properly organised and we combined our forces with that of the Rly. workers in the recent Rly. strike, we both would have won hands down, bringing the authorities to their knees."

Five Year Prospects

He pointed out that according to Planning Commission, the passenger traffic is expected to increase from 130 thousand to 180 thousand passenger Km. between 1973-74 and 1978-79 and goods traffic from 65 thousand million to 110 thousand million tonnes km. during the same period. This will necessitate an increase in number of trucks on the road from 410 thousand to 575

thousand at the end of 1978-79. Similarly, number of buses will need to be increased from 110 thousand to 150 thousand during the same period.

He further pointed out that the Draft of the Fifth Plan envisages "large increase in the demands on bus transport for short distance movement of large volumes of cargo" and "in the field of passenger transport, there is expected to be a substantial step up in the demands for mass transport in metropolitan towns and large cities".

"Thus, alluring prospects of increased employment are being held," he said and added, "But the entire Fifth Plan is now in doldrums and none can say how much of the promised fruits will materialise for the road transport workers".

Unbearable Conditions

Speaking about the unbearable conditions under which road transport workers have to work, Ranadive said, "The goods transport industry still continues to impose exacting and more hazardous conditions of work. It was pointed out to the 1969 Wage Board, that very few drivers and cleaners were in permanent employment and a substantial number of workers in this industry was being kept on temporary or casual basis. The truck drivers and their helpers in most buses had no

timings or fixed duties, no overtime. By and large, these conditions continue today also.

"The workers in the Goods Transport industry had to put in any thing between 12 hours and 14 hours a day and in passenger transport the drivers and conductors remained separated from their families for long hours due to exigencies of service and break downs on the way, etc. Besides, the workers had often to sleep without shelter being responsible for the safety of the vehicle and the cash collections and at many places there were no proper arrangements for rest rooms for the night or for long hours of the day. These conditions exposed before the 1969 Wage Board continue to-day also in many places and establishments."

Low Wages

Referring to the low wages prevailing in the road transport industry and the miserable wages sanctioned by the last Wage Board, he said—"The Board calculated from the available data for public undertakings that the average wage of the unskilled workers (basic wage plus D.A.) was Rs. 117. This average was to go up to only Rs. 130 as a result of the Board's recommendations—an increase of 11%." This, according to the Board, would raise the cost of operations

by only 2.9% in respect of public undertakings where the cost of personnel constitutes only 26.2% of the total cost of operation. "In fact", he said, "it sanctioned wage rates which were lower than the existing rates in many undertakings."

He went on to add, "The Board refused to consider the principle of need-based wage and suggested wage boards with the perspective of reaching the need-based level in a given time-period. It refused to accept the principle of full neutralisation of D. A. and sanctioned a rate which imposed a direct wage cut on the overwhelming majority of the workers."

Taxation Loot

While explaining how the bourgeois-landlord Government was looting huge sums by way of taxation on road transport undertakings to bring down their net profits, he pointed out that in 1960-61 five State undertakings paid 38.9 per cent of their profits as income-tax, which went up to 48.8 per cent in 1965-66. Similarly, sixteen private undertakings paid 44 per cent of their profits as income-tax in 1960-61, which went up to 60.1 per cent in 1964-65.

"It is thus seen," he said, "that 40 to 50% of the surplus produced by us is filched by the bourgeois-landlord Government,

The excuse of no money to meet our demands is thus hollow. A cut in the rapacity of the authorities will leave enough money to meet our legitimate immediate demands”.

Indirect Robbery

He went on to add, “Apart from direct taxation, indirect taxation filches another part of the surplus and raises the cost of transport for the public...”

“It has been said that on good roads the operating cost can be reduced by 50 per cent, the cost of fuel by 20%, the cost of tyres by 50%, and the cost of maintenance and spares by 60%, and the number of breakdowns can be brought down to nearly one-third besides reduction in the number of accidents”.

“This enormous indirect taxation and heavy burdens imposed by bad roads, etc. erode the surplus created by us and we have to pay for them. The economisation is done on workers’ wage and living conditions, under the plea that there is no surplus money.”

The Public Fleeced

Explaining that, when concessions are given to the workers the burden is invariably put on the passengers, the public is falsely made to believe that the workers’ wages can be increased only at the expense of the people and a deliberate attempt is made to estrange the sympathies of the people from the workers’ struggle, Ranadive said,—“It is clear that the workers’ demands can be met, not only without throwing additional

burdens on the people ; they can be met and simultaneously fares and other charges can be reduced only if the Govt. agrees to reduce its loot from the industry through direct and indirect taxation.”

“These facts must be fully placed before the people and they should be warned against the misleading propaganda of the Govt. We as workers from the Transport industry come into constant contact with our people daily ; there is a constant attempt on the part of the Govt. to create distrust between the two by putting the demands of one against the interests of the other. We have to fight this and remember that without the people, their support, we cannot win our struggle.”

“It is necessary for workers in transport industry to develop specially fraternal relations with the people and travelling public which consists of our class as well as our allies.”

Growing Unity

Emphasizing how the growing unity of the working class is leading to all-India struggles and securing the workers many a concession, he said—“without a continuous struggle for uniting our ranks and forging unity, we will not succeed in our aim.”

“The all-India Jute workers’ strike of November was a signal instance of this unity. I have already spoken about the Rly. workers’ strike which registered a landmark in the history of India’s trade union movement. Besides these, there have been innumerable united actions of

workers belonging to different Central trade union organisations, and political parties, for protests, for common demands.”

Warning the workers about the attempts of the reformists and the ruling classes to disrupt this unity, he added, “One of their methods is to raise chauvinistic slogans like jobs for the sons of the soil, to put Bihar workers against Bengal, Bengali against Oriya, and so on and disrupt the all India unity of our class. We must ruthlessly fight this disruptive slogan if we wish to advance against the capitalist class.”

Workers fight for the People

He then pointed out, “An important feature of recent times is the emergence of the working class as a leading force of the people in the struggle against high prices and for equitable distribution of food. In innumerable strikes and bundhs, the working class has voiced popular indignation against high prices and food thieves. It is my impression that transport workers have not participated in these protests as much as they could have and this weakness must be overcome.”

New Ordinances

Explaining the significance of the new Ordinances on wages, salaries and D. A., Ranadive pointed out, “The inflation, inflationary finance, which has been forcing prices to giddy heights has been the official policy since the First Five Year Plan. High prices leading

to forcible reduction of consumption of workers, employees, and poorer classes—city poor, agricultural workers and poor peasants—has been the official policy of the Government. Having levied this indirect tax on workers' and people's income the Government is now levying another direct tax by freezing new wage rise and half of the D.A."

He added, "Instead of attacking black money, commandeering the foodstocks from landlords and traders and ensuring equitable distribution of necessities of life at reasonable prices, the Government has attacked the workers, employees and toiling people. Instead of lowering the rate of its rapacious taxation on necessities of life and articles of common use which increase prices, the Government is attacking the workers and the people. The beneficiaries of official policies are the monopolists, big capitalists, foreign capitalists, landlords and big traders."

"This is the wage and incomes policy of the Congress Government which freezes wages and D.A. when every addition of a naya paisa was required to meet the rising cost of living. We have to fight and defeat the policy and compel the Government to withdraw the ordinances on the strength of our common movement."

Fight Against Capitalist-Landlord Rule

Emphasising the imperative need to fight the capitalist-landlord rule which perpetuates the misery of the working class,

Ranadive said, "This misery will continue so long as the capitalists and landlords continue to rule the country. There will be no living wages, no end to unemployment, no right to work, unless the means of production—the factories, mines, concerns, banks are removed from the private ownership and placed under social ownership. There will be no relief unless all foreign owned capital is nationalised and socially owned."

"Similarly, there is no solution of our food problem unless the working class aids the peasantry in smashing the land monopoly of the landlords and turning over the land to the toilers, the agricultural labourers and poor peasants. So long as the working class concentrates only on its wage struggle unmindful of the peasantry it will continue to starve and be enslaved"

Working Class Socialism

Characterising the Socialism of the Congress as a 'Cheating Socialism' which keeps the means of production in the hands of the capitalists or their States, Ranadive explained its difference with the Working Class Socialism.

He said, "The Socialism of the working class places the means of production in the hands of society, does away with the rule of the capitalists and landlords, organises economy and abolishes unemployment and exploitation. People's China has succeeded in abolishing unemployment, Soviet Union has banished it—that is how Socialism works."

"To fight and struggle for this Socialism, to fight for im-

mediate establishment of a People's democracy, that is the duty and responsibility of the entire working class, to carry on the fight in alliance with our vast peasant masses, agricultural workers, poor peasants, employees and toilers from cities and towns—this is the responsibility of our class. I am confident that the Road Transport workers will not lag behind in discharging this responsibility."

Against American Imperialism

He concluded his speech by drawing the attention of the delegates to the danger posed by American Imperialism and called upon them to wage a vigorous struggle against this danger and menace.

"Large sections of our working class do not realise the danger from American imperialism to the freedom of people's of all countries. They above all, do not realise that American imperialism, by giving loans to the Government, by sending private foreign capital, and through various agencies, is trying to dominate our economy and turn us into slaves. They do not realise the danger arising from the conciliatory policies of the Government of India. Already due to the foreign debt of the Government of India huge resources has to be transferred abroad. We have to sell our goods cheap and the working class and the people have to accept a lower living standard. Against this danger and menace, we must wage a vigorous struggle".

NEWSLETTER

Kerala

PPRIVATE bus workers of Cochin City went on strike from 17th June in support of the workers of three private transport services, completely paralysing private bus services in the city.

Employees of the Kerala State Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Society resorted to a one-day strike on 20th June under the auspices of the Joint Action Committee. This strike in support of their demands for wage revision, service rules, sales commission, etc. There were mass demonstrations before the regional officers in Quilon, Alwaye, Trichur, Kozhikode and Cannanor.

4,000 workers of Thumba Rocket Range took out a militant demonstration on June 29 protesting against the lathi-charge and firing by the security force on the meeting addressed by Com. A.K. Gopalan. They went to work only after obtaining an assurance from the Commander that those responsible for the lathi-charge and firing would be severely dealt with.

The workers of Trivandrum Rubber Works resorted to one hour strike on June 29 in protest against the repression in Thumba.

1,000 handloom workers of Calicut zone resorted to a one-day protest strike on July 4 in protest against the denial by the

handloom factory owners of the minimum wages declared by the Government. This strike was conducted under the joint auspices of the CITU, AITUC, HMS and Handloom Workers' Union.

Demanding the implementation of the Beedi-Cigar Act, and payment of the enhanced D.A., 8,000 beedi workers of Palghat District resorted to a one-day strike on 5th July. This strike was conducted under the auspices of the Joint Action Council consisting of CITU, INTUC and STU.

Employees of the Kerala Times, daily of Cochin, started an indefinite strike from 8th July in protest against the non-payment of variable D.A. as agreed upon in the agreement concluded between the management and the employees' Union.

Entire plantation labourers of Udumbanchola Taluk resorted to a token strike on 15th July in support of the struggle of the workers of Anyartholu Estate.

Strike in FACT, Cochin Division

The 67-days old strike conducted by the entire workers of FACT, Cochin Division, facing the threats and repressive measures of Central and State Governments, came to a successful end on 15th July, with the workers having won all the important demands.

According to the agreement

signed, on behalf of the workers by leaders of the FACT, Cochin Division workers, by S. C. S. Menon (Ind), K. Balachandran (CITU) and A. C. Jose (INTUC), there will be increase in the monthly wages of the workers ranging from Rs. 52/- to Rs. 152/-. This increase will have retrospective effect from March 1, 1972. The workers will also receive D.A. at increased rate from December 1, 1972. Further, the management will immediately make arrangement for Canteen. No worker will be retrenched. The management will give uniform, washing allowances, etc. soon, as well as transport facilities.

This victory of the FACT workers has been achieved due to the united strength of the workers. If the strike had not been settled on 15th July the workers of the other units of FACT would have gone on an indefinite strike any day. Moreover, the workers in the industrial areas of Kerala were making preparations for going on a strike in sympathy.

It is to be remembered that the Union Minister for Industries, C. Subramaniam had threatened that if the strike was not ended, the Government would stop all supplies of food grains to the State, thus trying to turn the people of the State against the FACT workers. This threat had the opposite effect.

According to the INTUC leader, A. V. Jose, the management could not get even one worker as black-leg during the strike.

United Struggle to Continue Under the Banner of NCCRS

THE National Co-ordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle (NCCRS) met in New Delhi on June 26 to take stock of the post-strike situation and to chalk out programmes for taking the movement forward.

On June 25, the Action Committee met to review the struggle and the post-strike situation. But as many of the leaders were still in jail and full reports of the struggle were not ready, it decided to postpone review of the struggle to a future date. It, however, proposed certain steps to carry forward the movement.

Over a hundred delegates representing various organisations attended the meeting on 26th. They reported on the brutal terror tactics adopted by the Government in different places to break the strike. Chaining of Motormen to the carriage to run trains, forcing arrested leaders to lie down on platforms for hours in the sun, merciless beating in custody, torturing railway workers to make them divulge whereabouts of leaders—these are only a few of the horrifying incidents narrated by them, besides innumerable other forms of repression already reported in the Press.

Side by side, the delegates also testified to the high morale of the railwaymen who have not accepted defeat and are determined to carry forward the struggle to wrest their demands.

Even after the withdrawal of the 20-day strike, there have been two one-day strikes at Samastipur and work-stoppages in Bombay, Madras, Shoranur and other centres in protest against arrests and victimisation. The zonal NCCRS in Southern Railway decided to resort to any form of direct action after July 12 if victimisation issue is not solved.

The delegates also reported that, due to the extensive damages to carriage, engines and other equipments during the strike, unsafe conditions of the track and lack of repairs and, above all, the absence of about a lakh of workers who have been kept out—train services are yet to become normal.

Government Warned

In a resolution adopted at the meeting, the NCCRS congratulated the Railwaymen and their families for their heroic struggle and the unity, determination and courage displayed by them in resisting police brutalities and coercive weapons of the Government. It also greeted all those who stood by the railwaymen during their heroic struggle.

The resolution unequivocally condemned the arrests, detentions, evictions, rape on women and other brutalities perpetrated by the minions of law and order; the Goebbelsian propaganda war against railwaymen; the campaign of lies and slanders; deploy-

ment of the Army, BSF, CRP, SRP etc. and use of MISA, DIR etc. and other methods adopted by the Government to meet the legitimate demands of railwaymen.

The resolution pointed out that, despite the declarations by the President, Prime Minister, Railway Minister and Home Minister, during and after the strike, that there would be no victimisation and negotiations would be resumed, the railway administration has chosen to pursue a course of confrontation with railwaymen. Victimisations are being continued with vengeance.

It pointed out, in the four weeks after the withdrawal of the strike nearly ten lakhs have been given break-in-service, nearly 30,000 permanent employees have been dismissed, 50,000 casual and substitute workmen have not been taken back although they have been serving for 5 to 20 years and over 20,000 workmen are being convicted under DIR etc. Besides, there have been innumerable cases of penal transfers, reversions, forced and premature retirement etc.

The consequences of this suicidal policy, the resolution pointed out, is that normalcy in train services cannot be restored even after one month of the strike. It warned the railway administration that "there will be no return to normalcy on the railways unless the administration changes its ways and restores normalcy in its relations with the railwaymen". It reminded the administration, "that the unilateral withdrawal of the strike by

the NCCRS Action Committee does not mean that the railwaymen have either given up their demands or have accepted defeat "

The resolution demanded that the Government and the railway administration take immediate steps to release all those arrested in connection with the strike, to withdraw all pending warrants and cases, to end all acts of victimisation and to resume negotiations with the NCCRS on the railwaymen's demands.

The resolution called upon the railwaymen "to preserve and strengthen the unity they have achieved during the days of the great struggle", and warned them to guard against all attempts of enemies to divide and split their ranks.

Movement To Go Forward

The Meeting called upon all railwaymen : (1) to activate the NCCRS at all levels, to constitute committees where they may not have been set up as yet and rid these of strike-breakers ; (2) to hold Conventions of railwaymen at all levels under the banner of NCCRS ; (3) to observe a Protest Week from July 22 to 28 ; and (4) to take all steps to provide relief to victimised railwaymen.

The meeting also resolved to call a National Convention of Railwaymen on August 26 in New Delhi to decide on the future course of action.

The meeting appealed to the organised Trade Union movement to render financial and other help to the NCCRS to provide much-needed relief to the victimised workmen and

their families. It thanked the international T.U. organisations for their fraternal support during the struggle and sought their continued moral and material support.

The meeting felt that the ruthlessness of the Government in dealing with Railway strike posed a challenge to the entire working class movement in India and that there should be united response by all organised sections of the working people against this challenge. To plan this united response the meeting decided to invite all Central Organisations and National Federations of labour to a Conference in new Delhi on July 20-21.

In conclusion, the NCCRS renewed its pledge "to do everything within its power to spearhead the movement, to forge the fighting unity of the working class and the toiling masses in the country, transcending all divisions based on any consideration".

NCCRS of Eastern & S. Eastern Rlys. Meet

The NCCRS of Eastern and South Eastern Railways met recently to draw up programme for implementing the decisions of the Central NCCRS. The programme includes : wearing of black badges on 22-23 in both the railways ; demonstrations and meetings on July 26 in S.E. Rly. ; and a convention on July 24 and a mass rally on July 28 in Chittaranjan. Decision has also been taken to constitute NCCRS bodies at Divisional levels in S.E. Rly. which will be

finalised through Divisional Conventions to be held between August 1-9. A zonal Convention in S.E. Rly. has been fixed on August 18 at Raipur.

AITUC's Role

Even in the matter of unitedly organising relief and legal aid for victimised railwaymen, the AITUC leadership and a section of their workers are playing a dubious role. They are opposing the institution of court cases against illegal victimisation and are trying to spread the illusion that the victimised employees can get reinstated by making appeals to the authorities. At the instigation of the leadership, a victimised worker of the CLW (who was also an office-bearer of the AITUC Union) refused to join in the court case lodged at the instance of the NCCRS and made an appeal to the authorities which has since been turned down. Because of this attitude of theirs, no court case could be lodged in S. E. Rly. except in the case of some workers of Shalimar. Some office-bearers of the AITUC Union in S. E. Rly. are also openly or secretly advising retrenched workers to accept re-employment on daily wage, despite a decision of the Zonal NCCRS against accepting such re-employment.

Loco Running Staff Meet

After the withdrawal of the strike, the attitude of the Government towards the demands of the Loco Running Staff has also hardened and the Committee set up in terms of the August 1973 strike settlement is deliberately delaying final settle-

Consumer Price Index Numbers

(Industrial Workers/Base 1960 100)

State/Centre 1974

March April May

March April May

ment. To review the position and take further steps, the Loco Running Staff Association (LRSa) is meeting in Delhi on July 29-30.

Meanwhile, the Working Committee of the S. E. Rly. LRSa met on July 20 to review the situation and decided to observe August 6 by submitting memoranda at every Loco Shed. The meeting also called upon all Loco Running Staff to strengthen the NCCRS and be prepared for next phase of struggle.

CITU Fund for Railwaymen

(Contributions received between 21.6.74 to 18.7.74)

	Rs. P.
1. Staff of all Bengal Teachers' Training College	110.00
2. Staff of CITU Central Office	50.00
3. All India Handloom Fabrics Marketing Co-operative Society Ltd. (Calcutta Unit) Employees' Union	51.00
4. North Calcutta Card-board Workers Union	10.00
5. Darjeeling Dist. Chia Kaman Mazdoor Union	157.00
6. Ganatantrik Mahila Samity, New Barrack-pore Branch, 24-Pgns.	10.00
7. Collection through CITU-West Bengal Committee	18500.00
Total	18888.45

(N.B. Total Collection upto 18.7.74 amounts to Rs. 26,297.45)

Andhra Pradesh

Gudur	264	269	298
Guntur	284	286	298
Hyderabad	271	273	277

Assam

Digboi	256	260	273
Doom Dooma	248	265	280
Labac	237	260	257
Mariani	226	245	250
Rangapara	248	265	276

Bihar

Jamshedpur	278	293	307
Jharia	294	308	323
Kodarma	358	362	371
Monghyr	347	344	337
Noamundi	286	304	332

Gujarat

Ahmedabad	264	272	284
Bhavnagar	285	297	306

Haryana

Yamunanagar	286	297	309
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J & K

Srinagar	227	231	234
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Karnataka

Ammathi	287	295	300
Bangalore	286	286	292
Chikmagalur	285	290	301
Kolar G. F.	287	292	296

Kerala

Alleppey	314	337	363
Alwaye	288	298	312
Mundakayam	286	291	309

M. P.

Balaghat	277	286	305
Bhopal	278	281	289
Gwalior	312	316	329
Indore	309	316	326

Maharashtra

Bombay	249	259	269
Nagpur	277	277	295
Sholapur	279	288	295

Orissa

Barbil	252	280	284
Sambalpur	263	276	287

Punjab

Amritsar	278	292	306
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Rajasthan

Ajmer	286	289	304
Jaipur	286	297	309

Tamilnadu

Coimbatore	246	258	269
Coonoor	263	276	301
Madras	248	261	268
Madurai	257	266	282

U. P.

Kanpur	281	287	296
Saharanpur	290	294	311
Varanasi	316	320	333

West Bengal

Asansol	274	286	298
Calcutta	255	264	272
Darjeeling	261	266	267
Howrah	270	274	280
Jalpaiguri	264	271	280
Raniganj	301	306	322
Delhi	296	309	325

Other Centres

Berhampur ('49)	362	358	365
Cuttack (1949)	308	317	329
Jabalpur (1949)	356	362	377
Beawar ('51-'52)	321	313	324
Tripura (1961)	243	250	260
H. P. (1965)	202	208	217
Goa (1966)	177	185	198
Bhilai (1966)	170	178	180
Kothagudam('66)	169	173	179
All India ('60)	275	283	294
do ('49)	334	344	357

* Figures in bracket indicate base year.

(Labour Bureau, Simla)

CITU's Activities In Defence Of Railway Employees

AFTER the withdrawal of the historic Railway strike, Comrade B.T. Randive, President and Comrade P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU issued a statement demanding end of victimisation measures against railwaymen, release of arrested employees, withdrawal of cases, reinstatement of retrenched employees and settlement of the 6-point demands of the Railwaymen through negotiations with the NCCRS. They also appealed to other mass organisations of workers, peasants and toiling people to collect funds for legal and other aid to victimised railway employees, and directed all State Committees of the CITU to mobilise working class and public opinion in support of the victimised railwaymen.

On June 4, a meeting was held at the CITU Central Office under the presidentship of Comrade B. T. Ranadive to organise legal aid for the victimised railwaymen. Comrades Jyoti Basu and Md. Ismail, Vice-Presidents of CITU and twenty leading lawyers of Calcutta attended. From this meeting a Legal Aid Committee was constituted with A.P. Chatterjee as the Convenor.

Leading lawyers associated with this Committee—Somnath Chatterjee, M.P., Rathin Deb, Sadhan Gupta, Snehangshu Acharya and Syed Maunsur Habibullah, are conducting the defence of victimised railwaymen in different courts of West Bengal. They have already succeeded in obtaining injunction

in favour of the victimised union leaders of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works. At present, a case instituted under Article 311 of the Constitution and Railway Servants (D & A) Rules, is being heard in the Calcutta High Court. The railway workers are represented by leading counsels like Rathin Deb, Sadhan Gupta, Somnath Chatterjee, A.P. Chatterjee and Maunsur Habibullah.

The Office of the Legal Aid Committee, functioning at the CITU Central Office, is being run by a band of victimised railway employees who are giving wholehearted attention to the task. Com. Sudhin Kumar, Vice-President CITU has lent a typewriter to help in this work.

The Legal Aid Committee is providing legal aid to victimised railwaymen of West Bengal and some other States. So far the Committee has instituted cases for the release of 55 railway employees detained under MISA (Eastern Rly.-17, S.E. Rly-30 and N.F. Rly-8). Besides seventeen cases are being conducted against dismissal of railwaymen under Rule 14 (2) of Railway Servants (D and A) Rules. The number of employees involved are : Eastern Rly—29, N. F. Rly—160, CLW-42 and S. E. Rly—17. The petitions of 80 victimised employees of Eastern Rly. and several employees of S. E. Rly. are also under preparation.

Relief Centres run by PRC

As victimised railway employees and their family members are

being denied medical help in Railway hospitals, the People's Relief Committee (PRC) has decided to open relief centres in some railway colonies. Already such centres have been opened at Malda (N. F. Rly.), Kanchrapara (E. Rly.), Adra, Kharagpur and Santragachi (S. E. Rly.).

CITU Fund for Railwaymen

In response to the appeal of the CITU, donations to the Fund have been received from many organisations and individuals. Total collections in the fund up to 18.7.74 amounts to Rs. 26,297.45 including Rs. 23,500 collected by CITU—West Bengal Committee from various unions and mass organisations. Besides this, the employees of Eastern Railway and the Central Govt. Employees working in West Bengal have donated Rs. 300 and Rs. 1000 respectively to the Legal Aid Committee. (For list of donors to the Fund, see statement given elsewhere in this issue).

Out of these collections, the CITU has already spent Rs. 9678.40 upto 14.7.74 for legal aid and other purposes, including Rs. 6500 as donation to PRC for relief to railwaymen, Rs. 880 to Legal Aid Committee for Court Fees etc. and about Rs. 1980 for printing and stationery.

The funds collected so far are, however, not enough to cope with the immense task before us and it is hoped that more contributions will be forthcoming in the near future to enable us to defend the victimised railwaymen successfully.

West Bengal Jute Workers Observed Demands Day

AT the call of the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU), Jute workers in all the 62 Jute Mills of West Bengal observed "Demands Day" on July 24 by wearing badges and holding meetings and processions. The day was observed to protest against the Black Ordinances freezing wage and D. A. and support of the demands for implementation of Government commitments given at the time of withdrawal of the strike, work or allowance for budlee workers, stoppage of lay-off and wage-cut on the plea of power crisis, implementation of the Expert Committee on Price Index, etc.

Earlier, on June 24, thousands of Jute workers submitted memorandums addressed to the Chairman, I J M A with mass signature of workers, to their respective mill managements demanding implementation of the promises given by the IJMA and the West Bengal Government at the time of withdrawal of the 33-day strike. The memorandum re-iterated their 10-point demands and warned the IJMA and the Government that the workers would be forced once again to take trade union action including strike, if the terms of the strike settlement are not honoured.

The Central Executive Committee of the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union, at its meeting held on June 7 decided to call for a one-day industry-wise strike unitedly with other

Central Trade Unions to protest against the non-implementation of promises made by the Government and IJMA at the time of withdrawal of strike. Accordingly, the BCMU appealed to the other Central Trade Unions to take a united decision on the date of the strike. The BCMU suggested July 8 as the date of the strike. Later, the State Labour Minister appealed to the BCMU to postpone the strike and assured that he would call a tripartite meeting on July 16 after the IJMA representatives return after attending an I. L. O. meeting. At its meeting held on July 5, the Central Executive of the BCMU decided to postpone the strike. But it again appealed to other Central Trade Unions to take a united decision on the date

Comrade Jhon

Comrade Jhon, Working President, Hindusthan Steel Employees Union, Bhilai died on 20th July. The CITU and The Working Class express their deepfelt condolences to the HSEU and bereaved members of his family.

of the proposed strike and called upon the worker to carry on preparations for the strike.

In a separate resolution, the Committee stated that, the workers are entitled to additional D. A. of Rs. 50 as per the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Price Index and demanded immediate implementation of the same and payment of arrear D. A. with retrospective effect.

Convention Of Chemicals and Pharmaceutical Unions

THE All India Chemical and Pharmeceutical Employees' Federation representing more than one lakh organised workmen in the factories, offices and fields all over India recently held a meeting of the Working Committee in Calcutta from 8th to 10th July 1974. The Committee strongly protested against the recent ordinances issued by the Central Government which affected the wages, and decided to participate in all the movements along with other organisation as per the decision of the Central

Trade Union Organisation at Delhi on the 20th July 1974.

The Working Committee finalised a common charter of demands for all the workmen and decided to observe 9th September as the Demands Day to popularise the demands all over India. The Working Committee took a serious note of the existing situation in West Bengal where the democratic and Trade Union rights of the workers, including the workers in the Chemical and Pharmaceutical

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COMRADE HAREKRISHNA KONAR

The CITU offers its homage to the memory of Comrade Harekrishna Konar, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), outstanding leader of the CPI (M) and General Secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha.

The Communist movement in India has lost an unbending champion of the cause of Marxist-Leninist doctrine; the Kisan movement one of its most ardent champions of the agrarian revolution.

Since his young days, Konar's was a life devoted to the cause of the Indian people. A fighter in the cause of national freedom, Communism beckoned to him in the early days when he was serving his apprenticeship in the

revolutionary struggle in the Andaman Jail. His life since then became one devoted to the democratic revolution, of Socialism. A versatile person, Konar was an effective mass speaker and leader of the people, a successful parliamentarian, a powerful ideologue, organiser of the underground Party and open mass movement.

Proletarian internationalist to the core Konar fought chauvinism consistently. His firm loyalty to basic principles enabled him to fight all deviations with equal emphasis.

A tireless worker in the cause of workers' and peasants' alliance, Konar struggled for developing a People's Democratic Front based on the alliance.

Despite protracted ailments,

Konar continued to work for the revolution with relentless zeal, determined to spend every minute of his life for the sacred cause.

Harekrishna Konar is no more, but his memory, the memory of a life refulgent with the spirit of dedication and sacrifice for the cause of the working class will ever remain with us. His tireless struggle for the people and his services to the kisan movement will not be forgotten.

The CITU sends its condolences to the All India Kisan Sabha to build which he spent several years of his life.

The CITU offers its condolences to his wife and other members of the bereaved family.

industry, are being suppressed by goonda elements making the functioning of unions impossible. Several leading trade union workers in the Pharmaceutical and Chemical industry have been thrown out of employment on various excuses.

The Working Committee specially noted the fact that while the industry is making huge profits through high prices of the drugs and by exploiting the labour, it is denying the benefit of the life-saving drugs and medicines to the ordinary people. It demanded the nationalisation of the Chemical and Pharmaceutical industry.

The Charter of Demands formulated by the Working Committee include :

Minimum Wages Rs. 540 ;

D.A. linked to working class Consumer Price Index for field staff ; 10 per cent minimum Bonus and abolition of maximum limit ; Abolition of Contract labour ; Parity of wages for Casual/Permanent workers ; arresting price rise of life saving drugs ; maternity benefit etc.

By special invitation, Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU addressed the meeting and explained the recent Ordinance and the task before the working class.

A convention of the unions in the industry in West Bengal was held on the 10th at the University Institute Hall addressed by B.S. Chitre, President, J. S. Mazumdar, General Secretary, Madan Phadnis and others.

Railway Workers' Relief Fund of CITU—West Bengal Committee

The CITU—West Bengal Committee has received Rs. 30,602.13 as contribution towards the Fund till July 27 from CITU Unions, mass organisations and individuals. Out of this, Rs. 27,700 has been deposited with the CITU Centre and Rs. 2655 spent for printing coupons, badges etc.

The State Committee intends to close the Fund drive positively on August 15 and, therefore, requests the unions, mass organisations and individuals to deposit the funds collected by them and return the used and unused coupons and badges immediately to the State Committee.