



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

On Other Pages

- *Magnificent Response To November 17 Bundh*
- *Upsurge Of Militant Struggles By South African Workers*
- *Interim Wage Rise For Five Lakh Coal Workers*
- *Bonus Movement By Bhilai Workers—A Review*
- *Delhi Bundh—A Great Success*
- *Central Government Employees & Workers On To Countrywide United Mass Actions*
- *Locomen Plan Bigger United Struggle*
- *Lawful Cheating | Legal Notes*
- *Delhi Statesman Workers Struggle*
- *Jute Workers Again Prepare For Industry-wide Strike*
- *Other Regular Features*

Editorial Board

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All Support To Loco Workers

B. T. Ranadive, *President CITU*

ANOTHER MEETING BETWEEN THE AIRLSA representatives and the Railway Board Officials has revealed that the latter are out for sabotaging the August agreement and plunging the country into a railway strike. The Deputy Railway Minister representing the Government, is helping the officials to sabotage the agreement and cheat the workers. The Labour Minister looks on helplessly paralysed and transfixed before the arrogant railway officials. The Railway Minister issues statements and promises but does neither chastise the officials nor sack any one of them. The Prime Minister who is appealed to by the LRSA leaders remains silent and does nothing. They all pin their faith in the treacherous conduct of some federation leaders to disrupt the ranks of the workers and cheat the LRSA workmen of the reduction of duty hours.

It is time all central organisations stepped in to demand the implementation of the agreement and tell the Government it will not be allowed to break the settlement which has the full support of public opinion and all political parties.

Since the end of the strike the railway board officials have resorted to delaying tactics in one meeting after another. The Board representatives have virtually told the LRSA leaders that they are not a party to the settlement and that every thing has to be discussed anew. They have come with a fantastic suggestion that a period of four years should be provided for the implementation of the 10 hour day, though the agreement lays down that the issues should be settled within three months.

Every imaginable excuse is being advanced to protract the negotiations. The railway board now pleads operational difficulties. They say they require more engines, new lines, new quarters, new rest

**DEC. 1 : ALL INDIA PAY STRIKE
 BY CENTRAL GOVT. EMPLOYEES**

crew vans and running rooms before they could think of introducing the ten hours work day. All this amounts to telling the employees to wait till the dooms-day.

The LRSA representatives have exposed every argument advanced by the railway board officials. They have pointed out that operational difficulties can be easily overcome. All that is needed is to arrange relief of engine crew after ten hours duty. To be able to do this is necessary to have a sufficient trained cadre, a proper mode of transport and running rooms at certain points.

As far as the adequacy of trained cadre is concerned it is known that the administration maintains a reserve of fifty per cent and there should be absolutely no difficulty in the way of introduction of the new work day. In earlier days shortages were met through a condensed course of training and there is no reason why the same should not be done now if it is necessary. In fact this would help to absorb a number of unemployed person for whom the Government expresses its solicitude.

The LRSA has also pointed out that neither the mode of transport of relieving crew nor running room constitutes a problem.

On the question of victimisation also the same dishonest attitude is being pursued. In a large number of cases agreed decisions have been reached but these are not implemented under

the plea that the settlement is a package deal and unless there is agreement on the major issue the unjust victimisation orders will not be withdrawn.

As if all this provocation was not enough, the Railway Board is trying to disrupt the ranks of the workers through bribery and by using the services of some leaders and organisations who carry no credentials with the loco workers. They have granted cash awards from Rs. 25/- to Rs. 1,000 to those who did not join the strike. It stands to the honour of the Motormen of Howrah Car Shed that they refused to accept this bribe money.

Simultaneously, the officials are working through other railway federations. According to the General Secretary of the AILRSA, they have set up a parallel consultation with the AIRF and NFIR and started negotiations on the problems of the Loco Running Staff. The question of leave reserve has been decided and for one year the Loco Running Staff have to put up with a loss to the extent of 5%.

The meaning of these developments is plain and simple. The railway board officials are out to sabotage the agreement, divide the loco workers from other railway workers and plunge the country into a strike.

An extended meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the AILRSA took stock of the situation and while agreeing to meet the Railway Minister in

another meeting, has come to the conclusion "it may have to once again unleash further agitation for ensuring the implementation of the agreement." It has called upon the workers to observe a protest day and hold conventions in December to apprise other sections of railway workers and Central Government employees about the situation.

All trade union organisations will welcome these decisions. Especially welcome is the effort to seek greater unity, and understanding with other sections of railway workers.

It should be noted that the AIRF convention held in October also passed a resolution to hold a convention of all trade union organisations of railwaymen and other Central employees, feeling that all-in-unity was necessary to secure needbased wage and other demands. Let the AIRF leaders put their strength behind the AILRSA and defeat the Railway Board's game of dividing the workers. They should refuse to negotiate with the Board on the question of Locomen's demands accepting the reality that the AILRSA has the confidence of the locomen.

Once more the railway officials are breaking a solemn agreement. Let the united voice of the working class be raised in defence of the loco workers and warn the authorities that the entire working class to a man will throw in its full weight behind the locomen.

Locomen Plan Bigger United Struggle

SEETHING with resentment at the non-implementation of the August agreement, about 800 delegates from almost all the Loco sheds of the country attended the extended meeting of the CEC of the All India Loco Running Staff Association at Delhi. P. K. Barua, Secretary General, in his report reviewed the last struggle and pointed out that although the unity and determination of the Locomen was the main factor behind the glorious victory, the support received from various section of railwaymen, ladies and family members from railway colonies, Opposition M. P.'s and the people at large was no less a contributory factor. Locomen have, therefore, a great duty towards the people suffering from the economic crisis. They must build up their struggle as a part of the bigger struggle against the Government policies.

Explaining the present position of the negotiations, he said that there is a virtual stalemate as the officials have raised various operational difficulties not connected with the question of reduction of duty hours. He hoped the Railway Minister, who desired to meet the LRSA representatives before the next round of talks on November 29, would intervene. But he asked the Locomen to prepare for struggle while exposing the game of the Railway Board. He also

asked the members to prepare for a broader united struggle with other sections of Government employees on the basic demands of need-based minimum wage, bonus, etc. The report was adopted unanimously.

The CEC also decided to observe November 26 as 'Protest Day', hold divisional conferences on December 28 and explain the situation to railwaymen and other sister organisations. In the event of no satisfactory settlement, the Working Committee was vested with full powers to take decisions of struggle for implementation of the agreement. In another resolutions, the Secretary General was directed contact other organisations of Central Govt. employees for building up united struggle on basic demands.

The Prime Minister, Railway Minister and the Labour Minister have been intimated of these decisions with requests to intervene.

Organisational preparations by Locomen in S. E. Rly

The LRSA of S. E. Railway will hold divisional conferences in all the divisions by November 27. On November 15, a divisional conference was held at Bilaspur with 250 delegates, after which a demonstration was led to the Divisional Superintendent and a public rally held near the Railway Station which was addressed by M. R. Sabapathy, S. K. Dhar and others. Only a

fortnight back a similar conference held by the AITUC led S. E. Railwaymen's Union was attended by only 40 delegates forcing them to abandon the holding of a public meeting.

Locomen refuse 'Reward' for Strike-breaking

Refusing to become 'permanent dalals' of the Railway authorities, Motormen of the Howrah Car Shed refused to accept cash rewards offered by the Railway Board to those Locomen who worked during the strike. Similar reports have come in from Bilaspur and various other centres.

AIRF leaders face Black Flag

For scuttling the merger of three Unions in the Integral Coach Factory, Perambur, Priya Gupta and another leader of the AIRF who went there for a meeting with the General Manager on November 14, had to face black flag demonstration by the workers. The indignation among workers ran so high that the General Manager had to cancel the meeting.

LRSA in the forefront of Railwaymen's struggles

Fresh from their victorious strike, Locomen are now leading the struggles of all sections of railwaymen. With their support, the Shed Mechanical Staff of Eastern Railway recently won an important victory. Locomen have also been joining the struggles of other sections of Railwaymen at Bhojudih, Tata-nagar, Raipur and other centres of the South Eastern Railway.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND WORKERS On To Countrywide United Mass Actions

From A Correspondent

WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT of the Government decisions on the Third Pay Commission recommendations, the country is again resounding with the angry demonstrations of 2.8 million Central Government employees and workers. On 8th October around noon, the Union Finance Ministry declared the government decisions on recommendations of the commission and the afternoon sky of all State Capitals was rent with the slogan—"Down with the Government Decisions on the Third Pay Commission's Recommendations", in lakhs of voices. Next two days, 8th and 10th of October, witnessed series of mass-demonstrations of the Central Government employees and workers in every work-place all over India.

To cool-off the resentment that generated among all sections of the central employees immediately after the retrograde recommendations were submitted by the commission to the government and to impose unilateral decisions of the government in this regard, the government only marked time under the sham show of "negotiations" with the staff-representatives in the joint consultative machinery at the national level. But contrary to government's calculation and anticipation, its final decisions after three months' haggling in the name of "negotiations" have not only made the employees' determination more solid to fight

for realisation of their just demands but also have strengthened and increased numerically their ranks, as those who had earlier expressed "satisfaction" at the government decision to "negotiate" with the staff-representatives in the JCM before the government takes final decision on the commission's report" and were much hopeful about the outcome of the "negotiations" and hence, refrained from organising movements, had to fall in and join hands with the Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers led by Comrade S. K. Vyas, in building united movements against the government decisions on the Commission's recommendations. So, the 19th of October was observed as All India Protest Day by holding joint mass-rallies and demonstrations all over the country, in which not only Madhusudan—Om Prakash Gupta groups of Confederation and NFPTE, but also FNPTO—the organisation which was created by the government in the P. & T. after the heroic strike-struggle of 1968, participated. Seldom was there any place in India where Central Government employees and workers were stationed, mass-demonstrations and rallies were not held on 19th of October to protest against the government's unilateral decisions on the commission's report. Though the AIRF and the AIDEF did not officially co-sponsor the programme, a large

number of affiliated units of these two all-India organisations and the various categories of railwaymen belonging to different categorical organisations joined the rallies and demonstrations held on this day.

To carry forward the preparation for united industrial action, the Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers organised a 12-hour long mass sit-in demonstrations in all central government offices and establishments all over the country on 31st October, 1973. A sizeable section of railwaymen also participated in the programme. Though, this time, the Madhusudan—Om Prakash Gupta groups and the FNPTO could not rally round this programme, possibly because of their indecision as to how far they would involve their respective organisations and ranks in having a confrontation with the government, a large number of their rank and file who by this time, particularly after joint observance of 19th October's programme, realized the necessity of going in for united mass-actions for achievement of their just demands, participated in the sit-in demonstrations on 31st October, 1973. Meanwhile, the All India Loco Running Staff Association, from its recently held Central Executive Committee's meeting, has decided to associate itself with the country-wide united industrial action of the Central employees at Delhi to discuss and decide upon the possibilities of building up a broad-based united industrial action of the central government employees and workers, in the context of the AIRF's decision to go in for indefinite strike in February, 1974. ■

Interim Wage Rise For Five Lakh Coal Workers

AT THE MEETING OF the Joint Bipartite Wage Negotiating Committee for Coal Industry held on November 19, a settlement was arrived at between the CITU, INTUC and AITUC, representing the workers, and the Coal Mines Authority, Bharat Coking Coal Ltd., NCDG and others representing the employer side.

According to this settlement, 5 lakh workers in 1100 collieries all over India will get interim wage increase of Rs. 39 per month from November 15, 1973 pending final recommendation of the Committee. Daily rated and contract labour will get interim rise of Rs. 1.50 per day. All workers, including contract labour, on whom the Coal Wage Board recommendations are applicable will get benefit of this wage rise.

Moreover, this wage rise will be taken into consideration for the purpose of Provident Fund, Workmen's compensation or insurance, overtime, leave with pay, paid holidays, maternity and sick leave, lay-off and retrenchment compensation, gratuity and profit sharing benefits of workers.

The workers will start getting wages at the higher rate from December 1 and the arrears will be paid off by December 19.

Earlier, at the second meeting of the Joint Committee held on October 24, the CITU representative demanded an interim wage rise of Rs. 65 from the date the Joint Committee was appointed. However, the INTUC and AITUC demanded Rs. 52 from November 1.

As the coal mine employers rejected both the demands, a joint meeting of the CITU, INTUC and AITUC decided to give call for a token strike on November 15 and an indefinite strike from November 26 if their demands were not met in the meantime. The dates were later changed to November 26 and December 10 respectively. In view of the settlement, the call was however withdrawn.

At the Joint Committee meeting of November 19, Shri J. G. Kumarmangalam proposed an interim wage rise of Rs. 39 from December 1, which was later changed to November 15. Although the CITU representative forcefully reiterated his earlier demand for Rs. 65 wage rise from August, he had to agree to the new proposal for the sake of working class unity since the INTUC and AITUC had already accepted the same.

But the CITU representative successfully fought for the deletion of some clauses from the draft settlement relating to the code of discipline and excluding

the casual and contractors' workers from the purview of the wage rise. He also demanded that the wage increase should be taken into account while calculating quarterly bonus as per Coal Mines Bonus Scheme and underground allowance, but this could not be included for lack of support from the other Trade Unions.

The meeting also decided to set up a sub-committee with
(See Page Six)

Six Workers Killed in Dhanbad Colliery Firing

On November 15, six workers including a woman worker of the Angarpathra and Gazalitanr collieries of the Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. were killed, and eight more were seriously injured, when the Security Force and anti-socials in the employ of the management opened fire on a large deputation of Coal workers who had gone to the Area Manager's office at Sijua, Dhanbad to submit a memorandum. Uptil now at least 15 workers are missing.

The workers had gone there in a mass deputation to submit a memorandum against the reign of goonda terror let loose by the management at these collieries and to demand a stop to these. Earlier, on November 13, a conciliation meeting at the Regional Labour Commissioner's office was to be held but the management did not turn up.

This unprovoked firing and killing have been condemned by the CITU and others.

Bonus Movement By Bhilai Workers

—A Review

AFTER CARRYING ON A valiant movement for over three months for 20 per cent Bonus (reported in November 1973 issue of *The Working Class*), the workers of Bhilai Steel Plant have now to be content, for the time being, with 8.33 per cent bonus for 1972-73 and a paltry ad hoc of Rs. 100 for 1973-74. This is the result of an agreement signed by the INTUC and some other unions on November 13, betraying the interests of all workers including their own following.

The workers, one and all were in a fighting mood and there was a great urge for united action amongst them. The Hindusthan Steel Employees Union (CITU) tried hard to build up united action from the very beginning, but the vacillations of the other unions, particularly the INTUC, let the workers down.

In view of the huge profit earned by the Steel Plant in 1972-73, the HSEU took the initiative to raise the demand for 20 per cent bonus for 1972-73. A memorandum signed by over 5000 workers was submitted. Simultaneously, a call to boycott 8.33 per cent bonus was given and an appeal made to all other trade unions for a joint movement on this issue. The call was repeated from a mass meeting on September 1 which was addressed by Md. Ismail, M.P., Vice-

President of CITU. The slogan of 'Bonus Boycott' became so popular that the INTUC, AITUC and other unions were forced to support it, though belatedly.

In the meantime, the management announced a programme of bonus payment but the workers firmly continued their boycott.

On September 21, at a joint meeting of all the unions, the HSEU and some other unions proposed a one-day strike but no date could be fixed due to the vacillations of the INTUC. Ultimately, a one-hour strike in each shift on October 15 was agreed upon. But at the last moment the INTUC backed out and unilaterally announced a 'hunger strike' movement from October 17. In the interest of unity, the CITU and AITUC unions were forced to call off the strike. The workers, though confused and angry at the INTUC back-out, firmly continued their boycott.

Sensing the mood of the workers, the INTUC union decided to take a strike ballot on October 20 and the AITUC followed suit. The HSEU supported it and worked hard to make it a success. As a result 99 per cent workers voted for strike. After some usual dilly-dallying the INTUC served strike notice on October 31, but simultaneously started secret

parleys at Delhi to wiggle out of the strike. The workers, including the INTUC rank and file, were keen on the strike and were seriously preparing for the strike. The HSEU appealed to INTUC for forming Joint Committees to lead the strike, but without any response.

Finally, on November 11, the INTUC union issued a leaflet praising the Government and stating that due to higher profit the workers will get higher bonus in 1973-74. Simultaneously they stopped all preparations for the strike. To cap it all came the betrayal—the agreement of November 13.

There is a tremendous discontent among the workers at this surrender. They are confident that the strike would have been successful and they would have won if there was no betrayal. The lesson learnt in this struggle will enable them to be more careful in future.

Coal Workers

(From Page Five)

representatives of employers and Trade Unions to go into details about the differentials, nomenclature, categorisation and work-load. The CITU feels that the employers will now try to increase work-load and reduce employment in the name of rationalisation as has already been done in NCDC and Singareni collieries and in some Bengal Coal mines. The coal workers will, therefore, have to get prepared to resist unjust workload and at the same time fight for minimum wage and other vital demands.

Lawful Cheating

SO, THE EMPLOYER HAS the charter to Cheat ! At least the Calcutta High Court held so in the case of Assam Railway and Trading Co. vs. S.K. Sen and others. (1)

It was a case of sordid deception on the part of the employer. The Company entered into a settlement with the workmen over certain matters in dispute between them as early as 31 July 1959. These matters included a dispute as to the pay scales of the workmen. But it was one of the usual companies who make agreements in order to violate them. Hardly had the ink been dry on that agreement, the Company backed out, saying that the agreement could not be implemented unless the Government raised the selling price of coal by Rs. 1. 50 per ton.

The Company made a pretence of corresponding with the Central Government in the matter. The object was obvious—to procrastinate and build an excuse for not implementing the agreement.

The Union felt themselves at the tether of their patience and, on January 15, 1960, they went on strike.

In face of the solidarity of the workmen, the Company resorted to the well-trying tactics of alternate cajoling and threats. When threats could not break the unity of the workmen, the Company gave out that no decision could be taken as long as the

strike continued and, on January 27, 1960, they issued a statement that anyone joining duty by January 30, 1960 would be given employment.

The workmen accepted the assurance of the Company at its face value and reported for duty on 30 January 1960. But assurances of the capitalist are as vows written in water. As soon as the workmen joined they issued chargesheets against as many as 86 workmen and dismissed them. The dispute went to the Tribunal and the reference



Arun Prokas Chatterjee



was on the question whether that dismissal was justified.

The Tribunal gave an award full of inconsistencies. For, at one place, it said that it was an instance of unfair labour practice and, at another place, it said just the contrary. It is often found that, in the dispute between the working class and the capitalists, the Tribunals land themselves in such contradictions in their zeal to exhibit their impartiality.

But the tragedy for the workmen is that such exhibitions of impartiality are taken full advantage of by the employer in the Higher Courts and they drive home the contradictions to their own advantage.

In the present case also the Tribunal came to the finding that there was no material to justify the conclusion that the

management wanted to crush legitimate trade union activities or that active union workers were chosen for victimisation and that there was no unfair labour practice in this matter.

But, a little later, the Tribunal found that there had been a breach of the assurance given by them on 27 January 1960. Further, to cover up their deceit, the Company alleged that they had addressed two letters to the Union secretary saying that the Company reserved the right to institute disciplinary proceedings against the workmen, whereas in fact they never served such letters on the union secretary. The Tribunal found so and the High Court has also not disturbed this finding that no such letters were ever served on the Union Secretary.

The Tribunal found on the aforesaid facts that the dismissal of at least 36 out of 86 workmen was unfair labour practice.

Apart from seizing on the fact that the Tribunal dismissed the contention of unfair labour practice at one place and upheld that contention at another the High Court came to the conclusion that cheating and fraud practised on the workmen did not constitute unfair labour practice. The learned Judges held :

“A breach of promise or assurance or undertaking by an employer whatever other consequences it may have, cannot be said to be unfair labour practice. A breach of promise or assurance may be illegal, it may amount to a breach of contract, it may be a mala fide act, it may

even be a fraudulent act, but in so far as it is not inseparably connected with the relationship of employer and employee, it cannot be said to be unfair labour practice..."

We must confess that the reasoning of the learned Judges may appear too learned for the working class. It sounds highly abstruse that, as in this case, fraud and deception may lead to the dismissal of as many as 86 workmen, temporarily stall the trade union activities of the workmen and yet all this will not amount to unfair labour practice.

The learned Judges drew their strength from a Supreme Court Judgement in the case of Workmen of the Motor Industries Co. Ltd. Vs. Management of Motor Industries Co. Ltd. and another (2), but it was the worse for it.

In that case, over the suspension of a workman, there was a lightning strike at 2.30 P. M. and there was a settlement at 5 P. M. whereby the workmen promised not to resort to any strike without giving at least 4 days' notice and the management agreed not to victimise any workman for resorting to that strike. Immediately after, the management chargesheeted four workers for misconduct under the Standing Orders for resorting to the strike and dismissed them. On a reference, the Tribunal held that, though the management had promised not to victimise any workman for participating in the strike, the Union could not prove that they had promised not to take any action against any workmen in connection with the strike. The Tribunal held that there was no victimisation (? !)

The Supreme Court upheld the award of the Tribunal.

1. *Calcutta Weekly Notes*
at page 848

2. *AIR 1969 Supreme Court*
at page 1280

Delhi Statesman Workers Continue Grim Struggle

FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS the workers and employees of the Delhi office of 'The Statesman', led by the Statesman Employees' Union, have been continuing a grim struggle against the repression and goonda attacks launched by the management.

Ever since the Wage agreement of January, 1971, under which the workers won some major demands, the management intensified its attacks on the Union leadership and the workers to counteract the growing influence of the Union. With the help of a few bought-up stooge workers the management organised a goonda-gang comprising of some daily rated workers and outside anti-socials. With the help of its henchmen and 'private militia', the management adopted every dirty trick in the book to disrupt the unity of the workers and terrorise them into submission. It encouraged its henchmen to fan communal and regional feelings among workers, to intimidate workers from joining union meetings, to beat up workers and Union leaders and prevent the normal functioning of the union. When all these failed, the management even engineered the formation of a stooge union (Statesman Workers' Union) and set up self-styled office-bearers to confuse the workers. To facilitate the operation of the goonda-gang, the management allowed outsiders and anti-socials free access

to the departments and staff-quarters.

Led by the Employees' Union, the workers all along stood firm against these attacks. On September 21 last, failing to prevent the Union from holding a meeting of workers, the goonda-gang launched a brutal attack on the workers and Union leaders after the meeting. Protesting against this, the workers *en mass* went on spontaneous strike from September 22 demanding security of life, removal of outsiders from the staff quarters, action against the goondas and suspension of the management henchmen who led the attack. In the face of this determined action, the management had to retreat and suspend some of its henchmen after which the strike was withdrawn on September 25. Although it retaliated by chargesheeting some of the union leaders, it had again to come down and withdraw the chargesheets when the Union threatened to go on strike.

All its dirty tricks having failed to disrupt the unity of the workers, the management is now trying to create dissension among the workers of both Delhi and Calcutta offices by propagating that the Employees' Union wants some workers (meaning its own henchmen) to be charge-sheeted and that the Union is opposing the shifting of the Junior Statesman work from Calcutta to Delhi.

The Employees' Union and the workers are determined to defeat this nefarious game of the management.

Successful Token Strike By Bombay Engineering Workers

AT THE JOINT CALL OF the Engineering Workers' Union, Mumbai Shramik Sangh and General Employees' Union (all affiliated to the CITU), more than 45,000 workers of 200 engineering and other factories of Bombay observed a successful token strike on November 9 in support of the striking workers of Calico Chemicals, Sun-N-Sand Hotel, Bardai Pvt. Ltd. and three other factories and demanding immediate intervention by the Government for a settlement of the disputes.

Through this token strike they also protested against the brutal police repression let loose on 2000 workers of Calico Chemical and 400 workers of Sun-N-Sand Hotel who are on strike for the last three months and the workers of Bardai Pvt. Ltd. who are on strike for the last 16 months.

In the morning of the same day, more than 10,000 workers of 200 factories assembled at the Kamgar Maidan, Parel and marched in a mammoth procession to the office of the Labour Commissioner at Tardeo to submit a memorandum. The workers were addressed by comrades S. Y. Kolhatkar, P. K. Kurane, P. Sanzgiri, A. B. Sawant, S. F. X. Pereira, P. Krishnan and others.

Workers of Calico Chemical fight Police Repression

More than 2000 workers of

Calico Chemicals (controlled by the Sarabhais of Ahmedabad) are on strike since August 10 last protesting against the anti-labour policy of the management. Besides refusing to implement the Award given in 1971 by a Tribunal, to which the demands of the Workers' Union were referred in 1965, the management has consistently denied the right of the Technical and Clerical staff to join or from a union.

The strike was sparked off when the management summarily dismissed Com. Dighaskar, President of the Union Staff Committee. They refused to talk with the union for a settlement and let loose brutal police repression on the workers. Scores of workers including all the Factory and Staff Committee members, were arrested for taking part in union activities, refused bail and subjected to brutal torture in police lock-up. Even Com. S. F. X. Pereira, General Secretary of the Mumbai Shramik Sangh and Com. Bashir, Secretary of the Union were arrested on false charges and the office of the Mumbai Shramik Sangh was raided and searched by the police.

The State Labour Minister, who was approached by the Union, both before and after the strike, for intervention in settling the dispute, pleaded

inability to force the management to sit for negotiations and the Government is turning a blind eye to the police repressions going on.

Despite these repressions, the workers and employees are firm in their determination to fight till victory is achieved. The Maharashtra State CITU is also calling a meeting of the representatives of other Central Trade Unions to discuss broader solidarity actions in support of the Calico Chemical workers.

Engineering Apprentices to get higher Wages & D. A.

According to a recent judgement of the Patankar Tribunal, apprentices in the Engineering industry who were so long getting Rs. 140 per month, will get wages and D. A. at par with unskilled workers, i. e. Rs. 280 per month. The Tribunal has also asked the industry to pay at this rate with retrospective effect from January 1, 1972. Thus, each apprentice will get Rs 3200 as arrears.

The judgement of the Tribunal also provides for 30 days' leave in a year for a daily-rated worker provided he works for 11 months. A foreman is to get Rs. 100 as monthly allowance and 1½ days' wages as overtime for working on Sundays or holidays.

Madan Phadnis, Secretary, Maharashtra Committee of CITU and P. R. Krishnan, Secretary, Engineering Workers' Union (CITU) represented the workers at the Tribunal.

(On Page 12)

Upsurge Of Militant Struggles By South African Workers

“WE WERE ON A razor edge then,...I and probably every other businessman were very worried men.” This was what the head of the Ackermann Supermarket chain had to say while looking back over the mighty strike wave which swept over South Africa for some time. (Cape Times, April 10, 1973)

For over six months, a series of strikes and work stoppages involving nearly 250,000 negro workers swept over South Africa in a mighty wave. It began in the last three months of 1972, reached its climax in mid-February, 1973—when over 30,000 workers were out on strike each day for some days - and subsided in March-April. It was the first sustained episode of struggle since the 60's involving widest sections of African workers and people and signified a rising upsurge of legal and semi-legal actions by workers after a decade of severe repression. Although some of the big strike actions were obviously led and organised by the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)—the trade union wing of African National Congress (ANC)—most of them were spontaneous and lacked overt organisation, which made it difficult to sustain the strikes for long periods.

Rising wave of strike struggles

Towards the end of the

decade of severe repression, in the 60's, a rising wave of strike struggles was noticeable. According to a Government report, the average number of strikes per year in 1959-69 was 70. It rose to 86 in 1971 and between 1972-73 it jumped to 160 involving more than 61,000 negro workers. This, however, does not reflect the true picture—the number of strikes and workers involved were much greater. For one thing, the official figures have always under-stated the extent of strike actions. Moreover many of the strike actions, especially in small units and for shorter durations, were never reported by the press or by the employers to avoid inflaming labour relations further.

Industries and areas affected

While at its peak, the strike wave affected in varying degrees almost all manufacturing industries. It was only in mining and agriculture that there was less impact of the upsurge. Particularly hard hit were the Textile industry (20 out of 160 officially recorded strikes and stoppages) and the Iron and Steel and Engineering industries (22 out of 160). Other industries affected in varying degrees were the transport, construction, distributive trades and other sections of manufacturing industries.

According to an estimate

between 2 lakh to 2.5 lakh negro workers were involved in the strike struggles during the six-month period, October 1972 to April 1973. Some of the major strike struggles recorded in this period include those in African Stevedores, Durban (2000 workers); Frame Group Textiles, Natal (7000); Consolidated Textile Mills, Jacobs (2600); Ropes & Mattings, Durban (2800); Consolidated Textile Mills, East London (2000); Durban Corporation (16,000); Hammersdale Border Industries Complex (7000); Sappi Tugela Paper Mills, Natal (2000) etc.

The areas most affected by strike actions were Durban and Natal. Durban and its industrial complexes (Pinetown, New Germany, Pietermaritzburg) and Northern Natal (Tongaats, Richards Bay, Empangani) accounted for half the number of actions. The other areas which were hit include Johannesburg and most of the Reef industrial towns, and other main industrial centres like Cape Town, East London, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria.

The Background

The keynote of the recent strike struggles was militancy. The African and other black workers not only braved retrenchments, imprisonments, banishment to the poverty-stricken 'homelands', they even faced police batons and bullets with

unflinching courage. Some of the instances of courage have passed into legend and demonstrate how the negro workers have stepped forward to assert their rights. "They often took to the streets, and sometimes took over the streets, turning their strike action into a festival of the oppressed."

Since the '60s, severe repression was clamped down on the negro workers and people to stifle their voice of protests. After the 'Rivonia movement' of 1963 the ANC was banned and the SACTU was virtually banned, though not officially. But these brutal repressions could not dampen their morale, nor could it completely stop the covert operations of the ANC and SACTU.

The exploitation of negro workers reached its present pitch due to many factors—grinding poverty, spiralling prices, wide gap between white and negro wage standards and unemployment—all fruits of the Apartheid and cheap labour policy of the South African Government.

The anger and resentment of the negro workers was flamed by the widening wage gap between white and negro workers. In the mining industry alone the wage gap has widened from 17.6 : 1 in 1966 to 20.3 : 1 in 1971. This in spite of the fact that the percentage of negroes in the total labour force has increased rapidly in the last ten years. In the manufacturing industry the percentage has risen from 70 in 1961 to 77 in 1971.

Due to the growth of foreign investments in industries, the

number of skilled jobs is fast outstripping the number of white workers making the industries more dependent on skilled negro workers. But this is not matched by a corresponding rise in the wage level of negro workers, which remain low and fixed. The real income of the negro worker has been further eroded by the current inflationary pressure. The cost of Living index (Base 1970) has gone up to 118.7 and during the decade 1963-72 it jumped up by 74 per cent. In 1972 alone, price of meat has gone up by 17 per cent and of vegetables by 24 per cent.

Since the consumer Price Index is calculated on the basis of 'white' standard of living, for the negroes it means 50 per cent more rise in the CLI.

The huge pool of negro unemployed, numbering 1.5 million or 30 per cent of the African labour force, by its sheer size acted as the catalyst to this outburst. Another burning problem was the lack of job security and permanency of negro workers in the towns. The Apartheid policy of the Government accentuated the problem by resettling in the barren

(On Page 16)

Ceylon Workers Demand Higher Minimum Wage

In the background of the serious food crisis and spiralling inflation through which the country is passing, the recent announcement on September 30 by the Prime Minister of Ceylon raising paddy prices by Rs. 7 per bushel and wages by 10 per cent for those drawing up to Rs. 400, subject to a maximum of Rs. 20, has raised a storm of protest from the trade unions.

The resentment of the workers is quite understandable, since the rise in price of paddy and other foodstuffs has not been neutralised by a corresponding rise in wages. A wage rise of Rs. 20 actually will mean an additional 65 cents per day. But due to the rise in prices of rice and foodstuffs the additional expenditure for a family of five will be no less than Rs. 2.25 per day.

The Ceylon Federation of

Labour had issued a statement pointing out the inadequacy of the wage rise and urging the Government to accept the demands of the Joint Council of Trade Union Organisations of Ceylon (JCTUO) for ensuring a realistic Cost of Living Index with payment of Rs. 2.50 per point increase.

A week earlier, the JCTUO had submitted a 9-point Charter of Demands to the Employers' Federation of Ceylon, including the demand for a basic minimum wage of Rs. 200 for all categories of workers, non-recurring cost of living allowance of Rs. 2.50 per point increase, permanency after completion of six months' service or requisite period of apprenticeship, etc. It may be noted that the pro-Govt. Unions are willing to accept a minimum wage even as low as Rs. 142.90.

Jute Workers Again Prepare For Industry-Wide Continuous Strike

AT THE JOINT CALL OF all the Central Trade Unions working in the Jute industry, 2.3 lakh workers in 57 out of 62 Jute Mills in West Bengal observed a completely successful one-day strike on November 5. About 20,000 workers of the remaining 5 mills, who had a holiday on November 5, observed complete strike the next day.

One of the most significant and absolutely new feature of the strike was that it was not for any immediate economic gain of the workers, but in defence of the jute growing peasants and for the nationalisation of the Jute industry which will benefit the entire Indian people.

After the successful strike of November 5, Jute workers of West Bengal are again preparing for a much bigger struggle—a industry-wide continuous strike in December, 1973.

The Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU), the major force among jute workers in West Bengal, is holding its Conference from November 30 to December 2, 1973 at Jute Locality, Naihati. Delegates representing workers of all the 62 Jute Mills attending the conference will discuss the General Secretary's report which reviews the developments of the last one year—a glorious year in T. U. movement.

The Jute industry to-day is going through a period of boom in production and trade. This has proved wrong all talks of competition from synthetic substi-

tutes and has once again proved the view held by T. U. leaders for the past one decade that jute goods, being the cheapest packing material for food and other materials, will never lack in demand as no other substitute can take its place.

While the industry is in such a comfortable position, the jute barons and the Government are robbing the jute peasants of a fair price for raw jute. The jute workers of West Bengal are demanding a fair price for raw jute for the jute growers. The Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union and the Kishan Sabha took initiative to hold a joint conference of jute workers and peasants to demand Rs. 80 per maund as price of raw jute.

Another issue before the workers is the loss in wages suffered by them due to the power crisis. In spite of Government assurances, the jute Industry and particularly the workers had to suffer for the last one year. The workers are legitimately demanding full wages for the period of attendance, whether there was work or not, to compensate them for the loss in wages due to power crisis.

Bonus has become another sore point. The Bonus Agreement has lapsed in 1972. In view of the fabulous profits made by the jute industry, the workers now want that the quantum of bonus should be increased from 8.33 to 40 per cent. This has to be settled now.

Other issues of equal importance and to be settled in the coming strike are : the violation of the 1972 agreement ; upward revision of rates for piece-rated workers ; grade and scale for clerks and other monthly rated workers ; free education for workers' children ; canteen ; full ration ; etc.

This time the workers want to settle, once and for all, all their outstanding issues through this all-India strike.

For the all-India strike, the major issues are : (a) nationalisation of Jute industry including raw jute and foreign trade in jute products ; and (b) uniform wage structure and other facilities on an all India basis.

The Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union has approached all Jute Worker's Unions throughout India to come out with a continuous strike on similar demands on a common date. The BCMU has suggested that December 17 be fixed for commencing the continuous strike to which no response has been received so far from other Central T.U. organisations.

Maharashtra Newsletter

(From Page 9)

Dharna by State Government Employees

At the call of the Maharashtra State Government Employees' Confederation, all State Government employees staged an all-night Dharna on November 17 on the demand for D.A. according to Cost of Living Index and extension of the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission to State employees.

Magnificent Response to November 17 Bundh Call

CALCUTTA AND ITS suburbs—nay the whole of West Bengal — witnessed a tremendously successful General Strike and hartal on November 17 last. The call for the Bundh was given unitedly by five Central Trade Unions—CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), TUCC and HMP—supported by nine Left parties—the CPI(M), RSP, SUC, Forward Block, Forward Block (Marxist), RCPI, Workers' Party, S.P. and Biplabi Bangla Congress.

The issue before the Bundh was to protest against the anti-people policies of the Congress Government resulting in food crisis, abnormal rise in prices of essential commodities, ration-cut etc.

Defying large-scale violence by police and Congress hoodlums, arrests, intimidation and threats of reprisal the workers, employees and the people courageously withstood the attacks of the Congress Party and Government to make the Bundh a magnificent success.

Prior to the Bundh, a sustained campaign was carried on unitedly by the Left parties and the trade unions through numerous rallies, meetings and demonstrations all over the State. This was followed by simultaneous Civil Disobedience in different districts culminating in the central Civil Disobedience in Calcutta on November 15. On that day,

thousands marched in a procession from Subodh Mullick Square to Esplanade East where they were stopped by the Police. More than 1500 volunteers led by Comrade Jyoti Basu and other leaders of Left parties courted arrest. Taking advantage of the provocation created by some hired agents of the Congress, the Police made a wild lathi and teargas charge on the people seriously injuring many of them. The people faced this calmly and courageously and returned with firm determination to make the Bundh a grand success.

It may be recalled that the five Left Trade Unions originally called for a Bundh on November 19 and repeatedly appealed to the INTUC, AITUC and HMS to join in the Bundh. But the latter spurned all the appeals and unilaterally called for a 'Cease Work' in industries on November 17. When, to maintain the unity of the working class, the five Left Trade Unions changed the date of the Bundh to November 17, strangely enough the INTUC, AITUC and HMS advanced the date of their 'Cease Work' to November 15. It was clear that their main purpose was not to protest against the price rise etc. but to disrupt the Bundh called by the five Left Trade Unions.

The Congress Party and the Government made huge preparations to oppose the Bundh. The

State Chief Minister announced "tooth and nail" opposition by the Government. Before the Bundh, hundreds were arrested and threats issued to Central and State Government employees to prevent them from joining the Bundh.

On the day of the Bundh itself, hundreds of volunteers including some leaders of Left parties were arrested, police resorted to brutal lathi charge in many places, Congress goondas threw bombs and attacked shopkeepers and raided houses of workers and T.U. leaders. But all sections of the working masses faced these attacks courageously.

About 2 lakh jute workers and one lakh workers in Coal mines participated in the Bundh. In Darjeeling, workers in 90 tea gardens out of 98, in Terai workers in 40 gardens out of 47 and in Dooars in 100 out of 151 gardens participated in the Bundh. In the Engineering industry, 75 to 80 per cent workers participated; in Hind Motors it was a 100 per cent success. In the Textile industry, the bundh was a complete success and in the Durgapur Steel and Alloy Steel plants 70 per cent workers joined the strike in the face of threats and attacks by goondas and police. In the Indian Iron & Steel and Indian Standard Wagon of Burnpur, more than 50 per cent of the workers joined the strike.

The bundh was also completely successful in Howrah and Hooghly districts and in the industrial belts in Raniganj, Asansol and other places. It was

completely successful in the industrial units in Behala, Kidderpore, Hyde Road, Taratolla, Manicktolla, Belliaghata and other industrial centres around Calcutta. In the Barrackpore belt it was successful in Titagarh, Jagatdal, Kamarhati, Naihati, and other places. In Budge Budge it was a complete success.

Defying goonda threats and intimidation, shops and markets remained closed in Calcutta and in all the district towns. Taxis, private buses and rickshaws did not ply in Calcutta and the industrial complexes and trucks and long-distance carrier transport did not operate anywhere. Although some trains ran and State buses and trams in Calcutta were forcibly brought out by the Government, there were practically no passengers barring policemen in mufti and street urchins. Majority of the State Bus and Tram workers joined the strike. In the North Bengal districts shop and markets did not open and transport did not ply. Similar was the case in other districts.

Congratulating the workers, employees and the people for their magnificent response to the Bundh call, the leaders of the five Left Trade Unions pointed out that "the massive success of the general strike shows on the one hand the determination and maturity of the working class and the people of West Bengal and on the other their ability to foil the game of disruption and disunity attempted by the INTUC, AITUC and HMS." They also expressed the hope that the INTUC, AITUC and HMS

CITU Views Explained In ILO Seminars

THE International Labour Organisation and the Norwegian Aid Development Agency (ILO/ NORAD) organised two Seminars on Industrial Relations in India recently. R. Umanath, Secretary, Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU participated in a Seminar held at Bangalore on November 5-6 while M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU read a paper in the Seminar held at Ranchi on November 12-13. The Seminars were attended by leading trade union functionaries, representatives of managements both in public and private sectors and senior Government officials.

The CITU representatives in both the Seminars sharply attacked the industrial relations machinery of the Government which was treating every industrial dispute as a law and order problem. They criticised the Government and the managements for foisting INTUC unions on the workers and demanded recognition of trade unions by secret ballot. They pointed out that multiplicity of trade unions and managements have been responsible for floating bogus unions to disrupt the T. U. movement. They opposed the concept of linking wages with productivity and opposed every

would draw proper lessons from it and come back to the path of unity to carry forward the united struggle to achieve the burning demands of the working class and the people.

restriction on right to strike. They condemned the use of DIR, MISA, ESM Act and other repressive measures during legitimate trade union activities. They pointed out how restrictions have been imposed on trade union and democratic rights of workers. They criticised the recommendations of the National Commission on Labour and the proposed Industrial Relations Law.

Due to the firm position taken by the CITU representatives in these seminars no unanimous conclusions could be arrived at. The representatives of UTUC and UTUC-Lenin Sarani at Ranchi also attacked the present industrial relations machinery on similar lines.

Blind Workers on Indefinite Strike

One hundred and twenty blind workers of the workshop for Blind at Worli in Bombay are on strike since October 1, demanding an increase of Rs. 40 in their monthly stipend and protesting against the rude behaviour meted out to them.

Out of the 120 workers, 80 are inmates of the hostel, 11 of the day workers and 6 of the inmates are married. At present they get a monthly stipend of Rs. 60 only, which has remained fixed for the last 10 years, out of which the inmates have to pay a messing charge of Rs. 30 p.m. The naked exploitation to which they are subjected for so long, coupled with inhuman behaviour meted out to them, sparked off the strike.

KERALA NEWSLETTER

ONE thousand Construction workers working in the Cochin Shipyard resorted to a lightning strike on 27th October in protest against the attack on them by the CISF men and INTUC gangsters. The workers resumed duty after a promise of an impartial enquiry by the General Manager.

Farm workers of Trivandrum District resorted to one-day token strike on November 1.

At the call of Travancore Coir Workers' Union (CITU), one lakh coir workers of Trivandrum district struck work on November 1 demanding ban on husking machines and protesting against the non-implementation of minimum wages.

600 workers of Beliapatam Tile works, Cannanore Dist. resorted to a token strike on November 2 demanding wage increase of Rs. 2/- per day, etc. The strike was called jointly by the CITU and INTUC unions.

600 workers belonging to 10 farms under the Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Department and Agricultural University in Palghat Dist. resorted to a token strike on November 1 demanding confirmation of temporary employees, interim relief, P.F., pension, etc. The strike was conducted jointly by the CITU and AITUC. If the demands of the workers are not acceded to before November 14, 10,000 workers in 92 farms plan to go on indefinite strike.

Workers working in the farms

in Thaliparamba in Cannanore Dist. also resorted to one-day, token strike in support of the above demands.

Under the auspices of the CITU, demonstrations and meetings were held on November 9 in different districts of Kerala protesting against police intervention in trade union disputes, against police repression and against price rise. Reports have come of militant demonstrations and meetings held in Trichur Town, Kunnankulam, Chalakudi, Kodungallur, Puthukkad, Ollur etc, in Trichur Dist., in Kottayam Town and in different parts of Ernakulam Dist.

Workers of Comico-Binani have decided to continue their indefinite strike, going on since September 3, ignoring the ban on the strike imposed by the Central Government under DIR. The demands of the workers include 33% bonus and Rs. 35/- as interim relief.

A joint meeting of TU organisations of Ernakulam Dist. held on November 10 decided to call a general strike in protest against the policies pursued by the Government towards T. U. struggles and to declare support to the struggles going on in the District.

At the call of the Quilon Dist. Coir Workers' Union (CITU) 1.25 lakhs of coir workers resorted to one-day strike on 15th November and 5,000 workers conducted picketing of the Dist. Collectorate, as part of the struggle.

10,000 farm workers under the State Government and Agriculture University started an indefinite strike from 15th November in support of their demands.

Ex-Home guards throughout Kerala conducted Satyagraha before the Kerala Government Secretariat in Trivandrum on November 15, demanding jobs.

Conference of State Government Employees

In the background of the 54-day old heroic strike of the State Government employees including teachers in January—February last and the recent strike struggles of electricity and transport workers, representatives of different organisations representing the overwhelming majority of employees met in a conference on October 12 last and formed a 'Federation of State Employees' and Teachers' Organisations'.

The Conference also decided to organise agitations and struggles on the demands for amendment of the recommendations of the 3rd Pay Commission, parity between wages of State and Central Government employees, D.A. with full neutralisation, Bonus for all, interim relief, etc.

Private School Teachers form Union

A State Convention of private School Teachers of Kerala was held in Ernakulam on October 7 which decided to form the 'Kerala Private School Teachers Union' with V. K. Gopinath, M.L.A. as President and K. C. Gangadharan Pillai as General Secretary.

Militant Struggles By South African Workers

(From Centre Pages)

'homelands' thousands of negro workers rendered jobless, making one in every three African worker a migrant. The diabolical policy of the Government to introduce 'tribalism' and ethnic rivalries in the urban areas also aggravated the situation.

Achievements of the Struggles

In purely economic terms, the recent strike struggles forced the employers to concede wage rise varying from 5 to 50 per cent of basic wages. According to the Financial Gazette, this will increase the earnings of 2.7 million negro workers in industry, mining, commerce and public employment by R 400 million over that of the last year.

Another significant gain achieved by the negro workers is that, through militant and mass actions they have asserted their right to strike despite the official ban on strikes. The Financial Mail had to admit, "It is clear that the law prohibiting African strikes is a dead letter." This is not because that the apartheid rulers are less keen to suppress the negro workers' struggles, "but because they have been shown to be unable to enforce the law if and when large numbers of workers defy it resolutely and simultaneously". This is a lesson which the multitude of exploited negro workers of South Africa will not forget for some time to come.

Source : SECHABA, Official Organ of African National Congress, September 1973.

Consumer Price Index Numbers

(INDUSTRIAL WORKERS/BASE 1960—100)

State/Centre	1973			State/Centre	1973		
	July	Aug.	Sept.		July	Aug.	Sept.
Andhra Pradesh				West Bengal			
Hyderabad	255	253	247	Calcutta	217	220	222
Assam				Howrah	225	229	234
Digboi	222	232	230	Delhi	256	259	264
Bihar				Other Centres			
Jamshedpur	238	249	244	(On different bases)			
Jharia	245	258	247	1973			
Gujarat				July Aug. Sept.			
Ahmedabad	236	233	242	Cuttack (1949)	297	297	292
Bhavnagar	266	260	266	Berhampur (1949)	332	332	340
Haryana				Jabalpur (1949)	307	304	295
Yamunanagar	246	251	252	Beawar (1951-52)	285	284	291
J & K				Himachal Pradesh (1965)	179	183	185
Srinagar	201	204	211	Goa (1966)	158	159	155
Kerala				Tripura (1961)	222	207	204
Alwaye	275	287	273	All India Consumer Price Index			
Mundakayam	267	279	269	Index			
M.P.				(Working Class/General Index)			
Bhopal	243	249	253	Base			
Gwalior	263	265	258	1973	1949	1960	
Indore	271	276	278	March	263	216	
Maharashtra				April	269	221	
Bombay	235	227	228	May	277	228	
Nagpur	259	260	261	June	283	233	
Sholapur	281	275	281	July	295	243	
Mysore				August	300	247	
Bangalore	250	258	275	September	301	248	
Orissa				Source : Index Sheet, Labour Bureau, Simla			
Sambalpur	235	240	238	Correction			
Punjab				In the November, 1973 issue the All India General Index (Base 1949) for August 1973 should read as 300.			
Amritsar	239	243	246				
Rajasthan							
Ajmer	246	253	254				
Jaipur	250	256	267				
Tamilnadu							
Coimbatore	210	211	212				
Madras	226	226	224				
Madurai	228	231	231				
U. P.							
Kanpur	239	254	255				

Delhi Bundh—A Great Success

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN Delhi's history, a completely successful Bundh was observed on November 6 at the joint call of four Trade Unions—the CITU, AITUC, UTUC and HMP, supported by the local units of the CPI (M), CPI, RSP, Socialist party and other mass organisations.

In the background of the glorious united struggle of the Textile workers of Delhi for 26 days and the solidarity action by over 50,000 workers on April 30, the call for a General Strike of the working class in Delhi was initiated by the Delhi units of the CITU and CPI (M).

Determined to build up an united action, they approached the CPI, RSP, and Socialist Party and their T. U. wings—AITUC, UTUC and HMP for a joint call for the General Strike. While the other Trade Unions and Parties readily agreed to the proposal and the slogans formulated by the CPI (M) and CITU, which sought to emphasise the responsibility of the anti-people policies of the Congress Government for the present economic crisis, the CPI and AITUC vacillated on the question and wanted to direct protest action only against the black-marketeers and hoarders. However, they ultimately agreed to a common date for the General strike on November 6 and also accepted the joint declaration.

The Joint Declaration, signed by the four Trade Unions as well as the Delhi Bank Employees Federation, Delhi Newspaper

Employees Federation, All India Building Workers Union (Delhi) and the All India Life Insurance Employees Association (Delhi)—demanded, among other things, introduction of statutory rationing in Delhi, punishment to hoarders, profiteers and black marketeers, reduction in prices of essential commodities, seizure of hoarded stocks, compulsory levy on landlords and monopoly stockists, need-based minimum wage and 100 per cent neutralisation of price rise, stoppage of Police repression on workers' strike etc.

The call for General Strike inspired response and support from all sections of workers and the people. Response in support of the strike came pouring in from students, Government Employees of Delhi, 55,000 workers of Delhi Corporation, Bazar committees, mercantile workers, hotel workers, transport workers and other sections. What was originally planned to be a general strike of industrial workers and commercial establishments developed into a virtual Delhi Bundh.

On the Bundh day, the entire commercial and industrial activity in Delhi came to a standstill. All hotels, Banks, newspaper offices and shopping centres were closed. All workers in Textile and Engineering industries, mercantile establishments and Autonomous Bodies responded to the call. Except in New Delhi and some outer areas, Taxis, Scooters and public buses

practically did not ply. Lawyers in Tis Hazari and Parliament Street courts observed complete strike.

The INTUC opposed the General Strike and appealed to the people to oppose it, which was ignored by the people. Their isolation proved total when, in the DCM Textile Mills where they have a major union, not a single worker turned up for work. In desperation, gangsters in their pay attacked workers' processions in some places.

On the Bundh day, CITU, HMP and UTUC organised a joint march to the Prime Minister's house. Thousands of workers, commercial employees, SFI students and girl students from the Universities marched in procession from the India Gate. A 10,000 strong rally was held near the P.M.'s house addressed by Jyotirmoy Bosu, M. P. and others. The AITUC, which refused to march jointly with CITU and others, organised a separate rally.

THE WORKING CLASS

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Struggles For Bonus & Wage Rise Continue

WORKERS OF ALL 65 Textile Mills in Coimbatore will get bonus at 11.33 to 25 per cent for 1972 according to the terms of a settlement arrived at on October 8 at tripartite level with CITU and other trade unions.

The strike by workers of Kovai Dist. North Madurai Panchayat Board, led by the CITU union, was called off on October 21 after 6 days after the Board accepted the workers' demands for payment of wages on 1st of every month, Diwali advance etc.

Led by the Kovai Dist. Mechanical Workers' Union (CITU), more than 100 factory workers won victory when the management agreed to pay bonus at 17 to 35 per cent and T. A. of Rs. 25 to 50 for 1972.

After 6 days' successful strike, from 10th to 15th October, the workers of Tarapuram Co-operative Mill forced the employers to accept their demand and agree to pay 12.33 per cent bonus and Rs. 125 as festival advance. They were led by the CITU union.

After a long struggle, the 14-point Charter of Demands of the workers and employees of Shaw Wallace in Villupuram was settled on October 24. The workers were members of the Villupuram General Workers' Union (CITU). They will get increased wages from April 1 last, annual bonus of Rs. 25 each and other benefits.

Led by the CITU union, workers of Indian Wire Products went on strike on October 18 for higher bonus for 1972-73. The management, which had earlier refused to pay more than 12 per cent, had ultimately to agree to pay 18 per cent bonus, after which the strike was withdrawn on October 21.

As a result of the settlement made by the Industrial Estate—General Workers Union (CITU), workers of South India Steel Rolling Mills, Madras will get 4 months salary as bonus for 1972-73.

Beedi workers of Salem, members of CITU union, will get bonus at 20 paise per 1000 beedies made by them for 1972-73 as per a settlement arrived at on October 30.

The Charter of Demands of the Arumuganeri Chakupuram Plastic workers, led by the CITU Union, was settled recently. Under the agreement, effective from November 1, the workers will get higher basic wages, allowances, E.S.I. and other benefits.

Transport Workers of Kanyakumari continue struggle for Bonus

The State Transport workers of Kanyakumari Dist. are on strike since October 15 on their demands for 25 per cent bonus as paid to their counterparts in the rest of Tamilnadu, reinstatement of those retrenched during the last food movement, cancellation

of transfers, suspension orders, etc. Protest meetings, demonstrations, rallies and hunger strikes are being held throughout the State in support of the striking transport workers. The State CITU has extended its full support and help for the fighting Kanyakumari workers, who are determined to continue the struggle till victory.

STATE CITU CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS

The next Conference of the Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU will be held in Madras Town from 20th to 23rd December, 1973. B.T. Ranadive, President and P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of CITU will attend.

The Conference of the Maharashtra State CITU will be held at Thana near Bombay from 25th to 27th December, 1973. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU will attend the Conference.

The Conference of Delhi Committee of CITU will be held on January 2-3, 1974. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU will attend.

A Convention of Trade Unions in Madhya Pradesh, affiliated to CITU, will be held at Bhilai on December 25-26, 1973. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU will inaugurate the Convention.

A Convention of Trade Unions in Gujarat, affiliated to CITU, will be held in the last week of December, 1973. Jyoti Basu, Vice President CITU will attend the Convention.

Reports From Unions

Conference of Engineering Workers at Delhi

At the initiative of the CITU-Delhi Committee, a Conference of Engineering workers of Delhi, Faridabad (Haryana) and Ghaziabad (U. P.) Industrial complexes was held in New Delhi on November 3. The Conference was attended by over 100 delegates from Delhi, Faridabad and Ghaziabad representing a large number of Engineering Workers' Unions, including some INTUC and AITUC unions who joined despite the opposition of their parent organisations.

The Conference decided to observe Demands Day on December 17 and a demonstration before the Parliament on December 20. A Committee of 19 was formed to campaign on the demands and organise the above programmes.

Strike in Usha Spinning Mill, Faridabad

About 1600 workers of Usha Spinning Mills, Faridabad (Haryana)—who were earlier with the AITUC and recently joined the Suti Mill Mazdoor Union (CITU)—went on a token strike on November 12 on their demands for Rs. 50 as interim relief, D. A. linked with Cost of Living Index, 20 percent bonus and reinstatement of some victimised workers. Brutal Police repression has been let loose on the workers and 16 employees arrested. Com. Baldev Singh, a CITU leader from Delhi, who went there for conciliation talks has also been arrested. Hired

goondas of the management and some AITUC men are also attacking them. In protest, they are continuing the strike successfully.

Ghaziabad Engineering Workers Strike

At the call of the CITU, 5000 workers of 12 Engineering concerns of Ghaziabad (U. P.) observed a successful one-day token strike on November 12 demanding Rs. 70 as interim relief, D.A. linked with Cost of Living Index, implementation of Wage Board recommendation, etc. The Police resorted to brutal repression on workers and arrested comrades Bhardwaj and Balbir Singh of Jain Tube Co. under DIR. Despite opposition of the AITUC, majority of the workers joined the strike.

Gwalior Rayon Workers Continue Struggle against Lock-out

Led by a Joint Council of Action comprised of the CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, BMS and other unions, 3500 workers of the Gwalior Rayons at Mavoor (Kozhikode) are continuing their struggle against the illegal lock-out declared by the management on July 24.

Earlier, on June 27, the unions had jointly demanded an interim relief in view of the price rise which the management ignored completely. The workers went on a token strike on July 16. The management retaliated by suspending six workers, calling in the Police which resulted in re-

pression and finally by declaring a lock-out on July 24.

Despite Police repression and attacks by management hired goondas, the workers are determined to continue the struggle.

TELCO Workers observe successful Token Strike

Led by the Joint Trade Union Front comprising of the local units of the CITU, AITUC HMS, a section of the INTUC and two other independent unions, workers of the Tata Engineering and Locomotive Co. of Jamshedpur observed a day's token strike on November 22 to press their demand for upward revision of wages. Despite opposition of the recognised INTUC union, overwhelming majority of the workers responded to the strike. On the same day, Md. Ismail M. P., Vice-President of CITU addressed a large meeting of workers.

IAC Employees' Struggle

Fourteen thousand technical and non-technical employees of the Indian Airlines Corporation started an agitation from November 12 against the arbitrary imposition of additional workload on the plea of introduction of a new shift system. It seriously affected the operation of the IAC. They also decided to go on an indefinite strike from November 25 if the authorities failed to settle their demand and withdraw the new shift system. In the meantime, the IAC authorities declared a lockout from the early morning of November 24.

Com. B T. Ranadive, President CITU issued a statement
ON LAST PAGE

West Bengal Newsletter

Goonda Terror : Aftermath Of The Bundh

Durgapur

For a week or more preceding the successful 'Bengal Bundh' of November 17, anti-socials led by the local Congress and INTUC carried on large-scale intimidation of the employees of Durgapur Steel Plant and Alloy Steel Plant. Overwhelming majority of the workers and employees defied this threat and joined the Bundh.

On the day of Bundh, assaults and house to house raids were carried on by the goondas—with the Police a silent spectator—in almost all the areas. H. N. Chakrabarty, a Council member of Hindustan Steel Employees' Union (CITU) was severely assaulted. Another HSEU member, B.G. Debnath, was kidnapped with the intent to murder.

Furious at the success of the Bundh, the Congress and INTUC in collusion with the Police have handed over almost the entire Durgapur Township to the anti-socials after the Bundh. From November 18 onwards, armed goondas have been moving about in several cars raiding houses of workers in several areas, assaulting and chasing workers and launching murderous attacks on HSEU leaders. On November 18, Ranjan Biswas an active member of the HSEU was murdered by these anti-socials in the

evening. Despite protests, the Police have remained totally inactive.

Texmaco

More than 40 to 70 per cent workers of different departments of the Texmaco factory, near Calcutta, joined the November 17 Bundh. The next day 50/60 armed anti-socials brutally attacked the workers and forced some of them out of the factory. The workers unitedly resisted the attack, downed tools in some departments in protest and demanded that all workers forcibly evicted by goondas since the 1972 General Elections must be allowed to come back and join work.

North Bengal

In Cooch Behar, North Bengal—where the Bundh was a grand success—Congress led goondas raided many shops in the town and attacked the shopkeepers to force them to keep the shops open on the Bundh Day. In protest, the businessmen have decided to keep all the shops closed for an indefinite period.

CITU's Protest

On behalf of the CITU, Md. Ismail, M.P., Monoranjan Roy M.P. and Robin Sen, M.P. met the State Chief Minister on November 19 and protested against the pre-planned attacks by Congress rowdies in Durgapur, Raniganj, Texmaco and other places both during and after the Bengal Bundh. They demanded his immediate intervention to stop the attacks.

Reports From Unions

FROM PAGE NINETEEN
expressing full support of the CITU for their demands and urging the authorities to immediately withdraw the new shift system and settle the dispute through negotiations with the employees' representatives. He also protested against the lock-out imposed by the authorities and demanded its withdrawal.

Successful Strike in Bishrampur Colliery

More than 90 per cent of the workers, including the ranks of the INTUC union, of Bishrampur Colliery (M.P.) successfully

observed one-day's token strike on November 15 last. The INTUC union withdrew its support on the eve of the strike.

In Banki & Surakachar Colliery also the workers organised a torchlight procession on the same date.

UCTU Unit formed in ETAH

From the Convention of the State & Central Government employees held at Etah on November 11, a Samjukta Trade Union Council (STUC) was formed, which will hold a mass rally on 25th November in protest against the recommendations of the 3rd Pay Commission, skyrocketing of prices etc.