

THE WORKING CLASS

40 Paise



MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

VOL I. No 9

MAY 1972

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B. T. Ranadive (Chairman)

P. Ramamurti

Manoranjan Ray

CALL OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE Rally To The Support Of Bengal's Working Class

The Working Committee of the CITU in its meeting held in New Delhi on 24-26 April gave a clarion call to the working class of India to take up the challenge of the capitalist class which has resorted to semi-fascist terror throughout West Bengal. The meeting decided to mobilise the working class in all the corners of the country and raise its powerful voice against the most brutal repression on trade union and democratic movement in the State.

The meeting was held in the Constitution Club, New Delhi. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, presided over the meeting.

At the outset the meeting paid homage to the memory of Sunil Sen, Member, General Council of the CITU and prominent T. U. leader of Dum Dum and other martyrs who fell victims to police bullets and assassin's dagger.

The meeting deeply mourned the untimely death of Rajen Sinha, Member, General Council of the CITU and a popular leader of the garden workers of North Bengal and several T. U. activists of T.U. and democratic movement since the General Council meeting held at Coimbatore in June 1971.

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, said in his opening speech, "The entire bourgeois press is concealing the barbarities and cruelties perpetrated in West Bengal and obstructing the fight against them. It is for the working class of India to carry on campaign in defence of our West Bengal comrades, in defence of West Bengal trade union movement and in defence of the democratic movement in the whole of India."

Referring to the grave danger posed by the semi-fascist terror in West Bengal, Ranadive said, "These developments show that the ruling classes of India afraid of the growing strength of the Left forces have started in West Bengal subverting parliamentary elections and they are establishing a trend towards one party dictatorship..." "The working class and the people of India," he warned, "must defeat this trend and the line pursued in West Bengal before it becomes a danger to the other States."

MAY DAY GREETINGS TO READERS

★ *May Day Manifesto on Page Ten* ★

Criticising the reactionary role played by some leaders of the INTUC and the AITUC in West Bengal, he said, "When the workers, our unions are under this inhuman attack, there is no protest, no solidarity, no sympathy for them. On the other hand, they do everything to screen the Congress crimes and slander the attacked workers." "None but a stooge union will be allowed to exist," he warned, and appealed to the AITUC and all trade union leaders "to retrace their steps before it is too late."

Recalling the suffering and privations of the working class during the past year due to the policies of the Government, Ranadive explained how the Congress Government was adopting various unscrupulous methods to cheat the workers while talking of Socialism and Garibi Hatao. "Every means which is paraded as intended for giving relief to the workers," he said, "in reality is one which deprives them of some rights".

"The year 1972," Ranadive warned, "does not promise to offer any relief to the workers". "The rising foreign debt payments and the present cut off in American aid creates the necessity for the capitalists and their Government to increase exports at competitive prices, at lower prices, i. e. at the expense of the workers, the small producers or people's needs."

"This foretells of a new attack on the industrial workers," he said, "who will be asked to accept extra work-load without increase in wages...It is not surprising, therefore, that such slogans as moratorium on strikes for three years have been raised in the most authoritarian quarters...The consortium of the three trade union organisations which is being knocked together by the Labour Minister is

intended to serve this very purpose.'"

Welcoming the growing urge for united action amongst the workers, he said "Faced with the growing attacks on their standard of living under the stress of the recession, the mass of workers readily joined in common action and the trade union leaders in many industries and States had to accept the fact."

Ranadive expressed the hope, "that in the coming year the CITU following its policy of forging new alliances with the mass of workers and other organisations, overcoming the resistance of the reformist leaders of various organisations, will succeed in discharging the new responsibilities created by the developments of last year and raise the movement qualitatively to a higher level."

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU reviewed the struggles conducted by the trade unions during the last 10 months. He pointed out the leading role played by the working class of West Bengal and said, "As in the past the working class of West Bengal was at the forefront of the struggles against the onslaught of capital. The strike wave continued unabated during the second part of 1971 when protracted struggles were launched by the workers."

Ramamurti described at length the reign of terror let loose by the Congress regime in West Bengal and the heroic resistance given by the working class of West Bengal.

He highlighted the growing urge for unity in struggles and said, "despite growing repression the workers and employees in all sectors of economy fighting a grim struggle to preserve and improve their living conditions. Though the leadership of AITUC, INTUC and HMS have been trying to keep themselves aloof

from the united struggles the review shows that several united actions have taken place all over the country. The growing feeling of class solidarity among the mass of workers is crossing the barriers of organisational affiliations and bringing millions of workers together on common issues."

Ramamurti narrated in detail the efforts made by the CITU to implement the decisions of the Convention held in May last year and noted, "The response of the AITUC and HMS leadership to CITU's efforts for united actions was getting cooler as the days passed by due to involvement of the leadership of these organisations with INTUC in negotiations on the question of recognition of trade unions and allied matters, at the instance of Government of India who were and are anxious to get these organisations to unite and toe the Government's line so that they could parade this as isolation of CITU." He assailed the stand taken by the leadership of AITUC, INTUC and HMS during the "national emergency" when they accepted blanket ban on strike.

Ramamurti then expressed his confidence that the working class of all affiliations will continue to struggle unitedly for their pressing demands and defeat the machinations of the leadership of AITUC, HMS and INTUC in diverting the attention of the workers from the path of struggle.

He then dealt with the activities of the CITU during the last 10 months and emphasised the need for strengthening the organisation which alone is a guarantee for further united struggles.

Monoranjan Roy, Secretary, CITU gave an account of the repression in West Bengal

★ On Page Nineteen

Jute Workers Prepare For Indefinite Strike From May 8

With the experience of the successful united strikes of 1969 and 1970 still fresh in their memory, the jute workers of West Bengal are determined to launch a bigger struggle for the realisation of their demands. The failure of the Wage Fixing Committee to submit their recommendations even after the lapse of two years has exhausted the patience of workers.

In a Joint Press Statement issued on April 9, the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU), Bengal Provincial Chatkal Mazdoor Union (UTUC) and Bengal Jute Mill Workers' Union (UTUC-Lenin Sarani) jointly gave a call for an industry-wide continuous strike in the jute industry from May 8. In a separate statement issued on the same day the INTUC, AITUC and HMS unions also called for a continuous strike from May 8. Subsequently, the T.U. Organisation of the Forward Bloc (TUCC) has also issued notice for strike from the same date.

The Joint Statement issued by the three Left Trade Unions calls upon the jute workers of West Bengal to unitedly commence the industry-wide strike from May 8 for realisation of their long-standing demands and to continue the strike till the demands are realised. The 10-point Charter of demands include—immediate nationalisation of jute industry; a minimum wage of Rs.300/-per month; permanency of Budli Workers; Revision of Wage structure; variable D.A. at 0.35 paise per point on 1939 base; Gratuity at the rate of one month's full pay for each year of service; Permanency of workmen at 115%; Free

quarters or House Rent allowance at 20% etc.

The Joint Statement also pointed out that the CITU, UTUC and UTUC (Lenin Sarani) had taken the strike decision earlier but did not announce the date as they wanted to announce it jointly with the INTUC, AITUC and HMS. It was regrettable that inspite of repeated urgings and the traditions of joint movement in the jute industry the other organisations failed to agree to a joint announcement of strike.

The CITU, the two UTUCs and TUCC held a joint Press Conference on April 18 in which they appealed to the INTUC, AITUC and HMS to at least agree to conduct the strike jointly so that all the T.U. organisations may take a united stand on the workers' demands. The Executive Committee of the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU), at its meeting held on April 16, has also appealed for joint leadership and formation of a Joint Strike Committee to conduct the strike.

Though the strike call could not be given jointly, the fact that it has been called by all the Trade Unions from the same day (May 8) has created great enthusiasm amongst the workers who have started preparations for the strike in full earnest.

The State Labour Minister Dr. Gopal Das Nag convened a Tripartite meeting on April 19 to discuss the strike issue. At the Tripartite meeting he made some proposals for the settlement of the strike. Another meeting was held on April 22 which failed to produce any result mainly because of the adamant attitude of the mill-owners. Another round of talks is due to be held on April 29.

British Railwaymen Work to Rule For Higher Wages

Nearly three lac Railwaymen in Britain, led by three major Railwaymen's Unions, started work-to-rule from April 17 demanding a 16 per cent wage increase, which brought about a major crisis in Britain's railway transport system.

The British Government gave a 48-hour ultimatum to the unions to call off the work-to-rule, which was rejected by the unions, and on the expiry of the ultimatum period invoked the new Industrial Relations Act to suppress the railwaymen's struggle. The National Industrial Relations Court established under the new Act ordered the lifting of the work-to-rule. The biggest of the Railway Unions, the General & Transport Workers' Union, has already been fined for contempt for refusing to appear in the Court.

The work-to-rule was ultimately called off by the unions on April 20, but that is not the end of the story. Militant rank-and-file railwaymen, particularly in the southern region, are still continuing the work-to-rule defying court orders.

Compulsory Paid Holiday

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a compulsory holiday and an additional paid holiday. The two other issues need not be answered in details as the answers to these issues lies in my findings in Issue No. 1. The salary for May Day if advanced to the workmen for 1st May, 1970 cannot be recovered from. The workmen would get the salary for this day not only in 1970 but for all the years as additional payment."

Patit Paban Pathak, Member, General Council of the CITU represented the workmen in this case.

Phoney War Against Unemployment

Perhaps not so much lip sympathy is paid to any other problem in India by the spokesmen of ruling party as the twin problems of unemployment and poverty. The Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in several of her ivory tower speeches on Garibi Hatao has often expressed her "firm determination" to end poverty and unemployment from the Indian soil. The people were assured that it was a part of the "time bound" programme.

While so much loud talk about tackling the unemployment "on a war footing" or "initiating of crash programmes to end unemployment" are going on in India the unemployment continues to soar during 1971. The registered unemployment which stood at 40,69,424 in the month of January 1971 went up to 50,99,919 during December in the same year i.e. a rise of over 25 per cent. These figures however reflect only a part of the urban unemployment problem. If the rural unemployment is further added to that it makes a ghastly picture of the total unemployment in the country. The figures of backlog of unemployment of the Planning Commission when exceeded a colossal figure of 1.3 crores on the eve of launching of the Fourth Plan it was decided not to calculate these figures in future on the plea that the concept was "unscientific".

When a hue and cry was raised in the country over the alarming rise of unemployment, particularly when the educated unemployment was about 25 per cent of the total registered unemployment, the Government came forward with the usual proposal of forming a

Committee and sidetrack the attention of the people. A Committee on Unemployment under Chairmanship of Shri B. Bhagwati was appointed to study the problem and suggest remedial measures.

The CITU in a Memorandum to the Committee made it clear that, "It will be seen that the problem of unemployment in India is thus a problem of developing capitalist relations super-imposed upon old semi-feudal relations. Any attempt to treat it apart from this context is bound to fail. To treat it only as a problem of a 'developing' or 'backward' country without taking into consideration the property relations will be just cheating ourselves, and cheating the people."

The Memorandum continued, "Its basic solution of course depends upon the liquidation of the present property relations. It is, therefore, wrong to search for sources of unemployment in imbalances in economic growth or in minor lacuna in planning. Actually, it is the social and economic structure that is at fault. Other weaknesses may add to the situation without being the major cause."

The committee has now submitted Interim Report on Short Term Measure for Employment to the Government. A cursory glance at the mediocre Report will convince a reader that this most serious question has been treated by the Committee in an extremely casual manner. The Committee has failed miserably to touch even the fringe of the problem, though it has made a bold claim that it went into the basic causes of unemployment etc.

The Committee has not said anything about the growing emphasis given by the capitalists and the Government to modernisation, automation, rationalisation and other job saving devices which bring down sizably the employment potential in the country. In an economy based on private profit the employer's main interest always remains confined to maximisation of profit and bringing down "the labour costs". There is no wonder that some economists have advanced a theory that some unemployment is inevitable in a "free" economy. Any recommendation that ignores this basic factor will not lead to check the growth of unemployment in the country.

There was no need for a Committee to find out that "unemployment has been increasing over the last few years at a disquieting pace."

The official statistics on this question already shows the alarming trend. The situation has been made worse due to the mounting figures of unemployment of highly qualified persons. The Employment Exchange data shows that the number of unemployed engineers including diploma holders registered a three-fold rise from 23,000 to 64,000 during 1960 and 1970 while the number of matriculates almost doubled from 6.19 lakhs to 11.01 lakhs.

After reading the Committee's claim that, "we have felt it necessary to suggest immediately some short term and quick yielding measures which should be undertaken to alleviate, to some extent, the widespread suffering and hardship caused by unemployment and under-employment," one's curiosity is aroused to read the measures sugges-

ted but ultimately the reader ends shocked to find the following observation, "...all these schemes (with the exception of the scheme for rural housing as outlined by us) are already included in the Fourth Plan and specific provision for them have been included in the Plan outlay..."

Thus the whole burden of the Report is only to analyse the schemes provided in the Fourth Plan and to suggest minor changes here and there. At times the suggestions are so ridiculous that one cannot but feel that they are made only to justify the existence of the Committee itself.

Take for instance the suggestions "Unemployed persons should be exempted from the payment of application fees" and "only in such cases where an interview is an essential step in the process of selection, unemployed candidates called for an interview should be paid travelling expenses to enable them to appear for it." One can find several suggestions of this type. The relief is just taken and does not change the present position.

No special research is necessary to find out that the first three years of the Fourth Plan have miserably failed in creation of new jobs as claimed by the Planners despite spending of thousands of crores of rupees. Then how one can imagine that by just spending Rs.740 crores more by the Planning Commission the unemployment in the country could be sizably reduced as visualised by the Committee.

The so called schemes provided in the Fourth Plan to boost employment potential are just bogus and do not lead to any sizable reduction in unemployment. Instead of creating new jobs their main purpose is to create market for the capitalist production.

The Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Agencies (MFAL) account for about Rs. 115 crores in the Fourth Plan. Though it promises credit facilities for the poor peasants and agricultural workers the actual help will not fall into their hands as the past experience shows. The Committee admits that "some of the most vulnerable farmers, like share croppers and tenants without record rights in land, are facing difficulties in obtaining loans from financial institutions, due to their inability to provide sureties to the satisfaction of the banks, for the loans advanced by them." The recommendation of the Committee that the financial institutions need not insist on these sureties may still not benefit the needy peasants and tenants since the rural credit system is controlled by the rural rich, who would utilise this measure, if accepted by the Government.

The so called Crash Schemes for Rural Employment have only further enriched the upper strata of the rural society who pocketed in co-operation with the corrupt bureaucrats all the benefits given by the schemes. There is no wonder that it cannot generate employment though Rs. 12.5 lakhs have been sanctioned to each District. Instead of attacking the very basis of the scheme the Committee wants minor changes like differential allocation of funds to districts etc. which does not make any difference in its character.

The Committee further wants only additions of some more schemes like minor irrigation, rural electrification, construction of road and inland water transport, rural housing and water supply and education. But their implementation is entirely left with the existing bureaucracy

which will only eat away the money, without creating any new employment as expected by the Committee. The Fourth Plan has provided about Rs. 1300 crores for the rural schemes. The Committee however feels that raising the outlay to Rs. 2000 crores will meet all the requirements of the recommendations of the Committee.

Regarding industrial sector the Committee has vaguely suggested maximum utilization of the under-utilized capacity in factories. The Committee has conveniently ignored that this under-utilisation is the direct result of the Government policies of boosting big business and collaborating with foreign monopolists when the economy is over dependent on foreign aid and imports and the utilisation in industries will also to some extent depend upon the availability of aid and imports. However instead of criticising this policy responsible for present stagnation the Committee has noted, "we are aware that action on some of the remedial steps has already been initiated". The Committee has been referring to concessions given by the Government to some industries and wants that similar facilities should be extended to others.

On the question of closed units it is well known that they are also the result of the policies of the Government. However instead of going into the causes of these closures it has appreciated the measures taken by the Government. All that the Committee wants is that "the Government should set up an agency charged with the duty of overseeing the economic health and state of affairs obtaining in such industries where closures have taken place or are apprehended".

Jyotirmoy Basu a member of the Committee suggested that the

Committee should recommend that the minimum that the Government should do is atleast to guarantee a certain sum for each unemployed person as relief pending the acceptance of "Right to work" as fundamental right in our Constitution." The Committee however did not agree with the proposal and Basu had to append a separate note in support of the demand.

The Report of the Committee is a futile exercise to rubber stamp the present deceptive schemes of the Government and sow illusions among the people that the Government is seriously doing something to solve the vexed problem of unemployment.

The workers in our country however know very well that the rate of rise in unemployment has gone up substantially higher after the appointment of the Committee itself. Even if all the proposals of the Committee are accepted by the Government, yet it will not be able even to stop further rise in unemployment in India.

The Interim Report of the Committee gives us an indication of the nature of its final recommendations. However the Committee may show sympathy for the unemployed and downtrodden it merely remains on paper and will not lead to any reduction in the size of unemployment in the country.

The Committee or no Committee the ranks of the unemployed are going to swell higher and higher with each passing day. The ruling classes are only prevaricating while trying to pose as crusaders of fight against unemployment. The problem can never be solved within the framework of capitalist society. It is only by changing the capitalist relationship of production and establishment of socialism that the Right to work can be guaranteed to every individual in the society.

Ruthless Repression Continue in CLW

Ruthless repression by local Railway authorities, armed anti-socials and the police on workers and employees of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, which have been continuing for the past one year, have now been intensified after the rigged elections and formation of a Congress Government in West Bengal.

Armed goondas, encouraged by police and local administration, are openly roaming about assaulting and threatening workers. Repression in various forms has also been mounted by the police and Railway authorities to destroy the CLW Labour Union (CITU) and the militant unity of the workers. Trade union rights of workers are being trampled on.

Following the successful "Chittaranjan Bundh" of February 23, the Vice-President and General Secretary of the union were arrested under MISA and 60 others, including two women, were also held on false charges. The Railway authorities promptly suspended those arrested.

The Railway authorities have also been trying to victimise the leaders and activists of the Labour Union. Their attempt to transfer seven union leaders in July of last year was then foiled by the determined resistance of the workers. Now, with a Congress Government in power, they have again started a ferocious attack on the union. On April 20, transfer orders were served at gun point on seven union leaders including the President, Vice-President and Working President of the union. The President was handed over the order while surrounded by armed police guards. Elaborate posting of CRP was made inside the factory and at all

the gates to stifle the protests of the workers.

The CLW Labour Union has strongly protested against these vindictive transfers and has demanded their withdrawal. The workers staged massive demonstrations before the General Manager's office and they are determined to fight back these repressions at any cost.

CITU Appeal for Financial Assistance to Evicted Workers and Employees

Following the rigged elections in West Bengal, hundreds of workers and employees have been evicted with their families from their homes by Congress (R) gangsters. Hundreds of others are out of their earnings as they are being prevented from reporting for duties in factories and offices for their refusal to join INTUC unions.

CITU—West Bengal State Committee has appealed to all trade unions, the workers and employees and other democratic people of West Bengal to donate generously to enable it to render financial assistance to these evicted workers and employees.

It has also appealed to trade unions and working class in other States of India to extend financial assistance to their suffering brethren in West Bengal.

All donations are to be sent to :-

West Bengal State Committee,
Centre of Indian Trade Unions,
249, Bepin Behari Ganguly Street
Calcutta-12

Kerala State Council of CITU Meets Kerala Prepares For Another Round Of Struggle

"The destiny of the trade union movement is to take the working class and the country towards the proletarian socialism which really means freedom from unemployment, poverty and exploitation. If the T. U. movement forgets this objective, directs itself only in the channel of daily economic conflicts it will become a narrow petty sectarian movement unable to even defend its daily interests". B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, said this while inaugurating the meeting of the Kerala State Council of the CITU held at Eloor (Ernakulam) on 7-9 April.

Reviewing the united struggles of the working class of Kerala, Ranadive said, "I offer my congratulations to all those following the INTUC, AITUC, UTUC who have joined in common action with us, who together with us braved privations and police repression to defend our livelihood. I call upon all of you to continue that same spirit of unity in Kerala".

Ranadive criticised the Achutha Menon Government for pursuing the same discredited anti-working class policy earlier pursued by the Congress Government. "Achutha Menon became one of the top-most champions of a wage freeze policy when three lakh Kerala State Government employees and teachers demanded granting of interim relief at par with the Central Government employees. When the NGO's went on strike, Menon vindictively imposed break in their service—a punishment which even the Congress Government hesitated to accord to their striking em-

ployees." The speech of Ranadive was translated and printed in Malayalam beforehand.

He then explained the seriousness of the problem of unemployment in the country which is assuming serious proportions and called on the working class to fight for unemployment relief.

Ranadive explained at great length the ferocious attacks launched on the militant T. U. movement in West Bengal and called upon thousands and lakhs of workers following the CITU to raise their voice of solidarity with the West Bengal workers. "Fascism is trying to secure a foothold in West Bengal. Let the working class unitedly say it will not have a foothold, it will be defeated. In this great task the unions must secure the co-operation of all democratic parties and elements for it is the common task of all to save democracy from the attacks of reaction."

He paid tributes to the valiant fighters in Vietnam who are inflicting heavy defeats upon U. S. imperialism.

Four hundred and thirty one members attended this first State Council meeting held for the first time after the foundation of the CITU. C. Kannan, President Kerala State Committee of CITU presided over the meeting. Earlier he hoisted the red flag and placed wreath at the Martyrs' column.

Kannan in his presidential speech emphasised the need to pay more attention to the task of building a powerful and well-knit organisation

of the CITU in the State to effectively launch bigger and united struggles.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, greeting the meeting, reviewed the efforts made by the CITU during the last two years for building a united movement on common issues throughout the country. He pointed out that the leaderships of AITUC, INTUC and HMS though talking of unity are obstructing united struggles and co-operating with the Congress Government in its anti-working class measures. He emphasised the need to continue efforts to build unity from below so that the disruptive efforts of the leadership of the other three national T. U. centres did not succeed.

E. Balanandan, Secretary Kerala State Committee of CITU, could not personally present his report to the State Council due to his domestic difficulties. His report in Malayalam was read out by O. J. Joseph, Asstt. Secretary.

Balanandan in his Report which was printed and circulated to all the members in advance pointed out how in Kerala, CITU took initiative since its foundation in every struggle and emerged as a builder of unity of the entire working class. He explained in detail the efforts made by the CITU to build industry-wise movement on the State level.

While reviewing the activities of the CITU during the last two years he stressed the need for better co-ordination of work of CITU unions. "Without a strong CITU it is not possible to develop united struggles in the State," he said.

Emphasising the need for solidarity action in Kerala in defence of working class of West Bengal, Balanandan said that unless the semi-fascist offensive in West Bengal was halted there was every

danger that it would spread to Kerala also.

Several industry-wise reports were printed and circulated among the members of the State Council. Industry-wise and district-wise group discussions were held during the recess.

Thirty comrades participated in the discussion on the Report which lasted for five and a half hours. Speakers narrated their local experiences and pointed out how the influence of the CITU was growing in all sectors. They further gave stress on democratic functioning of unions, trade union and political education of cadres, bringing more and more unorganised sections within the fold of CITU, strengthening of the State Centre of CITU etc.

Balanandan in his reply to the suggestions made by comrades accepted some of the suggestions made by comrades and highlighted the need for local initiative on many issues by our unions.

The Kerala State Committee published a booklet in Malayalam on repression in West Bengal. Members of the General Council collected Rs. 500 during the meeting as a first instalment of solidarity fund for the relief of thousands of West Bengal T. U. activists who were forcibly evicted from their areas. The meeting decided to organise mass collections and send the money to West Bengal State Committee of CITU.

By a resolution the meeting decided to organise a campaign throughout Kerala beginning from May Day and ending on 10th May to explain the suppression of T. U. and democratic movement in West Bengal. It also decided to prepare for a one day strike in the State in the middle of May in support of workers in West Bengal.

By another resolution the meeting condemned the call of Moratorium on strike and called upon workers of all affiliations in Kerala to resist this move.

The meeting greeted the valiant fighters in Vietnam for their recent victory and expressed its confidence that their struggle would ultimately rout the U.S. imperialists from the soil of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

The meeting passed several resolutions on conditions in industries and issues facing the working class. Notable among them were on industries like Coir, plantation, rubber, Bidi, Sugar, Cashew, engineering, fermentation, tile, textile, electricity and road transport. By a resolution the meeting sharply criticised the working of the ESI scheme and demanded better medical facilities for workers. It supported the decision of N. M. R. and PWD workers to organise a statewide strike.

During the meeting the unions in Kerala paid Rs. 9972.25 as affiliation fee to CITU for the year 1971. Unions which did not pay were asked to pay the money without fail at an early date.

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, while summing up the meeting of the State Council, asked the members to give up the bureaucratic methods of functioning prevailing in some of our unions. "This legacy of the days of Dange must be overcome if we want to go ahead". He concluded by expressing his confidence that the CITU in Kerala would be further strengthened as a result of this meeting.

The big procession was joined by the workers in the nearby industrial belt which culminated in a rally which was presided over by C. Kannan and addressed by B. T.

Ranadive, E. Balanandan and M. K. Pandhe.

To mark the occasion of the State Committee, The Kerala State Committee of the CITU organised on 7th April a Symposium on Moratorium on Strikes which was participated by leaders of all the Central T. U. organisations. Another seminar on Cultural movement was also organised on 8th April.

The workers in the Ernakulam industrial complex contributed about Rs. 20,000 to make the State Council meeting a success.

Legal Notes

★ From Page Nine
workman will be taken into consideration.

It is refreshing to see the Supreme Court referring to the First Principles of Industrial Adjudication the more so because judicial decisions have by and large laid down rules of law for industrial adjudication by no means less complicated than those relating to usual civil suits. The question of the employer's ability to pay intrudes too obtrusively, like King Charles I's head, into industrial adjudications, causing deprivation to workmen and creating serious imbalances in employer-employee relations. The Supreme Court decisions are also not free from such by no means healthy approach.

Let us hope that the Courts in India would remind themselves more often of the basic principles of industrial law so that adjudications may be easy, free from technicalities and rid of the useless load of learning.

The Supreme Court Reverts to First Principles

A. P. Chatterjee

The question was whether workmen should get transport expenses. It was a case of workmen working in a village called Atul in the two companies there, namely, Attic Industries Limited and Atul Products Limited. These companies manufactured dyes and chemicals and other intermediates. In the same region, the Cynamid India Limited, a factory in the pharmaceutical industry, paid transport expenses of 37 paise per day to every employee who was staying at a distance of five miles and more from village Atul and 12 paise per day to those who were staying beyond three miles but less than five miles.

The Tribunal who heard the reference in the matter of those two companies did not award as much transport allowance as it had given to the Cynamid workmen and instead granted a transport allowance of 15 paise per day to every employee who stayed at a distance of five miles or more from village Atul, but not on the days when they did not come to work either due to holiday or leave or for other reason.

The companies went in appeal to the Supreme Court against this award of the Tribunal (Civil Appeal 742 of 1968) and argued that the workmen, when they took up employment in the factories at Atul, knew fairly well that they would have to incur expenses for going to their place of work. They further contended that, in calculating the cost of living index, bus fare is also taken into account and accordingly dearness allowance should neu-

tralise the expense of transport by bus or rail. The Supreme Court has, in its judgement dated 14. 3. 72 in the instant case, negated the contention that the cost of living index included the rise in transport cost.

The Court also found that, on the principle that the industries in the same region should pay equally, the workmen in the two companies were entitled to transport allowance likewise with the employees in the Cynamid company.

Moreover the Court also took into account the fact that the Tribunal was not considering,

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in the instant case, the question of transport allowance in isolation but also adjudicated the wage-scales, dearness allowance etc. and that it must have fixed the wage-scales and dearness allowance after giving due adjustment to that transport allowance. The Court also held that the scanty sum of Rs. 4.50 per month awarded as transport allowance was not such as was prima facie unreasonable or arbitrary.

The decision in the instant case deserves notice, however, not because of the above findings, but because some First Principles of Industrial Arbitration are reiterated. The Court quoted Ludwig Teller's "Labour Disputes and Collective Bargaining" :—

"Industrial arbitration may involve the extension of an

existing agreement or the making of a new one, or, in general, the creation of new obligations or modification of old ones while commercial arbitration generally concerns itself with interpretation of existing obligations and disputes relating to existing agreements."

The Court held that, in proper case, the Tribunal could impose new obligations on the employer in the interest of social justice and can involve the parties in a new contract. It further observed that the financial ability of an employer to bear the additional burden is not the criterion. In fact, according to the Court, that is the principle behind the enforcing of the Industry-cum (—) Region formula under which the industries in the same region are required to pay equally. "The danger otherwise would be migration of labour to the one where there are more favourable conditions from those where conditions are less favourable."

In this context, the Supreme Court referred to its earlier decision in Remington Rand of India Limited vs. workmen reported in 1969 (19) Factories and Labour Reports at page 46 where, though the Court rejected the claim to extend the lunch allowance to all workmen, it recognised in a limited measure the obligation of an employer to provide medical facilities for its workmen, even though it accepted as correct the two contentions advanced by the employer, namely, that the primary responsibility for providing medical facilities for the citizens is that of the State and that, while fixing fair wages, medical expenses which may have to be ordinarily incurred by a

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The Centre of Indian Trade Unions, on the occasion of May Day 1972—the great international day of working class solidarity—expresses its sense of pride for the relentless struggles launched by the working class and other toiling people of India during the last one year to protect their working and living conditions and for trade union and democratic rights.

The CITU pays homage to hundreds of martyrs who laid down their precious lives while fighting against police repression and against gangster attacks by the hirelings of managements and the Congress (R). It takes pledge to carry forward the struggle left incomplete by these valiant fighters till the achievement of complete victory in the cause for which they devoted their lives.

West Bengal Braves The Onslaught Of Capital

The militant trade union movement and working class of West Bengal which fought innumerable strike struggles during the last twelve months against the onslaught of capital is to-day faced with the most ferocious attacks organised jointly by the Congress hoodlums backed by police, CRP and the authorities. Hundreds of union

offices belonging to the CITU affiliates have either been burnt down or occupied by INTUC goondas. The records of these unions have either been destroyed or captured, thus making normal trade union activity almost impossible. Over 650 leaders and activists of the trade union, kisan, student, youth, mahila and other democratic movements have been brutally murdered by this combine. While anti-social elements are given free reign to carry out their nefarious plans, thousands of trade union functionaries have been involved in false murder cases or detained under PVA or MISA. Section 144, curfew, combing operations and

merciless beatings in police lock-ups have become the order of the day. Tens of thousands of workers have been forced to evict from their residences by letting loose a reign of terror in the entire industrial belt.

The leadership of the ruling Congress and the Right Communist Party hatched a conspiracy to rig the elections in West Bengal and deprived millions of voters of their voting rights. This butchery of democracy is being paraded as victory for the Ruling Congress and its allies. CITU congratulates the working class and other toiling people of West Bengal for their courageous resistance to the rising fascist tendencies in the State and calls upon the working class of India to take up this challenge of the ruling party in West Bengal and raise their powerful voice on this May Day in condemnation against the conspiracy to suppress the trade union and democratic movement in West Bengal at the gun

point. CITU appeals to all international T.U. Organisations to rally in defence of the West Bengal workers and express their solidarity for the cause of freedom and democracy.

This offensive against the working class in West Bengal has come in the wake of several militant struggles organised unitedly by the trade union movement in the State. The successful Bengal Bundhs unitedly organised on August 27, in support of charter of demands including demands like reopening of closed factories, unemployment relief, bonus, rectification of price index, withdrawal of CRP, Military and recognition of Bangladesh, was

a unique success. The Union Labour Minister Khadilkar's efforts to disrupt the unity of the workers failed miserably. Another Bengal Bundh on October 13 against arbitrary dismissal of 13 top leaders of State Government employees and 32 leaders and workers of four Ordinance Factories in West Bengal was also organised unitedly.

Several other long drawn struggles of workers in West Bengal showed the growing tenacity of workers to defend their rights and living conditions. Notable among them are the struggles of workers in Sen-Raleigh, Kesoram Rayon, Annapurna Textiles, HSL Steel Plant, Graphite and AVB workers in Durgapur, Coal Mine workers in Raniganj belt as well as those in jute, plantation and engineering industries. The State and Central Government employees, employees in Mercantile Firms have also conducted several struggles for achieving their longstanding demands. As a result of all these struggles the

T. U. movement in West Bengal acquired a place of honour in the hearts of the working class of India as a whole. It is due to this that the capitalist class and their accomplices resorted to these fascist measures for suppression of T.U. and democratic movement in West Bengal.

The CITU congratulates the working class of other States for their unique solidarity for the working class of West Bengal. Forty lakh State Government employees all over India observed 5th November as "West Bengal Day" to protest against the vindictive measures against the State and Central Government employees, leaders,

workers demands thus proving no better than other Congress Governments.

Tamilnadu last year witnessed an unprecedented wave of strike struggles. The strike of workers in Simpson Group of industries against Government interference in union affairs, the strike of 60,000 textile workers in Coimbatore, the strike of Hindusthan Teleprinter workers despite prohibitory orders under the DIR, strikes of sugar workers in Nellikuppam, public sector strikes of workers in vehicle factory at Avadi as well as electricity and beedi industries have marked the growing unity and militancy of Tamilnadu workers. The DMK

higher emoluments. The State Government employees had to face a bitter opposition of their Government even to get accepted the simple demand of payment of interim relief at par with Central Government employees. The Rajasthan Government employees had to face brutal repression of police while Kerala Government imposed break in service on the striking employees.

The workers in Eastern, South Eastern and North Eastern Frontier Railways conducted several local struggles despite obstructive tactics of the established leadership. The Barauni-Garhara workers had to wage a longdrawn struggle for project allowance.

The employees in banks, LIC and other commercial firms resisted the attacks on their T. U. rights. In some places they had to resort to strike action to win their demands,

CITU To Strive on For United Actions

A key-note of these struggle was a tremendous urge for unity shown by the mass of workers and employees. The employers and the Government had to come down to meet their demands whenever the struggles were united and militant. The experience of the last one year's struggles shows that despite difference it is still possible to unite workers of all shades of opinion because the issues facing the working class are so pressing that they leave no other alternative but to close their ranks if they want to achieve their demands. On many occasions the rank and file workers have taken initiative and brought workers of all affiliations together in struggles. The CITU greets all these workers who offered stiff resistance to the onslaughts of capital despite heavy odds.

MAY DAY MANIFESTO OF THE CITU 1972

Anti-Repression Day was also observed in first week of February all over India by CITU Unions to condemn the savage repression on the T.U. movement in West Bengal. These solidarity actions have clearly shown that the Indian working class is no more in a mood to take these attacks lying down.

Working Class Struggles Intensified

In Kerala the workers in cashew, coir, plantation, road transport and engineering industries have participated in several strike struggles which assumed State-wide character in some cases. The agricultural workers have also conducted State-wide as well as district-wise strikes demanding wage rise and protesting against atrocities in police lock-up. The State Government employees and school teachers also joined State-wide strike action for interim relief at par with Central Government employees. The Achutha Menon Government shamelessly advocated wage freeze and opposed

Government resorted to police repression and openly came forward as defenders of the capitalist class.

The historic strike of two lakh Bombay textile workers on the question of bonus was followed by strikes in Nagpur, Sholapur, Ahmedabad, Coimbatore, Kanpur, Delhi, Akola, Kolhapur and other textile centres in India. These outbursts of workers against the pro-employer Bonus Act has brought to the forefront the demand of minimum bonus of 8.33 per cent.

The strikes of J. K. Rayon and Indian Explosive workers in Kanpur, Hotel workers in Delhi, NCDC employees in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, PECO workers in Assam, Colliery workers in Dhanbad, struggles of rice mill workers in Andhra have kept the flag of struggle flying during the year.

The Central Government employees who were totally dissatisfied at the paltry rise of second interim relief and inordinate delay in publication of Third Pay Commission Report continued their struggle for

CITU expresses its solidarity for the agricultural workers in West Bengal, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Andhra who organised struggle for higher wages. The CITU congratulates the peasants who fought for land and successfully harvested the land they have won.

Alarmed by these rising struggles of the workers and realising their growing isolation from the workers the leadership of INTUC, AITUC and HMS are joining their hands behind the back of workers and devising ways and means of collaborating with the employers and the Government. They have jointly and separately betrayed the struggles of workers on several occasions. They joined struggles only when they were forced to do so by the united strength of the workers and as soon as they got opportunity they did not hesitate to stab them in the back. This attitude of the leadership of these organisations is a great stumbling block of the unity of the working class. On this May Day, let workers of all shades of opinions make a categorical declaration that they would stand united for struggles and oppose every ganging up against the interests of the workers.

The CITU did its best in building a united front of all central trade unions and national federations and it played a positive role in making the conference in May last year a success. The enthusiasm created in the minds of the workers was however shortlived due to the unilateral decision of the AITUC and HMS to join hands with INTUC in collaborating with the Government. The leadership of these organisations accepted blanket ban on strike after declaration of emergency. They gave up the concept of secret ballot and indirectly

supported the Government's call of moratorium on strikes.

The CITU still considers that a united front of trade unions can even now be forged on the basis of the following most pressing demands:—

1. Need-based minimum wage.
2. Cent per cent dearness allowance.
3. Immediate granting of relief to unemployed workers pending inclusion of right to work as the fundamental right in the Constitution.
4. End of manipulation in consumer price index numbers.
5. Recognition of trade unions on the basis of secret ballot.
6. Complete restoration of civil liberties.

Behind talks of socialism Govt. continues offensive against the people

Smt. Gandhi's Government despite lip sympathy for socialism and Garibi Hatao continues to boost the big business and landlords and hit the working class and poor sections of the people. The high taxation on the common people and concessions given to monopolists convincingly proves the fallacy of the claims of the ruling party. While talking about self-reliance the Government continues to rely on heavier and heavier dose of foreign loans and collaboration agreements. While talking of checking the prices the Government resorts to deficit financing and inflation which further boosts the price level. While talking about giving more jobs to the unemployed the Government goes ahead with programmes of modernisation, rationalisation, automation etc. swelling further the army of unemployed. On this occasion of May Day this year the working class should realise that no basic improvement in their living

conditions is possible unless the capitalist-landlord Government is dislodged from power and a genuine democratic Government of the people is installed in its place.

The CITU denounces the role of U.S. imperialism during the struggle of Bangladesh people and warns the working class that the machinations of U.S. imperialism in India still continue and pressure is being exerted on the Government of India. The CITU calls upon the working class to be vigilant and defeat all the conspiracies of the U.S. imperialists on the Indian soil.

Fraternal Greetings !

The CITU conveys its warmest fraternal greetings to the liberation forces in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos who are engaged in a life and death struggle against U.S. imperialism and are heroically inflicting crushing defeats upon U.S. imperialism and its stooges. Though Nixon administration talks of withdrawing from Indo-China it resorts to massive air-raids. The CITU is confident that the people of Indo-China will ultimately succeed and U.S. imperialism will be routed.

On the occasion of this May Day, CITU sends its fraternal greetings to the people of Bangladesh who have been able to throw out the yoke of Yahya Khan after great sacrifices. The CITU is confident that the people of Bangladesh will defeat all imperialist conspiracies and build self-reliant economy of Bangladesh.

The CITU sends its fraternal greetings to the working class and people of socialist countries for their achievements in socialist construction and valuable support to anti-imperialist struggles. The CITU sends its warm greetings to the U.S.

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West Bengal Industrial Tribunal Awards May Day As Compulsory Paid Holiday

J.K.Mitra, Judge of the Ninth Industrial Tribunal, Durgapur in a judgement delivered on 31st January 1962 awarded May Day as a compulsory holiday and an additional paid holiday. The award was given in the matter of an industrial dispute between Hindusthan Steel Limited, Alloy Steel Plant, Durgapur and their workmen represented by Hindusthan Steel Employees Union, Alloy Steel Unit (CITU).

The following issues were referred to the Tribunal :—

1. "Whether the workmen had acquired the right through custom, usage etc., to enjoy the May Day, 1970 as a National Holiday as defined in the Certified Standing Orders of the company or as an additional paid holiday in excess of the number of paid holidays prescribed by the said Standing Orders?"
2. If not, whether 2 days' salary that has been advanced to these workmen who neither reported for duty on 1st May, 1970 nor applied for festival holidays or leave for the day, be recovered by the Company ?
3. If the issue No (2) is decided in the negative whether the workmen who reported for duty on the day in question are entitled to extra wages?" The concluding paragraphs of the Award are as follows :—

"May Day was described as an International Labour Day by the International Socialist Congress of 1889. In Communist Countries and elsewhere it is the occasion for

important labour demonstration. The first of May is the date generally celebrated by trade unions, socialist parties and labour organisations in general for a public celebration. It is observed by the labouring class in every industrial country and not only in USSR where it is an official holiday but also in several other European countries it is also observed as an official holiday. In U.S.A. though not on 1st May but on the first Monday in September Labour Day is celebrated throughout the country as non-official holiday. It is the day of international solidarity of working people. The day of people's struggle against imperialism and for peace, democracy and socialism. The working people of the world and certainly of this part of Bengal cherish the occasion for nationwide celebration of their force and solidarity and in celebrating this day they demonstrate in their traditional way their inseparability from the working people the world over. It is the day for dedication of the working men to the struggle for peace and progress. The message of the Day is unusual and cannot be restricted within the narrow shell of the Standing Orders, even though these are certified.

"In these circumstances, there cannot be any room for controversy that May Day should be declared as a compulsory holiday, as a national holiday and as a public holiday par excellence. If the law strictly forbids the workers to claim it as a national holiday beyond the Standing Orders as there are at present, which however I do not accept, still then this Day must be declared as an addi-

tional holiday either in its own right or by virtue of their acquisition the same through custom and usage or under the circumstances obtaining in the labour world of the present day and in the facts and circumstances of the case."

"The Learned Counsel for the company urges that the workmen cannot claim to have acquired it through custom or usage, as a custom implies an assertion of right, a denial thereof and an ultimate acquiescence therein. I have already set out in details the background of the whole case and the consistent and persistent efforts that the workmen of the plant have been putting in to get the right. The workmen had always asserted the right to get the holiday and though the assertion had not been so direct as could it be it was undoubtedly prolific and the company had every time refused to grant it but ultimately it had to acquiesce in and grant the holiday. For a long spell of unbroken period right from 1965 the workmen had enjoyed the holiday as a compulsory holiday and an additional paid holiday and so they must be said to have acquired it as a customary right."

"If my view about its acquisition as a customary right is not correct, still then I would with all the emphasis that I can command hold that the workmen must get this May Day as an additional paid holiday under the circumstances of the case as well as under the circumstances that are obtaining at present in the plant and in the world at large."

In view of my findings above I now decide the issue No. 1 in the affirmative by finding out that the workmen would get May Day as a National Holiday which should be

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While Railmen's Greivances Accumulate In-Fighting Galore In NFIR

When railwaymen all over India are fighting increasing attacks from the Government on their living conditions and T. U. rights the leadership of the NFIR, who are always opposing legitimate struggles of railwaymen, are engaged in unseemly faction squabbles and in-fighting. The scramble for loaves and fishes of office has reached such a stage that even armed goondas are being freely used to oust one faction or the other from leadership.

During the recent Conference of Eastern Railwaymen's Congress (affiliate of NFIR) held at Patna on March 28, one of the factions imported armed Youth Congress and Chhatra Parishad goondas from West Bengal and started a rampage in order to oust A. P. Sharma from the post of President and instal Priyaranjan Das Munshi, the Youth Congress chief, in his place. Some of the delegates were injured and the Bihar Police had to resort to a lathi charge and arrest eightyone of the hooligans, mostly non-railwaymen. While the incident took place in the Howrah Division, the West Bengal Chhatra Parishad called for a 'Railway Bundh' in the Sealdah Division on April 1 thus foisting a most unjustified strike on the workers.

Such infighting is also reported in Southeastern Railwaymen's Congress (another affiliate of the NFIR) where Youth Congress hooligans are reported to have forcibly taken over the office of the Anara Branch of the Union.

Railwaymen Fight Back Repression

On March 27, RPF personnel posted at Khirai Station (S. E. Rly.) wantonly fired on some gangmen

and local people injuring four, including three gangmen. The railway workers and local people squatted on the rail tracks and halted all train movement for six hours demanding arrest and punishment of the culprits. The squatting ended after the authorities arrested the guilty RPF men.

Sen-Raleigh Group T.U.C.C. Thanks Workers, Employees & Trade Unions For Support In Their Struggle

The Sen-Raleigh Group T. U. Co-ordination Committee has sent the following message congratulating the workers and employees of these companies and thanking thousands of workers and employees and hundreds of Trade unions for their material and moral support :-

"The one year long struggle of Sen-Raleigh, Sen-Pandit and Ancillaries workers and employees against closure at Asansol and Kalyani units is just over. As a result of the Tripartite agreement signed on 27.3.1972 the factories were re-opened on 31.3.1972. The anti-closure struggle was led by the Sen-Raleigh Group T.U. Co-ordination Committee, Sen-Raleigh Employees' Union (Asansol) and Sen-Pandit Ancillaries Units' Workers' Union (Kalyani). Thousands of workers, employees and hundreds of T. U.'s in West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Goa and other States have supported this struggle materially and morally.

We express our deep gratitude and thanks to them.

We are sorry that we are at present not in a position to communicate with all T. U.'s that helped us in every respect.

We look forward towards strong

On April 7, the GRP and RPF personnel at Bilaspore (S.E.Rly.) manhandled and arrested the Loco Foreman as he opposed theft of coal from the Loco Shed. All railwaymen at Bilaspore spontaneously stopped work for six hours. The strike was called off only when the guilty RPF men were suspended and the Divisional Superintendent gave assurance of an impartial enquiry.

T.U. unity and solidarity and broad based democratic unity to resist the present offensives of the Ruling Class and the Government to restore democracy in West Bengal."

May Day Manifesto

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dock workers, British Miners, Italian agricultural workers and other workers of advanced capitalist countries who have fought long-drawn struggles against the monopoly capital.

The CITU conveys its greetings to the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America for their struggle against imperialist machinations and for national independence. Their struggles go ahead despite repressive measures.

The CITU on this May Day upholds the cause of world peace and reiterates its firm commitment of firm support to every struggle against imperialist preparations of war and armament.

Pledge For Unity, Democracy And Socialism

Let the working class of India take a pledge on this May Day to redouble its efforts to unite the entire people of India in the struggle against monopoly capital and landlords and for the establishment of democratic regime of the people and socialism on the Indian soil.

West Bengal Struggle Against Repression

Call For United Struggle Given By Convention of Four Central Trade Unions

The all-out offensive launched against the Trade Union and democratic movement in West Bengal by the Congress(R), specially after its fraudulent election victory, has brought together all the Left Trade Union Organisations with a firm determination to resist this offensive unitedly.

The call for united struggle was given at a Joint Convention held at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta on April 15 under the auspices of the State Committees of four Central T.U. Organisations CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and T.U.C.C.

All the speakers at the Convention cited innumerable instances of how the workers and activists of Left Trade Unions are being systematically attacked and forcibly evicted from their homes and places of work. Armed Congress (R) goondas, with the backing and encouragement of Police, CRP and administration, are on rampage especially in the industrial areas where Left Trade Union and democratic movement has a strong base.

The Convention unanimously adopted a resolution which alleged that workers and activists of unions are being assaulted and murdered by Congress (R) goondas armed with rifles, revolvers and bombs, and Union offices are being forcibly occupied, burnt or looted by them. Members of Left Trade Unions are being forced to join Congress (R) unions and those who resist are being prevented from joining their duties. The employers are taking advantage of this situation to retrench these workers for unautho-

rised absence. Even rowdies are being given employment to terrify the workers inside the factories and to disrupt the organised unions. These rowdies are collecting forced subscriptions from the workers and preventing leaders and organisers of the unions from entering the factories. Hundreds of union leaders and activists have lost their employment in this way. Where closed mills are being re-opened, supporters of Congress (R) are being employed in place of those who worked there before the closure.

Since the General Election, 30 workers and supporters of Left Parties have been murdered and more than 20,000 evicted from their homes along with their families. Trade union functioning has been totally stopped in about 300 factories, offices, coal mines, tea gardens etc.

Wherever the workers and employees resist these attacks the Police and CRP are used to arrest and detain them without trial on false charges. Inhuman brutalities are being perpetrated on them inside the jails. Several hundreds of such prisoners have been sent to Cuddalore jail where they are being subjected to inhuman torture.

The entire State administration, especially the Labour Department, is virtually functioning as the Party office of Congress (R). The Labour Department is ignoring the recognised majority unions and helping the employers by encouraging them to sign anti-worker agreements with the stooge unions.

The resolution warned the people that these attacks of the ruling

class will intensify in the coming days and will spread to other States unless checked at once. To resist these, united struggle of all sections of democratic people—peasants, students, youth and women—have to be built up under the leadership of the working class.

The resolution appealed to all sections of the people and other Central T.U. Organisations to take active part in these united struggles and also appealed to the working class and democratic people in other States to support the people of West Bengal in their struggle for Trade Union and democratic rights.

The Convention adopted a 12-point charter of demands which included restoration of T.U. rights and right to freely organise and conduct T. U. activities; cessation of attacks on trade unions and other mass organisations; security for workers to go to their respective places of work; arrest of all anti-socials and geondas; vacation of all T.U. offices forcibly occupied by goondas and stoppage of forcible collections from workers; political status for arrested persons and release of all political prisoners including those detained without trial; non-partisan functioning of the State administration including the Labour Department; stoppage of all attempts for retrenchment, wage-cut and increase in work-load; re-opening of closed factories, offices and other establishments and reinstatement of all retrenched employees fully retaining their rights; arresting of rise in prices and taxes; rise in wages; rehabilitation of evicted hawkers; jobs or unemployment relief for all unemployed; rehabilitation, with compensation for damages to property or home, of persons forcibly evicted from their homes.

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Repression on Coalmine Workers in West Bengal

By Employers, Congress (R) and INTUC Goondas

Since the fall of the second United Front Government in March, 1970 coalmine workers of Raniganj coal-belt have been facing growing attacks from hired goondas of mine-owners and hoodlums of the youth and student wing of Congress (R) backed by police. Repeated representations to the authorities have gone unheeded. After the rigged elections and formation of a Congress (R) Government in the State these attacks have been intensified manifold.

In a Memorandum sent on April 1, Robin Chatterjee, General Secretary, Colliery Mazdoor Sabha (CITU) has drawn the attention of the Chief Minister of West Bengal to the reign of terror and lawlessness prevailing in the Raniganj coal-belt and has demanded immediate end to these attack on the life and T. U. rights of workers.

The Memorandum, citing a large number of instances, points out that the employers, puppet unions of the Congress (R) and hired gangsters, backed by the police, are implicating T. U. leaders and workers in false cases, indiscriminately attacking workers' quarters and evicting them by force. Evicted workers are not being allowed to return to their quarters or join their work by the armed goondas of the employers who are utilising this opportunity to retrench thousands of workers on so-called charge of absenteeism. Nearly 2500 workers of Shri Amritnagar Selected, Karnani Nimcha, Monoharbahal, South Jairamdas, Patmohana and many other collieries are facing this situation.

The situation has fast deteriorated after the rigged elections. Now the anti-socials of every tripe; including those of youth and student wings of congress (R), in collusion with unscrupulous T. U. leaders of Congress (R) and police are terrorising workers in order to pressurize them to leave the CITU unions and join Congress (R) unions. Workers' quarters are being attacked with deadly weapons, leaders and workers of the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha are being assaulted and threatened with violence and arrest and workers are being evicted from their hearth and homes.

Taking opportunity of this situation, the colliery magnates are trampling underfoot legitimate rights of workers and are even refusing to pay their rightful dues. Arrear wages, salaries and other legal dues of workers, running into

British Mine Workers' Union Thanks CITU for Support

In his letter dated March 24 addressed to P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU, Lawrence Daly, Secretary of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers has acknowledged Ramamurti's message of support and solidarity to British Miners during their six-week old strike in the following words :

"Thank you for your letters of the 15th February setting out message of support in our recent dispute and of course these messages were very much appreciated."

crores of rupees, remain unpaid in many collieries. The position is worst in the case of Pure Sitalpur, Victory (MG) and Bhattar's Group of collieries. The colliery owners are also refusing to give the variable Dearness Allowance of Rs. 1.77 due to the workers since October, 1971.

The coalmine workers of Raniganj belt, under the leadership of the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha, are determined to unitedly resist this fascist onslaught on their livelihood and T.U. rights.

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The Convention also decided upon a three-tier programme of movement including (a) observance of Anti-Terror Day all over the State on May 11; (b) a mass deputation to the State Government in the second week of May on the demand for rehabilitation of the evicted workers and their families; (c) an extensive campaign to apprise the people of other States about the attack on life and democratic rights of the people of West Bengal.

The Convention also called upon the people of the State to take part in the "May Day" rally in thousands and make it a truly historic one, thereby demonstrating their firm resolve to resist the semi-fascist offensive of the ruling class.

The convention also adopted a resolution expressing solidarity of the working people of India with their fighting brothers and sisters in Vietnam.

Earlier, on April 8, the West Bengal State Committees of the CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC issued a joint statement on the same demands, calling upon all sections of workers and other democratic masses to unitedly fight this barbaric repression.

Militant Struggles Continue

The growing resistance of the working class to the anti-people policies of the Government and the naked exploitation of the employers is increasingly taking the shape of united militant struggles in various States of India. More so in Tamilnadu where, as reported in earlier issues of The Working Class, a new upsurge in militant united struggles has taken place in the last several months. The historic strike struggles of Simpson, Coimbatore and Avadi seems to have raised the workers' consciousness to a new level.

2000 workers of Cement Factory in Coimbatore district are on strike since April 13 for increased D. A., higher wages, gratuity, night shift allowance etc. A. Nallasivam, Asstt. Secretary of the CITU—Tamilnadu State Committee has issued a statement supporting the strike.

Over 6000 workers of Mettur Spinning Mills are on strike since February 21 on the demand for implementation of the State's First Wage Board recommendations of 1961 on the question of fixation of grades and scales of pay, quarters, etc.

About 6000 workers of Harvey Mills are observing work-to-rule from April 3 in protest against increased work-load. A 15-man United Action Committee has been formed to lead the struggle. They have rejected the anti-worker agreements signed by the INTUC, AITUC, HMS Unions and are determined to carry on the struggle despite attempts by those unions to sabotage the strike.

Last month the Press workers of

Trichinopoly, led by the Press Workers' Union (CITU), won an important victory when the employers conceded some of their long-standing demands, including leave facilities, gratuity, etc.

Despite arrests of hunger-strikers on false charges by DMK police, workers of Lakshmi Machine Works, Coimbatore are on relay hunger strike since March 6 in support of their demand for Bonus. T. Balan, General Secretary of General Engineering & Mechanical Union (CITU) has supported the struggle of the workers of Lakshmi Machine Works.

About 1500 plantation workers of Govt. Rubber plantation, Kanyakumari District, are on Strike since March 20 to realise their demands for Bonus, P. F., Gratuity, wages etc. at par with those prevailing in plantations in the private sector.

The workers of E. I. D. Parry's Sugar Factory, under the leadership of their Workers' Union, recently ended their 27-day old successful strike after an agreement was reached with the owners under which they are to get Rs. 31.53 more as basic wages, Retaining Allowance of 8½% for laid-off unskilled workers, increased night shift allowance, increased wages for casual workers, etc. These benefits will also be extended to workers of Parry's Sweets Factory.

At the Union Elections held on March 26, Com. V. P. Chintan (CITU) was elected President of H. M. Foam Employees' Union defeating the INTUC candidate.

Workers of the Wimco factory recently waged a successful struggle to get one of their colleagues reins-

tated who had earlier been illegally dismissed by the management.

8000 hosiery workers of Tiruppur, who were continuing a determined struggle since February 7 (reported in earlier issues), recently ended their strike after the management signed an agreement conceding 20% wage rise on their February wages. The management also agreed not to victimise any worker. The strike-struggle was led jointly by CITU, DMK and other Trade Unions.

The workers of Hindusthan Photo Films Factory at Ootacamund, a Government of India undertaking, went on a lighting strike on April 6, demanding among other things, withdrawal of disciplinary actions against two workers for alleged anti-management remarks. The management retaliated by declaring a lock-out from April 7. The workers resorted to picketing at the Factory gates during which hundreds of workers were arrested and sent to jails. A settlement was reached on April 16 between the management and the Workers' Union, under which the management agreed to withdraw disciplinary action against the two workers, to pay wages for the lock-out period and not to victimise any worker for participation in the strike. The other demands of the nine-point charter will be settled by informal arbitration and mutual discussions.

Warg Yudhha

(Class Struggle)

(Weekly Journal of the CITU in Marathi)

Editorial Board :

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Successful Strike by LIC Employees

42,000 LIC employees all over India observed token strike on April 25 in support of their eight-point Charter of Demands including recognition of All India Insurance Employees' Association, Bonus at the rate of three months gross salary, reduction of interest rate on Housing Loan, better promotion and leave rules, House Rent Allowance at 15% etc. Earlier, the LIC employees observed 'All-India Demands Day' on April 17 in support of their demands. They are also to boycott bonus and pay for April, 1972 for one day.

The reports so far received indicate that the token strike was completely successful in almost all the States. It was almost 100% successful in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Delhi, Madras, Orissa, West Bengal etc. More than 10,000 Insurance

employees, from sweepers to Superintendents, took mass casual leave in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa.

More than 5000 LIC employees of Calcutta participated in the strike defying armed attacks by Chhatra Parishad and Youth Congress gangsters who attacked the leaders and volunteers of AIIEA near Hindusthan Building and other places. Shanti Bhattacharya, General Secretary, AIIEA (Calcutta Zone) and Saroj Chowdhury, General Secretary of the AIIEA have condemned these armed attacks on the Association leaders by armed goondas of Congress (R).

Meanwhile, the LIC authorities have invited the representatives of the employees for a meeting with them on May 10-11 for discussion on their demands.

Working Committee of CITU West Bengal State Committee Meets

The Working Committee of CITU West Bengal State Committee met on April 9 to review the situation created in West Bengal after the rigged election of March 11.

The Working Committee heard detailed reports from members of different districts about the intensified attacks launched by Congress (R) gangsters after the election against workers, peasants and other democratic people as well as against the trade unions.

The Working Committee called upon the working class to close their ranks and maintain unity at all costs, to establish close links with the democratic organisations of peasants, students, teachers, youth, women and other sections of people. Direction was given to all unions affiliated to CITU to build broad-based unity of workers at the Plant, Factory and Industry level along with forces of UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), TUCC and others who believe in democratic functioning of Trade Unions.

The Working Committee appealed to all other Central Trade Unions in West Bengal to take a forthright stand in defence of T.U. and democratic rights and to support the common struggle of the people of West Bengal for these rights.

The Working Committee also appealed to all trade unions and to workers and employees to donate generously for the relief of those evicted from their homes and places of work by the Congress(R) goondas.

A resolution was also adopted condemning barbarous American bombing in Vietnam and expressing solidarity with the heroic Vietnamese people.

Barbarous US Bombing On North Vietnam

In a desperate bid to halt the victorious march of the National Liberation forces in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, US imperialists have unleashed ferocious and barbarous bombing attacks on North Vietnam from April 16. Hundreds of aircraft of the US Seventh Fleet, including giant B-52 bombers, are daily carrying on innumerable raids deep inside North Vietnam dropping thousands of tons of bombs on thickly populated civilian areas. As a result hundreds of innocent civilians, including women and children, have been killed and a large number of houses, school buildings and hospitals damaged or destroyed.

Peace-loving democratic people all over India have strongly condemned these unprovoked barbarous US bombing and demanded immediate halt to this. The working

class and other sections of democratic people have registered their protests by holding massive demonstrations.

On April 22, a massive rally was organised by the Garden Reach Branch of the Southeastern Railwaymen's Union to the American Consulate at Calcutta to demand immediate end to the barbarous bombing by US imperialists and to express solidarity with the heroic freedom fighters of Indo-China. The B.P.S.F. (SFI) and D.Y.F. also held a joint rally before the American Consulate at Calcutta on April 18.

Over 200 College and University Professors of Delhi staged a rally and demonstration before the USIS office on April 25. They condemned the barbarous US bombing on North Vietnam and killing of innocent civilians and demanded immediate halt to the bombing, among other demands.

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and appealed for solidarity action all over the country to defeat the offensive against the working class and democratic movement in India. The report was supplemented by Niren Ghosh, Secretary, C I T U, Shanti Bose, Kamal Sarkar.

The discussion on the Reports which began on 25 morning continued for the whole day. Biren Roy, Balanandan, Suryanarayana Rao, Gerald Pereira, R. Umanath, Chandi Prasad, Hari Singh Kang, Robin Mukherjee, Robin Chatterjee, Ravi Sinha, Ram Asrey, N. Prasad Rao, S. Y. Kolhatkar, Rabin-dranath, Mohan Punamia, Amal Ghosh Dastidar and Hari Krishna Shah participated in the debate.

The speakers explained in details the activities in their States and emphasised the need for all-India campaign against semi-fascist terror against T.U. and democratic movement in West Bengal. They gave their experience in building united actions on common issues and how several united actions were possible despite opposition from the reformist and revisionist leadership.

The Working Committee adopted several resolutions on the issues facing the working class and the trade union movement.

By a resolution on Viet Nam the meeting denounced the role of U. S. imperialism and appealed to all the Central Trade Unions of India to observe unitedly throughout the country a Day for joint protest against U. S. aggression and for solidarity with the people of Vietnam.

The meeting sent its warm fraternal greetings to the people and working class of Bangladesh and expressed its confidence that "it will be possible to forge fraternal relations between the working class of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan so

that they can march forward together in the common struggle against the forces of exploitation both internal and foreign."

The resolution on Unity and United Actions appealed, "to all sections of workers who are fighting for their battle unitedly to see through the disruptive manouvres of the employers and the Government, realise the danger posed to their united actions by the latest moves of the HMS, INTUC and AITUC leaders and carry forward the banner of unity and united action along the path of further consolidation and advance."

By a resolution on Newsprint Policy the Working Committee criticised the Governments policy of dependence on foreign countries for the supply of newsprint and failure of the Government to take action against press monopoly. It pointed out the rampant black-marketing indulged in by newspaper monopolies and demanded transfer of ownership to co-operatives of working journalists and newspaper employees. The meeting warned that the T. U.s will unitedly oppose any retrenchment of press employees.

The Working Committee conveyed its greetings to jute workers of India for their proposed all-India strike from May 8 in support of their longstanding demands and called for an all-India settlement of the dispute.

The resolution on recognition of trade unions assailed the leadership of AITUC and HMS for giving up the principle of secret ballot and accepting the verification procedure in a modified form. It reiterated once again that the CITU will continue its struggle for the achievement of recognition through secret ballot.

By a resolution on Moratorium on Strikes the Working Committee expressed its concern at the move

for moratorium on strike and criticised the leadership of INTUC AITUC and HMS for accepting restrictions on strike.

The Working Committee strongly condemned "the most revengeful and inhuman" treatment meted to a large number of detainees under PVA Act and MISA in West Bengal who have been transferred to Cuddalore Jail in Tamilnadu. It demanded treatment to them as political prisoners, and their release.

The meeting greeted the LIC employees for their united strike on April 25 demanding 15 per cent bonus, union recognition and other demands. It also strongly condemned the murderous attack on Sunil Maitra, Joint Secretary, All India Insurance Employees Association by Chhatra Parishad gangsters.

The meeting criticised the terms of reference of the Second Bonus Commission and the dilatory tactics of the Government to deprive the workers of their claim of 8.33 per cent minimum bonus. It called upon the working class to carry forward the struggle till the achievement of this demand.

By a resolution the meeting criticised the recommendations of the interim report of the Committee on Unemployment which only echoed the Government's policy without suggesting any drastic step. It also attacked the Third Pay Commission for deliberately delaying the submission of the Report.

The meeting passed resolutions greeting the working class of Tamilnadu for recent united struggles, condemning the DMK Government for the proposed anti-working class bill curbing T. U. activity and right to strike, condemning Achutha Menon Government for banning strike of electricity and dam construction workers and criticising the recent Act on taking over the closed units.

The meeting congratulated the railway workers for their recent struggles, demanding full rectification in fraudulent indices, condemn-

ing the licences granted for the manufacture of computer in India and supporting the striking workers in Building and Construction works in Delhi demanding implementation of minimum wage notification.

M. K. Pandhe gave a report on the CITU monthly journal, *The Working Class*, and called for a collective effort to improve its standard as well as circulation in order to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

Bimal Chatterjee presented a report of the Credential Committee according to which 51 new unions with a total membership of 9721 had completed all the formalities of affiliation and their affiliations were accepted. 210 unions with a total membership of 64227 had not supplied all the relevant information. It was decided that they should be given one month's time to supply it so that office-bearers could consider these applications. The proposals of the Credential Committee were accepted by the meeting.

The meeting accepted the invitation of Kerala State Committee of CITU to hold the first biennial Conference of the CITU in Kerala in the last week of December.

B. T. Ranadive summed up the deliberations of the meeting and called upon all the members of the Working Committee to launch a powerful campaign throughout the country to restore Parliamentary democracy and T. U. rights in West Bengal. He emphasised the need to strengthen the CITU organisation and strive for more and more united actions to defend the interests of the working class. In the end he emphasised the need to struggle for socialism which alone will emancipate the working class from the yoke of capitalism.

The meeting of the Working Committee will further strengthen the struggles of the Indian working class against the oppressive rule of the capitalists.

Resist This Attack On T.U. Rights & Democracy Appeal By West Bengal Trade Unions

The ruthless repression and reign of terror let loose in West Bengal against workers and employees after the fall of the U.F. Government in 1970 have been greatly intensified after the rigged Elections of March 11. It has reached such a stage when even the basic democratic right of the people to form Unions and Associations and to function them with freedom is at stake. Unless this dangerous trend is resisted unitedly by all workers, Trade Unions and democratic people of the country, this is bound to spread to other parts of India when the very survival of democracy will be in danger.

This warning was given by three Trade Unions of West Bengal—Jay Engineering Workers Union, the Dugapur Trade Union Co-ordination Committee and Calcutta State Transport Employees' Union (all affiliated to C.I.T.U.)—at separate Press Conferences held in Calcutta on April 7, April 17 and April 19 respectively.

The Press Handout issued by these Trade Unions quoted innumerable instances of assault and murder of workers, employees and Union activists; burning, looting and forcible occupation of Union offices; burning and looting of workers' quarters and their forcible eviction from homes; forcing worker to resign from CITU Unions and to join Congress (R) Unions; forcible collection of money from workers etc.

These Trade Unions have appealed to all workers and Trade Unions and democratic people of the country, irrespective of their political views, to take note of the gravity of the situation and extend their active support and co-operation in their struggle in the common interest of defending Trade Union rights and democracy in West Bengal.

They have also appealed to the members of the Press to make their own investigation and ventilate the incidents.

CITU Condemns Wanton Firing on Spanish Workers by Franco's Police

On March 10, when workers of the Bazan shipyard in El Ferrol (Spain) were holding peaceful demonstrations to protest against the attempt of National Bazan Enterprise to impose an anti-worker agreement, Franco's police attacked them and resorted to wanton firing. Two workers, Amador Rey Rodinguez and Daniel Niebla Garcia were killed in the firing and 29 others seriously injured. A large number of workers were also arrested. Despite police repression, the working class and people of El Ferrol went on a general strike in protest against these brutal and dastardly killings.

In a letter to the Government of Spain in Madrid, P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU, has strongly condemned this brutal and wanton firing which is a flagrant violation of the fundamental trade union and democratic rights of workers. He has demanded immediate end to such firings, restoration of trade union and democratic rights and punishment of those responsible for the killings.

In another letter, addressed to the Secretary General of the Committee of panish Workers in Paris P. Ramamurti has Conveyed the red salute of the CITU and working class of India to the memory of the martyrs of El Ferrol. He has also sent warm greetings and congratulations to the entire working class and people of El Ferrol for their brave resistance and heroic struggle against the attacks of the fascist regime.