



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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## Let the Rising Struggles Shatter the Foundations of Congress Regime !

**A** new strike wave has swept the country during January and February involving lakhs of workers. These strikes had been longdrawn in character and their impact on industrial relations in India was quite pronounced.

The 41 days long strike of 2 lakh cotton textile workers in Bombay accounted for the loss of eight million man-days. The 33 day long all India strike of nearly 3 lakh jute workers also resulted in a loss of about 8 million man-days. The one and a half lakh textile workers in Tamilnadu also joined the fray in February and on a rough estimate, the man-days lost due to their strike so far also amounts to 2 million. Thus these 3 major strikes fought in these two months alone have led to a total loss of over 18 million man-days. This figure is higher than the total man-days lost during the whole of 1972 or 1973.

In these two months several other strikes in local factories have also contributed to a great deal of loss of man-days. Moreover, during this period, man-days lost due to lock-out have also been quite big which will further boost the total loss of man-days due to industrial disputes.

Despite repeated sermons of the Prime Minister and the President of India to the working class that they should not disrupt production in view of the economic crisis, the surging tide of working class struggles is assuming serious proportions. Their talk of moratorium on strike is being contemptuously ignored by the workers irrespective of organisational affiliations.

The reliance of the Government and the employees on the INTUC unions to impose anti-working class agreements on the workers has proved to be of no avail in the Bombay textile as well as

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**APRIL 9 : 40 LAKHS STATE GOVT.  
EMPLOYEES TO STRIKE**

in jute mills strikes. The situation has become so ridiculous that the INTUC leaders could not prevent their own ranks from joining both the strikes. Even a section of INTUC leadership was expressing its resentment at the shameless sell-out of the dominant INTUC leadership. Ultimately, the employers had to give something more than earlier accepted by the INTUC leaders. Never before the real character of the INTUC leadership was so clear to the mass of workers.

In regard to the jute workers strike all the participant organisations remained united till the last and the strike was withdrawn jointly by all the trade unions. The workers resumed duty with a sense of confidence in their organisation. The CITU as the leading force in this strike played an important role in preserving the unity of all sections throughout the strike.

In Bombay, however, where the AITUC was leading the strike, Dange struck a deal with Chief Minister behind the back of other participant organisations and mass of workers and withdrew the strike by accepting a paltry rise in wages. This betrayal was strongly opposed by the other participating organisations while the workers in Government owned textile units continued struggle even after withdrawal of strike—even the AITUC ranks expressed their strong resentment at the disruption of unity by Dange in such a treacherous manner.

In Tamil Nadu strike, also the CITU fought against the disruptive tactics of other central

trade unions and stood firmly with the workers. The CITU carried forward the struggle single handedly when other central trade unions showed vacillations in the struggle and settled the strikes in some mills. Despite these disruptive machinations, the strike continues unitedly due to the tremendous sentiments of unity among the textile workers.

The CITU emerged in all these struggles as the foremost champion of struggles of workers.

The Government in these struggles openly sided with the employers and did everything to suppress and disrupt these strikes. These attempts met with stiff resistance at every step and workers showed readiness to fight a longdrawn battle despite heavy odds.

The Central and State Governments have shown utter bankruptcy to deal with the situation. Despite loss of over Rs. 100 crores of production, they continued their obdurate policies. This only has highlighted the worth of their so called concern about production.

The Union Labour Minister, K. V. Raghunatha Reddy, despite his talk of implementing a progressive labour policy, miserably failed to intervene in the strikes. The Maharashtra Chief Minister flatly refused to allow any intervention of the Central Labour Minister. In Jute, despite his convening of two tripartite meetings to discuss the issues involved in the strike notice the West Bengal Government and a section of the INTUC quietly struck a deal reducing him to a silent specta-

tor to the whole drama. If this be the condition of the Union Labour Minister one can imagine the condition of the Central Industrial Relations Machinery. The utter futility and dilatory character of the labour administration was seen in the most glaring manner in these strikes.

Some statisticians of the capitalist class have taken great pains to study the monetary gains in these strikes and loss of wages to workers in order to prove that the workers in the end lost heavily as a result of these strikes. They do not realise the tremendous gains of the working class who have built magnificent unity in these strikes and gave a powerful rebuff to the machinations of the employers and the INTUC bosses. The organisation built in these strikes will be a powerful weapon in the forthcoming struggles. Clear indications are seen that many more struggles are in offing in the near future. The loco-running staff are determined to get 10 hour day introduced and are resisting every sliding back from the earlier commitment by the brass hats of the Railway Board. Some other categorywise organisations are also seriously talking of struggle while the AIRF is committed to an All India strike. The Convention called by the AIRF and other categorywise organisations in Delhi on 27th February and the move towards unity in the Railway T. U. Movement is just an indication of the mood of the railway workers.

The historic decision of the All India State Government Employees' Federation to organise one day strike of 4 million State Government employees on

(Contd. on Page 19)

# Lessons Of All India Jute Strike

— Biren Roy

The 33-day old Jute strike involving about three lakhs workers all over India was called off at a rally of jute workers held on 15th February under the auspices of six Unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), TUCC and a section of HMS.

Three lakhs Jute workers in six States— West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh— began a continuous strike on January 14 last on a 14-point Charter of Demands which included Grades and Scales for all categories of jute workers, nationalisation of jute industry without compensation including foreign trade, Rs. 80 per maund as the minimum price of raw jute and take over of raw jute trade by Government, additional 20 per cent Bonus, D. A. at full neutralisation, relief for Budli workers, implementation of 1970 and 1972 agreements etc. The workers began the strike repudiating the agreement signed by INTUC, NFITU and a section of HMS on 13th January last.

During the old colonial days, the IJMA led by the British jute magnates were regarded as the real rulers of Bengal and a general strike by jute workers was deemed little short of a rebellion. Much water has flowed down the Ganges during the last 27 years. Ownership of

most of these mills has now passed into the hands Indian magnates—nine monopoly houses virtually control the entire jute industry—who have amassed huge profits amounting to more than Rs. 4500 crores during this period. But they have deprived the jute workers as well as jute growers of their legitimate claims. No wonder, therefore, that the West Bengal Government came out in support of the jute barons to break the strike and the INTUC leaders fully backed the conspiracy hatched by the West Bengal Government and the Jute magnates.

But the jute workers—their tremendous unity, their determination and class consciousness, foiled all attempts of the Government and IJMA bosses. Almost to a man, they joined the strike and continued it in the face of starvation and hardships, braving severe repression and goonda attacks let loose by the Government and Jute barons. Section 144 was promulgated in different Jute Mill areas in 24-Parganas, Hooghly and Howrah Districts preventing the meetings of Jute workers. Brutal lathi charges were resorted to in Bhatpara (24-Parganas) where many leaders of jute workers including four M.P.s were arrested. Large scale arrests were made during the course of the strike and many false cases instituted

against workers and their leaders. Lathi charge and goonda attacks were resorted to in many places. But defying all repression and attacks, the jute workers stood like a rock. The working class of West Bengal and other States also stood by their jute brethren. The six Central Trade Unions, supported by the Left parties, called an Industrial General Strike on January 31. Though the transport workers did not participate in the General Strike in large numbers, other sections of industrial workers and office employees responded magnificently. The strike was successful in Engineering, Cotton Textile, Coalmines and other sectors. Employees in Banks, Insurance and Mercantile offices observed successful strike. In the industrial sector the strike was more pronounced than the Bundh of 17th November last.

Many area-meetings and campaigns were conducted in support of the Jute workers' strike. In Calcutta, people will remember for a long time the mammoth demonstration held before the IJMA office on 14th February last for continuous five hours. The unity of jute workers and other sections of workers in the jute belt was so great that the Government did not dare to attack the united demonstrations of workers held in defiance of Sec. 144.

Though the Chairman of IJMA repeatedly stated that there was loss in production to the tune of Rs. 1 crore 70 lakhs daily and the Government declared that there was loss in foreign exchange to the tune of

Rs. 1 crore daily, they were determined not to settle the strike. The Government audaciously declared that there would be no further talks for settlement and the agreement of 13th January had to be signed. But the successful and heroic fight by the jute workers for 33 days ultimately forced the Government to negotiate with the leaders of strike and offer some concessions. They agreed to give Rs. 55 more as ex-gratia in addition to Rs. 45 offered in the earlier agreement. The introduction of grade and scale for daily rated workers was agreed to in principle and assurances were given that there would be no victimisation for participation in the strike. Many of the demands of the jute workers still remain unfulfilled, but the workers have at least the freedom to go into further struggles to achieve these demands. The treacherous agreement signed by the INTUC leaders on 13th January sought to pledge this right of the workers for a mess of pottage. Undoing of this treachery is the greatest victory of the workers.

The INTUC leaders and the IJMA bosses tried their best to disrupt any settlement but failed. The important fact to be remembered is that concessions were offered and settlement arrived at even though the strike leaders refused to sign the 13th January agreement. The settlement was unanimously approved by the jute workers with cheers in a huge meeting and the strike was called off. The jute workers resumed their duties in victorious

processions and with more determination to fight in future.

This 33-day strike of jute workers was significant in many respects. Some points need to be mentioned. (1) The wide united character of the strike—not only the workers belonging to the six Central Trade Unions but a large section of workers owing allegiance to Congress joined in the strike, which was a tremendous demonstration of rank and file unity. The important role played by the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU), the largest union of jute workers, in bringing about this unity. (2) The growing isolation of a section of INTUC leadership—despite their betrayal and opposition to strike, rank and file workers belonging to INTUC joined hands with other sections of struggling workers. It also resulted in widening the differences within INTUC. (3) The determination and courage shown by the jute workers during the whole strike period. The strike was carried on against heavy odds—this signifies a new level of class consciousness. (4) The jute workers fought not only for their economic demands but also in the interest of the democratic movement and the nation. They raised the demand for nationalisation and the minimum price for raw jute—this has paved the way for broader unity between jute workers and jute growers and other sections of democratic people. (5) The industry-wide strike in all-India basis for such a long period exhibits a new fighting need of

## Grenade Thrown At Durgapur Steel Union Leaders

On February 21 four leaders of Hindusthan Steel Employees Union (CITU) were seriously injured when an attempt was made on their lives by a grenade thrown on them by some miscreants belonging to the ruling party. Kanai Banerjee, a Council Member was hospitalized and operated upon and his condition is stated to be precarious. Though the police made an on the spot investigation none of the culprits have been arrested so far.

Since then the workers of Durgapur and Alloy Steel Plant have been demonstrating against this premeditated attack on the Union Leaders.

B. T. Ranadive President CITU in a letter to Chief Minister, West Bengal has condemned this outrage and demanded immediate action against the culprits.

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the working class. (6) The success of the strike should, therefore, be viewed not in terms of moderate economic concessions won but from the larger political context. The understanding between the CITU and AITUC and other Left Central Trade Unions and growing isolation of a section of INTUC leadership open up prospects of bigger struggles in future.

# The Struggle And Wage Settlement In LIC

THE struggle of the LIC employees led by the All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) against the second venture of the Public Sector Management of subduing trade union activities through all kinds of repression including lock-outs, should be carefully studied by the working class movement of the country. The AIIEA submitted the Charter of Demands as early as January 1973. They called for a walk-out strike on August 24, 1974 for 2 hours which was participated by overwhelming number of employees. From the beginning of December the management began stiffening their attitude towards employees' demands. In spite of the fact that the AIIEA represented the overwhelming majority of the employees, it appealed to all other Associations in the LIC to have a united front on the issue of the Charter. The splinter union recently formed, a break away group from the AIIEA, led by Sri S.M. Banerjee, and the INTUC union refused to have the joint front. On December 7, the AIIEA again called upon the employees to go in for two-hour walk-out strike and almost simultaneously the management of the LIC issued circulars prohibiting deputations, meetings, demonstrations etc., the rights long enjoyed by the employees. Then came

the spate of victimisations in the form of suspensions, charge-sheets, on over 1000 employees for violating the office circular. The AIIEA, while again appealing to the unions to have a united platform against these new offensives, began mobilising the employees independently and there were walk-out strikes throughout India on 14th and 21st December. On 28th December there was a total strike for one day. The employees were in such a fighting mood that the splinters and the INTUC, which even on 26th December branded the call of strike on 28th as ill-conceived and politically motivated, were forced to give a call for strike on December 27.

On 28th December, the working of the LIC throughout India came to a grinding halt. The work-to-rule movement, launched by the AIIEA from December 26, had already a paralysing effect on the working of the LIC throughout India and on December 31, at the call of the AIIEA, meetings were held throughout India violating the prohibitory order. In January the negotiation with the AIIEA broke down and again there was a two-hour walk-out strike on January 8, 1974. The management then came down heavily on employees issuing notices of wage cuts for work-to-rule to over 20,000 employees and declaring partial lock-outs in Madras, Bangalore, Patna, New Delhi,

Meerut and Dharwar. Against this offensive of the management and the Government, which were hailed by the monopolists Press as a step in the right direction, the AIIEA declared total strikes in all the offices within the jurisdictions of the locked-out Divisions. The splinters led by Sri S. M. Banerjee and the INTUC while giving paper threats against these actions began silently siding with the management by instructing their members to break the strike and join offices with Police help and signing bonds. Many of their members, however, refused to play the role of black-legs. Finally they withdrew their so called programme of agitation to create congenial atmosphere for talks on Charter although the management stood firm on the issues of victimisations and lock-outs. The AIIEA continued negotiations in New Delhi on the Charter simultaneously carrying on all the agitational programmes and the strike struggles with determination. While Shri S. M. Banerjee and INTUC leadership pleaded to separate the issues of charter and victimisations, the AIIEA remained firm that the monetary demands and issues of victimisations and lock-outs cannot be separated and these must be settled simultaneously. The heroic struggle of the employees of the LIC throughout India and the valiant and determined continuous strike struggle of about 8000 employees of locked-out centres and the stand taken by the AIIEA ultimately compelled the

*(See Next Page)*

## Indefinite Strike By Textile Workers Continues

ONE and a half lakh textile workers in 180 mills in Tamilnadu are on indefinite strike from February 1 in support of their 10-point Charter of Demands. The call was given by the Action Committee comprising the CITU, AITUC and HMS. The INTUC, which did not respond earlier, joined the strike from February 11.

Earlier, in 1972, the INTUC had signed an agreement with the millowners agreeing to increased work-load. But the other Trade Unions, including CITU, had rejected this agreement as unacceptable.

The demands of the textile workers include (1) Rs. 55 at 240 points (Base 1936-39) and 30 paise per point of rise ; (2) Rs. 35 increase in basic for all and

management to relent and finally an agreement was signed on January 24, as a result of which the lock-out was withdrawn and victimisations annulled.

The wage agreement provided for about 15% wage increase excluding bonus which will be paid at the rate of 15% of the annual salary including D A. In the background of the present policy of the Government this is a very significant achievement. The determination and the steadfastness with which the LIC employees led by the AIIEA achieved the success, facing the brutal offensives of the management-Government combine and their allies within insurance employees, will remain a source of great inspiration to the trade union movement in India.

5 per cent yearly increment ; (3) benefits for piece rate workers ; (4) higher overtime and night shift allowance ; (5) application of these terms to all mills including co-operative and Corporations ; and (6) effect from January 1, 1972 etc.

During the negotiations on February 5, the millowners made some proposals for settlement. Since these fell far short of the demands the CITU outright rejected it, but the other unions virtually accepted the same and were ready to call off the strike. They were, however, afraid to do so fearing the reaction of workers. But at the meeting of the Action Committee of February 8 they expelled the CITU from the Committee.

Firm in their resolve to defend the workers' interests, the CITU has called upon the workers to continue the strike till victory. The other unions have not dared to sign the tripartite agreement as yet and negotiations are continuing on the Labour Ministers' proposal. The CITU has given an alternative proposal for settlement.

All CITU representatives in Field Rolling Mills Workers Union have won in the election held on January 21, defeating their DMK rivals who controlled the union for the last 4 years.

2000 weavers of South Madurai Avaniyapuram, lead by CITU and others were on indefinite strike from January 11,

demanding increased wages. The strike concluded on 24th January, after an agreement was signed.

Powerloom workers in Madurai are on strike for the last 2 months demanding 15 p. per point. So far 300 workers have been arrested.

Kodari Sugar Mill workers are on strike from 1st February, demanding increased wages and to stop victimisation of the management.

The Standard Lithographic Workers are on stay-in strike from 7th February demanding withdrawal of suspension orders on 4 workers, Rs. 40 increase in wages from January 73 and full overtime wages.

40 thousand Beedi workers will go on indefinite strike once again if their 10 point Charter of Demands including increased wages, bonus etc., are not achieved. This was decided in the delegates meeting held at Vellore on February 6.

Neyvelli Ceramic Factory at Vatallur is under lock-out for the last 80 days. The workers have decided to struggle till their demands for increased wages, allowances, etc. are achieved.

Meenakshi Mills, biggest textile mill in Madurai is under lock-out for the last two months as the workers protested against the increase of workload by the management. Though the Lock-out has been partially lifted in some parts of the mill, the workers decided to continue struggle unitedly till the lock-out is withdrawn in full. The CITU has urged upon the State Government to stand by the workers and intervene in the issue immediately.

# Stop This Exploitation of Workers !

By R. G. Sthalekar

The current propoganda of the capitalist class and their redoubtable "socialist" champion Sm. Indira Gandhi, against the working class amounts to this that the working class demands have become exhorbitant and by strike actions they are holding the society to ransom, hampering production, causing price rise, hampering industrial development. According to her, the

industrial workers are the priviledged class today and the industrialists are the poor victims.

Here we will examine with figures taken out from the balance-sheets of the West Coast Paper Mills Ltd., sixth largest paper manufacturing company in India and show how false and mischivous is the propoganda of the Government of India. The mill is situated at Dandeli in

Karnataka and owned by two monopoly houses, the Bangurs and the Somanis.

Between 1961 and '73, production in the mill increased by over 167.6%, from 25,771 to 43,195 tonnes. Similarly, the total amount of finished paper sold shot up from Rs. 4,65,34,378 in 1961 to Rs 10,87,40,820 in 1973, an increase of about 234%. During the same period value added in manufacturing increased by 264%, from Rs. 2,1642,402 to Rs. 5,71,01,945. Percentage of value added to raw material, fuel consumed etc. in 1961 was 87, whereas in 1973 it was 110.6, clearly showing higher productivity of workers.

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I, Monoranjan Roy, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Sd/- Monoranjan Roy  
Publisher

Let us now examine how this increased value added has been divided between payments to workers and employees and the surplus retained by the owners. In 1961, total amount of workers share including wages, bonus and other benefits such as employers' contribution towards Provident Fund, Employees' State Insurance etc. was Rs. 38,93,929 (this includes salarly and other benefits given to the managerial staff also), i.e. 18% of the value added. It went upto 19.6% in 1962, and sharply declined to 16.5% in 1963, inspite of higher production during the year. It was the year the Government of India granted increase of Rs. 60/- per tonne of paper and the entire benefit of the higher price was retained by the owners. (Surplus value increased from Rs. 1,68,75,521 in 1962 to Rs. 2,21,11,829 in 1963). While marginal increase in percentage

of wages to value added is seen during the following years till 1968, it was once again slashed in 1969, from 25.1% to 22.5%.

This was the net result of another price hike of Rs. 400/- per tonne immediately after decontrol of paper in the year 1968. It was in that year the CITU union was organised and as a result of continued agitation for higher wages, its percentage during subsequent three years rose to 26.2, 26.9 and 27.9 respectively.

In 1973, 43,195 tonnes of paper is the production achieved during the first ten months only. Similarly wages paid during that year exclude wages for the strike period; hence the percentage of wages has gone down by 1.9 in 1973. Notwithstanding the strike, the value added in

manufacturing increased by about 23 lacs over the previous year; so also the surplus by about 27 lacs!

On the whole the percentage of wages to value added increased by 8 only in 12 years (which has been eaten away by unprecedented inflation during the last 12 years) while the value added itself increased by 264% between 1961 and '73; thus leaving a huge amount of surplus value every year in the hands of the monopolists. (Surplus during this period increased from Rs. 1,77,48,473 in 1961 to Rs. 4,22,25,284 in 1973). It should be remembered here that the total investment (paid up capital) by the owners of the Company is Rs. 2,40,00,000 only. It has so far issued bonus-share amount-

ing to Rs. 150 lacs to the shareholders by capitalising its reserves. Note the ever increasing surplus in the table. Thus, Rs. 4,22,25,284 for the year 1973, is 176% of their initial investment of Rs. 2,40,00,000.

The following table will make it amply clear that inspite of mounting costs how enormous is the increase in prices and the surplus enjoyed by the owners while the workers' share has increased by 8% of the surplus which has been more than eroded by mounting inflation. The only advantage Mrs. Gandhi and her patrons here is that with 70% of our countrymen still illiterate, they can get away with their lying propaganda.

Year	Production of paper	Value of finished paper sold	All Production costs including depreciation	Value added in mfg.	Salaries, wages and other benefits (including salaries etc. of managerial staff.	Surplus	Percentage of wages to value added
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
1961	25,771	4,65,34,378	2,48,91,976	2,16,42,402	38,93,929	1,77,48,473	18%
1965	32,535	5,85,65,748	2,66,18,159	3,19,47,589	66,37,784	2,53,09,805	20.8%
1970	41,100	9,24,33,685	4,37,06,755	4,87,26,930	1,27,82,090	3,59,44,840	26.2%
1971	42,651	10,00,97,290	4,94,99,930	5,05,97,360	1,35,98,210	3,69,99,150	26.9%
1972	43,098	10,79,70,527	5,31,40,036	5,48,30,491	1,52,71,466	3,95,59,025	27.9%
1973	*43,195	10,87,40,820	5,16,38,875	5,71,01,945	1,48,76,661	4,22,25,284	26%
Increase during							
Last 12 years	167.6%	233.7%	207.5%	264%		176%	8%

\* Production is for ten months since the workers were on strike for fifty days, during 1973.

[ N. B. The author of this study, Comrade Sthalekar, is the General Secretary of the West Coast Paper Mills Limited Employees' Union, Dandeli, Karnataka. ]

# British Courts and Trade Union Rights

British Trade Unions have a hoary past. In its fight for economic and Trade Union rights, its contribution to the World Trade Union movement is notable. Of course, politically British Trade Unions have scarcely been able to come out of its economic rut. Lenin, in his famous tract, *What Is To Be Done*, had occasion to refer to the 'economism' of British Trade Unions dampening the revolutionary ardour of the working class.

In their economic fights, the British Trade Unions have often, through their persistence, been able to persuade the Courts to pronounce in their favour. One such judgement was recently pronounced by the Court of Appeal in England in *Crouch v. The Post Office* reported in 1973 (3) All England Reporter at page 227.

It was a fight by the Telecommunications Staff Association (hereinafter referred to as TSA) not only against the employer but also against its big rival Trade Union, namely, the Union of Post Office Workers (hereinafter referred to as UPW) which, by the way, was recognised by employer. Lord Justice Denning has therefore compared it with the fight between David and Goliath.

The TSA asked for facilities under sections 5 (1) of the Indus-

trial Relations Act of 1971 which says, "Every worker shall, as between himself and his employer, have... (c) where he is a member of a trade union, the right, at any appropriate time, to take part in the activities of the trade union...". They asked that they might (a) recruit members within the Exchange Building, (b) collect subscrip-

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## Arun Prokas Chatterjee

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tions within the Exchange Building, (c) distribute and leave literature within the Exchange Building, (d) with the permission of the Exchange Superintendent, entertain officers of the TSA in the Exchange Building, (e) with the permission of the Exchange Superintendent, hold meetings of the TSA outside the working hours within the Exchange Building. The telephone manager replied, "The Post Office grants facilities to recognised unions only, and the purpose is to provide effective representation for collective bargaining purposes. Accordingly, no facilities are to be granted to unrecognised unions whether or not they are registered."

Five of the officials of the TSA moved the Industrial Tribunal which held in favour of TSA and ordered that they were

entitled to the facilities asked for. The Post Office and the UPW appealed to the National Industrial Relations Court and that Court held that "It is not an unfair industrial practice for the Post Office to prohibit the respondents from taking part in trade union activities at their place of employment outside working hours." The National Industrial Court held that the workers have no such right when on the premises of the employer. To that Lord Denning quipped that it did not need a statute to tell a worker that. According to him, if section 5(1) (c) of the Industrial Relations Act. (quoted above) is to give him any right at all, "it must mean that he has the right to take part in the activities of the trade union on his employer's premises". If that section gave him no more than

### MADHYAPRADESH ME CITU-KA AHWAN

(Call of Madhya Pradesh CITU)

(Report and documents of the Madhya Pradesh State Convention of CITU held in Bhilai, December 25-27, 1973)

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what the Industrial Relations Court thought, then, Lord Denning said, "it gives him nothing"

Lord Denning also repelled a contention advanced on behalf of the Post Office echo of which can be heard in the industrial tribunals of this country as well namely, that it is the right of employer to decide how his won property shall be used. After setting forth the provisions of section 5 (2) (b) of the Act, which says, "it shall accordingly be an unfair industrial practice for any employer, or for any person acting on behalf of an employer... (b) to... discriminate against a worker by reason of his exercising any such right," the learned judge proceeded to observe that the members of the TSA might not claim to carry on activities in respect of bargaining rights which might be reserved for the UPW being the recognised Union. But he did not see any reason why the TSA should not have the right to organise itself by such means as recruiting new members, collecting subscriptions, and so forth, and, therefore, there was no reasons why, in aid of this, the TSA should not be able to reserve a table in the canteen when not needed for others, or occasionally to hold a meeting in a room, if one is available. It would be most unreasonable for the employers to say to the officials of the union: "The table is our property or the room is our property; and, therefore, by reasons of our right of property,

we will not allow you to use it'. Lord Denning answers to such contentions. "The rights of property are not so sacrosanct as all that. By such conduct the employers would be discriminating against the officials of a registered trade union".

Lord Justice Stephenson, one of the other two judges who concurred with Lord Denning, relied on the rulings of the American Courts and quoted with approval the following observations of the National Labour Relations Board approved by the Supreme Court of the United States:

"... Working time is for work. It is therefore within the province of an employer to promulgate and enforce a rule prohibiting union solicitation during working hours. Such a rule must be presumed to be valid in the absence of evidence

that it was adopted for a discriminatory purpose. It is no less true that time outside working hours, whether before or after work, or during luncheon or rest periods is an employee's time to use as he wishes without unreasonable restraint, although the employee is on company property. It is therefore not within the province of an employer to promulgate and enforce a rule prohibiting union solicitation by an employee outside of working hours, although on company property. . . ."

I dare say that the above judgement of the Court of Appeal of England sets a new trend in the adjudication of Trade Union rights and, though it is as yet not more than a trend, it would be an welcome sight if such a trend repeated itself in the Indian Trade Union law and Industrial adjudication.

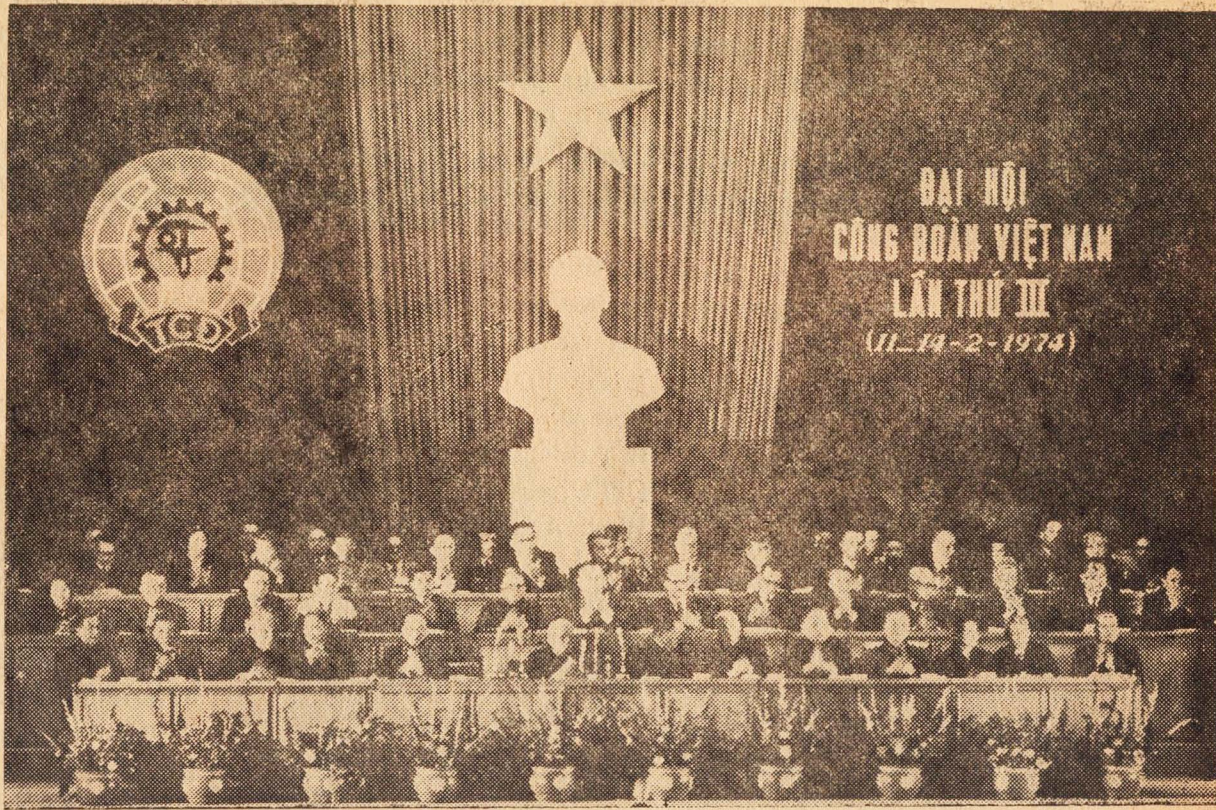
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## Delhi Engineering Workers' Conference

The first Conference of Delhi Engineering workers, attended by 100 delegates representing membership of five thousand workers, was held on 27th January in the Karampura industrial area. In his inaugural address Ghanshyam Saran Sinha, General Secretary, Delhi State Committee of CITU, made an appeal to all workers and trade unions to launch a united struggle to realise their demands and to fight against the anti-labour policy of the Government. The Conference demanded immediate interim relief of Rs. 70

for all Engineering workers, implementation of Engineering Wage Board recommendations, 1968, 20% bonus, abolition of contract labour, house rent etc. The Conference decided to form Branch Committees in all Engineering industries of Delhi and elected its office-bearers.

The Conference expressed sympathy with the struggling Engineering workers of Faridabad and Ghaziabad. It asked U.P. Government to release S.B. Bharadwaj, CITU leader and other trade union workers.



*The Presidium  
Third National Congress Of The Vietnamese Trade Unions*

# The Third National Congress Of The Vietnamese Trade Unions

**B. T. Ranadive, President CITU**

**T**HE THIRD NATIONAL Congress of the Federation of Vietnam Trade Unions, the mass organisation of the fighting working class of Vietnam was held in Hanoi from 11th February to 14th February.

The problems discussed, the speeches delivered, the fraternal greetings and felicitations from the leaders of the world trade unions made the Congress an outstanding event in the forward march of the glorious working

class of Vietnam for unification and socialism and a mighty demonstration of proletarian solidarity for the people of Vietnam in its struggle against American imperialism.

The speeches and report stressed the vanguard role of the working class and its international proletarian outlook.

The Congress brought out the leading role of the Workers' Party—the Marxist Leninist Party in guiding the trade union and working class.

The Congress devoted its labour and discussions to the new role of the trade unions in the conditions facing Vietnam and the working class—of trade unions which have become part of the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat and on whom rested the responsibility of directly leading the proletarian masses in the task of building Socialism, of unleashing the full production offensive of the working class for the purpose of Socialist industrialisation.

Supplement  
To  
The Working  
Class

Vol. 3 No. 7  
March 1974

Hanoi, the epicentre of revolutionary symbol of world proletarian resistance to American imperialism, was naturally the venue of this historic Congress. Hanoi, along with Haiphong and a few other cities had to face the most devastating bombing raids of U. S. bombers which spared nothing. The Railway station near the Red River is now a mass of tangled metal and cement—with a few cement pillars standing erect, the symbol of the unbending resistance of the people of Hanoi. The bridge over the river was partly destroyed but was as quickly repaired. In the zoo, there stand the remains of a American bomber. The March 8th Textile Factory run by women displays repaired roofs, damaged walls and a whole line of underground shelters. But these are just the last vestiges of a destruction that was rained on a devastating scale to bring Hanoi to submission. Hanoi gave its revolutionary answer to this flood of bombs and as heroically repaired the vast damage to residences and working class houses.

#### **Fraternal Delegates**

To Hanoi came delegates from 28 fraternal countries from proletarian centres to greet the Historic Congress. They arrived on the 9th February and were received at the airport by the President of the Federation of Vietnam Trade Unions, Com. Hoang Quoc Viet, Vice-President Nguen Cong Hoa, Vice-President Mrs. Truong Thi My, Secretariat member, Le Van; Head of the International Department of the Federation,

Nguyen Thuyet and other leaders of the Federation.

The foreign delegates represented the World Federation of Trade Unions, the trade unions of the USSR, People's Republic of Mongolia, Democratic Republic of Korea, Cuba, Albania, Roumania, Hungary, Poland, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, France and Italy from Europe. From India, there were two delegates—representing the CITU and the AITUC. From West Asia, the United Arab Republic, Syria, Palestine, Morocco, Iraq and Algeria were represented. And from Latin America besides Cuba, there were delegates from fighting Chile and Peru. The trade Unions of Japan were represented by the SOHYO.

The South Vietnam Federation of Labour sent a powerful delegation which consisted of working class guerrilla fighters. Fighting Laos and Cambodia still engaged in a life and death struggle with American imperialism completed the team of the fraternal organisations greeting the Congress.

#### **Background & Victory**

The Third Congress was meeting in the background of the great spectacular victory of the Vietnamese people. The Paris Agreement which compelled the U.S. imperialists to accept withdrawal of the American armed forces from South Vietnam, recognised the two administrations and three political forces, recognised the Vietnamese right for national self-determination, was one of the biggest defeats of American imperialists.

The people and working class of Vietnam had to face the most barbarous type of bombing by a ruthless enemy determined to blot out the entire people, its entire productive capacity, its means of existence.

But the damage has been enormous. "The war has rolled back our originally under-developed economy which had just made one step forward to where it was ten years ago."

The working class of Vietnam played a heroic role in defence, in armed struggle and protecting the production capacity of the country and achieving marvels of production in face of the most devastating bombing.

The communications and transport workers continued to maintain the arteries of communications open in face of the destructive bombing, one of whose primary aims was to destroy all communications. "Acting upon the slogan, 'we may shed blood, but never shall we let communications be disrupted,' truck drivers and sailors together with the workers at bridge repair sites and ferries overcame all damages and hardships caused by enemy bombs, shells and mines to bring supplies to the front.

Arms manufacturing workers worked day and night producing improved weapons "thus contributing a worthy share in defeating the so-called superiority of modern war technique of U. S. imperialism."

Carrying out the Party's slogan, "the hammer in one hand and the gun in the other",

the workers, under the worst bombing conditions evacuated their factories and offices to safe places, removing millions of tons of machines, documents, materials and equipment." The home-guard units of the workers and public employees comprising hundreds of thousands of persons, men and women, have fought valourously arms in hand, against the U. S. marauding aircraft to defend their factories, the socialist property and their comrades who were carrying on production and work.

Armed brigades of miners, cement workers, steel workers—came into existence during the war of resistance. They struck fear into the heart of the enemy with their resounding feats.

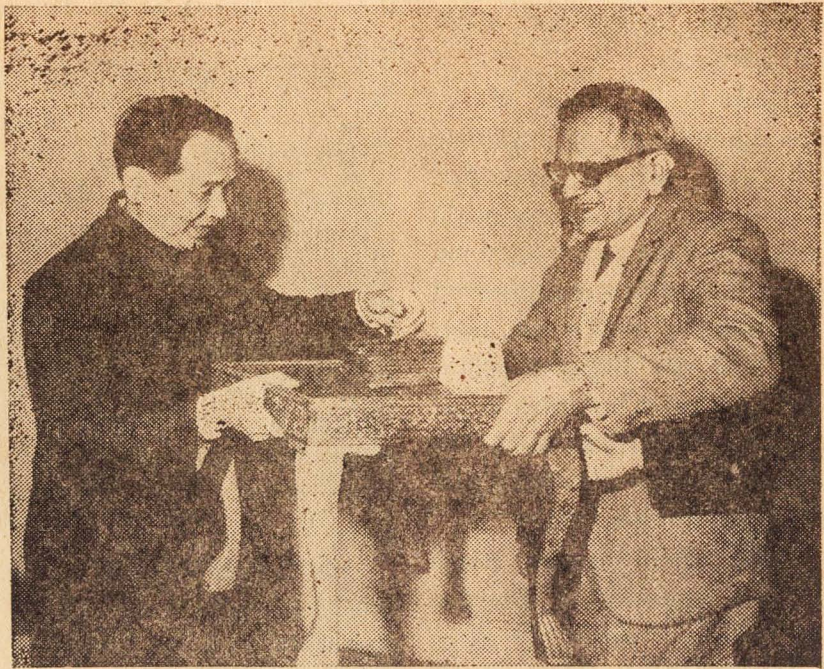
On the morrow of the end of the war, the workers magnificently responded to the appeal of the Party and the Government to turn to Socialist production and overcome all the difficulties created by the enemy's destructive bombings.

Within a short period all the railroads were reopened to traffic and all the bridges big and small on the main arteries were repaired. The power stations damaged by the bombings were quickly repaired and resumed production—their output reaching the pre-war level. Evacuated factories and machinery were brought back and reassembled and commissioned in record time. Badly damaged factories have completed their first drive of repair and resumed operation; cultural, educational and medical activities have returned to normal.

This is the glorious record in one year of peace.

At the conference inaugural speeches were made by President, Ton Duc Thong—head of the State, Premier Phan Van Dong of the DRVN Government.

fraternal socialist countries, first of all the Soviet Union and China, of the world's working class and labouring peoples, and of all the independence, freedom, justice and peace-loving countries and peoples." He expressed



*B. T. Ranadive presenting gifts to Com. Hoang Quoc Viet, President F.V.T.U.*

### **Comrade Le Duan New Stage of Revolution**

Comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Vietnam Workers' Party then addressed the Congress on behalf of the Party detailing the immediate situation and the required orientation.

Comrade Le Duan, greeting the workers on their successes and the victories of the Vietnamese people added "While referring to our working class and people's successes and achievements, we never overlook the substantial, priceless and multi-faceted contribution to them of the

heartfelt gratitude for international support and assistance.

He reminded the trade unions they were an extensive body linking the Party with the working class, vanguard class and most important force fighting for socialism and therefore they must play the most important part in translating the Party's new resolution into reality.

He told the delegates that the Vietnamese revolution has entered a new stage in very favourable circumstances but the battle for complete independence and freedom all over the country remains very difficult and complex.

Comrade Le Duan added, "The greatest achievement of the North's socialist revolution has been the elimination of oppression and exploitation, liquidation of the exploiting class as such and co-operativisation of small-scale and scattered production." On this basis the economy made initial advances.

Thanks to it in face of the war and bombings, an adequate supply of prime necessities, education and medical care could be ensured to the people and no great disturbances were observed in the distribution of goods, their prices and the living standard of the masses, who were made safe from hunger and cold, the usual companions of a fierce and long-drawn out war.

He reminded that the North has been engaged in Socialist construction for nearly 20 years, 15 of which were taken up by the war and only eight of which were devoted to building efforts which were repeatedly set at naught by war bombings.

What is the weakness to be overcome? The crux of the matter is that in our socialist society, a small-scale, basically agricultural economy still exists.

Bye-passing the stage of capitalist development, there is no other alternative than socialist industrialisation to turn our country a backward agricultural land with a system of production mainly small scale into one with largescale socialist production.

### **Trade Unions and Victorious Working Classes**

Comrade Le Duan then reminded the workers and trade

unions, "The working class in North Vietnam has become the ruling class of the country. As for trade unions, they are no more a weapon of struggling against oppression and exploitation but are assuming the role of an extremely important link in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat. One cannot figure out the labouring people's regime of collective master without the existence of the trade unions, with their vast rights guaranteed by State laws.

He quoted Lenin to say "the State power once being seized, the proletariat has one fundamental life and death question, that is to increase the bulk of social products and the labour force of production to a large scale."

Carrying forward the Leninist teachings on trade unions under Socialism, he pointed out that to say Trade Union is a school of Communism means first of all that it must educate the labouring people in the socialist communist ideology. The educational work mentioned here can only be done successfully in the course of and on the basis of productive labour movement of mass and revolutionary character with a view to successfully building socialism.

### **Offensive of Revolutionary Forces**

Le Duan then returned to the international situation and inspiringly summed up the present position reminding the delegates that the Vietnam workers are a part of the international working class and of the revolutionary epoch.

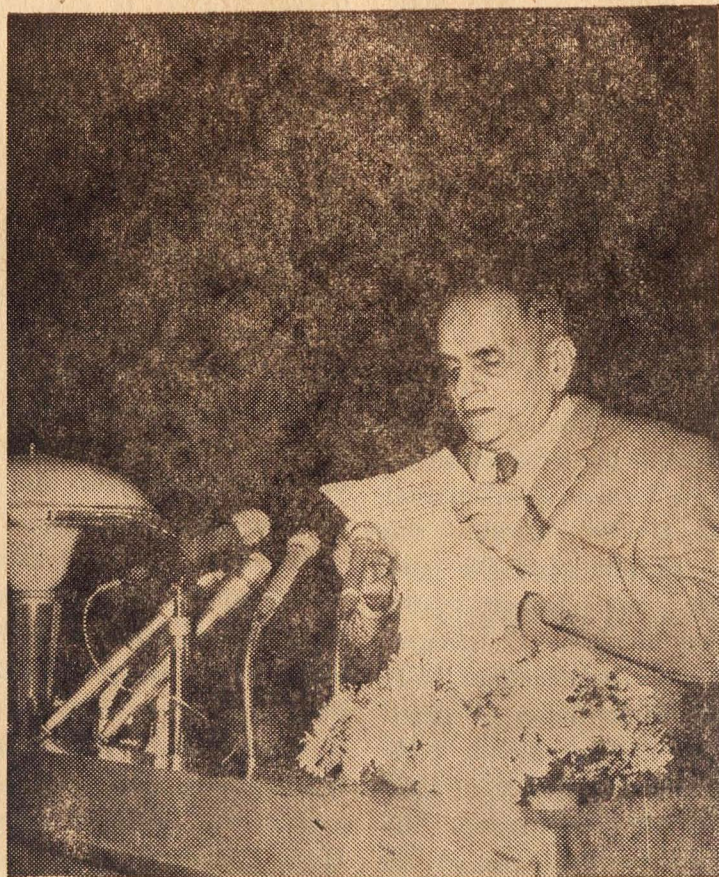
"The Vietnamese working class, the leading class of the Vietnamese revolution, constitute a part of the international working class, a class standing in the very centre of our era. The Vietnamese revolution constitutes a part of the World revolution, and is directly linked to three great trends of the proletarian revolution in the present era...that is: the movement of building socialism and communism in the world socialist system; the movement of struggle of the working and labouring people in the capitalist and imperialist countries, the national liberation movement and the uprising of the force fighting for national independence with a view to leading the country straight to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development. The revolutionary cause of our people is a concrete picture combining closely the lofty objectives of mankind in the present era: national independence and socialism. It is because our people have stood on the common position of offensive of the world revolution, and made full use of the strength of various revolutionary trends of the era, that they could create their force supremacy for defeating U.S. imperialist aggressors and their henchmen. On the other hand, the victory of our people's anti-U.S. resistance for national salvation has consolidated more the position of socialism in the world, strongly stimulated the people's struggle of countries in the Third World against old and new colonialism and influenced the revolu-

tionary struggle of the working class and labouring people in developed countries, at the same time, together with those revolutionary trends, made deeper and sharper the general crisis in the imperialist system. It is quite obvious that today the positions

situation was greeted with thunderous and prolonged applause.

### **How the Congress was prepared**

After Comrade Le Duan, the President of the Vietnamese Federation of Trade Unions, Hoang-Quoc Viet made his



*B. T. Ranadive, addressing delegates to the Third National Congress of Vietnamese Trade Unions*

of imperialism headed by U.S. imperialism are being by one serious step weakened, and the offensive position of revolutionary forces in the world is more solid than ever and the alternative of preserving peace is getting stronger than ever before.”

Le Duan's speech was punctuated with applause. His peroration summing up the world

opening speech. He welcomed the fraternal delegations from foreign countries; the representatives of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, Federation of Trade Unions for Liberation who have come from the “Brass Wall of the Fatherland”, shining with flames of struggle and resounding with splendid victories. He thanked

the leadership of the Workers' Party for its sedulous attention to the problems of the trade unions. Explaining how the preparation for the Congress was made at the grass roots level, he said, “After over three months of intensive work for the preparations of the Congress, all the trade union organisations at the primary level, in various localities and branches have successfully held their Congresses. Almost all the workers, employees and trade union members at more than 6,000 primary trade unions in North Vietnam actively took part in local Congresses, setting forth tens of thousands of proposals on such matters as: production, management of enterprise, management of office, labour code and regulations, and trade union activities.

### **On Tasks**

The report on Situation and Tasks of the Executive Committee of Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions was placed before the Congress by Vice-President, Nguen Cong-Hoa. In its comprehensive review of the activities of the trade unions, the heroic role played by them, by the working class of North and South Vietnam, the report dealt with the achievements as well as short comings.

It reviewed the role played by the trade unions and the working class in the harsh period of war of resistance; stressed the heroism and devotion to duty of the working class; its successes in battle field and off the battle-field; the heroic role of the People's Army and the entire

people and greeted the working class for its successes.

"The trade unions have rallied the overwhelming majority of the workers and public employees, organised them into a revolutionary force to strive for the successful implementation of the line of the Party. They have organised and mobilised the movement of the workers and public employees to engage in revolutionary acts, and at the same time, attended to the life of their members and improved their standards in all spheres. "The trade unions have launched a stirring movement of emulation to resist U.S. aggression for national salvation and to build Socialism among the workers and public employees..."

"In co-ordination with the State organs the Trade Unions have taken measures to care better for the life of the workers and public employees. Trade unions at all levels have actively taken part in the improvement of the wage system, and in the amendments to the labour policy in different periods, specially during war time. In particular during war time the trade unions have made great efforts to attend to the living conditions, transport facilities, dispersion, recreation and rest of workers and public employees and their families.

The report reminded the delegates that in spite of its bitter setback the U.S. imperialism remains very stubborn.

It said it is the task of the trade unions to heighten the class consciousness, the sense of

being the collective master ; develop the role of workers and public employees as collective master ; initiate emulation movement ; participate in the management of the factories, economy and the State ; carry out the three revolutions ; be ready to smash all schemes of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen, render all help to the South strengthen solidarity with the unity of working class and trade union movement of the world in the common fight against imperialism headed by U. S. imperialism.

The report proceeds to lay down the concrete tasks at each level in great detail. It calls upon the trade unions to assist improvement in economic management whose fundamental direction is "to abolish the method of administrative and surveying management and realise the method of management along socialist lines." It asks the trade union to participate in drafting labour code and regulations and look to their effective implementation. It further asks the trade unions to participate in the improvement of the managerial machine of the State by effective participation at all levels of management of State economy.

Together with this the trade unions are called upon to look to questions of prices, salaries, allowances, social welfare ; in collaboration with the state organs, broaden the application of the system of payment according to production results ; care for socialist accumulation and educate the working class

in conformity with the requirements of the revolutionary task of the new stage.

Finally, the Report stressed, "The trade unions bear the mass and class character of the working class. They belong to the system of proletarian dictatorship ...The trade union is a school of class struggle, of management of the economy, and of the State, a school of socialism and communism of the working class. In carrying out its function and role, the trade unions will develop its responsibility as a link in joining the Party with the masses, and as a solid prop for system of proletarian dictatorship..."

This report was followed by another on the amendments to the Constitution of the Vietnamese Trade Unions.

The first day was taken by these reports. Part of the first day and the whole of 12th was taken by speeches of the fraternal delegates.

During the course of the deliberations, The Congress was greeted by representatives of Ho Chi Minh Youth organisation, of collective farmers and of Peoples' Liberation Army. They all expressed Confidence in the leadership of the working class and the Central Committee of Workers' Party of Vietnam.

At the closing session of the 14th, the Trade Unions were awarded President Ho Chi Minh's order (2nd class) for their meritorious achievements. The order was proudly pinned on the Federation Flag in the midst of deafening applause from the delegates.

On the 13th and at the first session on the 14th the five hundred delegates who had shouldered the burdens of war, achieved marvels of production with rifle in one hand and hammer in the other discussed the reports in detail and came out with many valuable concrete suggestions on the basis of their own experience.

On the basis of this detailed democratic discussion, a final resolution on tasks was placed before the Congress. It embodied the basic formulations on and the concrete tasks as outlined in the Executive Committee's report.

The resolution was unanimously adopted accompanied by thunderous applause.

The Constitutional amendments were also unanimously adopted the delegates fully approving the new changes and provisions. The list of new office bearers was unanimously adopted and the Executive Committee of 71 was elected.

Com. Hoang Quoc Viet was re-elected President, Com. Nguen Cong Hoa and Com. Mrs. Truong Thi My were re-elected Vice-Presidents.

In his closing speech, Com. Hoang Quoc Viet said, "The unanimous adoption of the documents of the Congress has eloquently spoken out the onemindedness and determination of the workers and employees to realise the line and policies of the Party and State plans, especially the resolution of the Party's Central Committee.

The success of the Congress is

a source of encouragement to the manual and brain workers and a stimulation to the workers and people in both North and South Vietnam to push ahead the struggle to achieve the national democratic revolution in South Vietnam, strive to build Socialism in North Vietnam to realise the last wish of beloved President Ho Chi Minh: "My last wish is that the entire Party unites, the entire country unites to strive to build a peaceful reunified, independent democratic prosperous Vietnam and to contribute a worthy share to the revolutionary cause in the world."

After this the Congress rose to the strains of International.

Thus ended the historic Third Congress of the Vietnam Trade

Unions. The Marxist-Leninist guidance given by the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Vietnam, based on Lenin's teachings on the role of trade unions under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working out of the concrete tasks in the context of the existing political, international and economic situation and the enlightening discussions of the highly conscious delegates clearly showed that the glorious working class of Vietnam and its nature trade union movement will register further victories and fulfil all the tasks—the liberation of the South, peaceful unification of the country, rendering help to the fighting Laos and Cambodia and the successful socialist industrialisation of the North.

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## B. T. Ranadive, President CITU Speaks At The Third National Congress Of Vietnamese T.U.

Dear Comrades and Friends,

Allow me to offer you, on behalf of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, to the working class of Vietnam, to your trade union Conference, warm greetings of the working class of India.

Our organisation and working class highly appreciated the presence of your delegates at our Conference last April in Kerala. Their speeches and messages warmed our hearts and cemented the feelings of solidarity and friendship between the working class and the people of Vietnam and the working class and people of India.

I offer my homage to the memory of the lakhs of men and

women, the martyrs from the working class, from the peasantry, from the people, who fell victims to American barbarism; I offer my salutation to the memory of that revolutionary of imperishable fame—Comrade Ho Chi-Minh.

The struggle that the people of Vietnam have been waging is an unprecedented and unparalleled struggle. Never before perhaps was a people pitted against such a brutal power having overwhelming superiority in the most destructive arms. But the spirit of freedom, of resistance to secure the unification of the motherland, its freedom and its right to a better social order conquered the

bombs and vaunted military might of the American imperialists.

The battle wages by the people and working class of Vietnam, for unification of the country, for preserving the gains of Socialism, is simultaneously a battle for international working class, for all people fighting for freedom.

The unconquerable people of Vietnam were aided in their struggle by the valuable help from the Soviet Union, from the People's Republic of China, from all Socialist countries, from the working class and people of the world, by the wide sympathy shown by the American people themselves. The great banner of proletarian internationalism guided all sections to do their duty.

The result of this heroic struggle is the Paris Agreement which marked a big victory for the people of Vietnam, for the forces of freedom in the world.

But the imperialists cannot forget their habits. The United States Government has been hatching neo-colonialist plans and intervening in the internal affairs of South Vietnam. Instead of withdrawing to the last man the military personnel illegally left behind in the guise of American "civilian advisors", it continues its aid to the military clique of Nguyen Van Thieu.

Whatever resistance the imperialists and their stooges put up, they will not be allowed to break the agreement; they will have to implement it—that is the

demand of the working class and the progressive forces in India.

The glorious achievements of the people of Vietnam were achieved because of the correct leadership of the Workers' Party and the Government of the D.R.V.

Friends, Dear Workers, our working class stands in amazement not only over your military heroism, it also is deeply moved by your production heroism which enabled you to keep the wheels of industry running.

The rapid pace of economic restoration after the barbarous raids by B52s and F-111 dropping "Smart Bombs" could not have been achieved without marvellous production work by the working class and the people. The workers following the line of the Party of the working people quickly effected the evacuation and dispersal of industries and inflicted yet another defeat on the American imperialists.

Thanks to quick repair work, you were able to double the electricity output this year compared with the same period of last year. The rapid return of machinery from evacuation plants, their re-assembly and quick commissioning you have enable the vital engineering industry to forge ahead. You have voluntarily increased by 15 to 20 per cent the targets of production in many industries.

Peace hath her victories no less important than war. This mighty production effort of a people under the most devastat-

ing bombing, this great saga of building socialism, will for ever be remembered by toiling people all over the world.

There is no doubt that soon the entire Vietnam will be free from the foul aggression of American imperialism and its stooges; that a united people will refashion the country and take it to prosperity along the path of socialism.

There is no doubt that the valiant people of Laos and Cambodia, of the entire Indo-China will be able to breathe freely having thrown out the American aggressors and their puppets.

Comrades, the working class and the progressive section in India consider it their bounden duty to help in every possible way the people of Vietnam.

Let me offer you again my feeling of solidarity and friendship and wish you success in the battle to free Vietnam from imperialist and build a United Vietnam. Let me wish complete success to the deliberations of your Conference which will no doubt inspire the trade unions and the working class to play a still more glorious role in a gigantic task of rehabilitation, Socialist reconstruction and advance.

May the fraternal solidarity between the working class of Vietnam and of India grow stronger every day!

May the banner of International proletarian unity grow stronger every day!

May it continue to lead the fight against American imperialism!

# Apartheid-Worst Form Of Racial Discrimination

**P**ERHAPS nowhere else in the world, workers have to face such worst forms of racial discrimination and oppression as meted out to the African, Coloured and Asian workers under the white minority regime in South Africa. In no other country of the world, labour legislation, wage standards, conditions of service, job reservation etc. are based on the colour of a man's skin.

Racial discrimination under the apartheid and segregation practised by the white minority regime relegates the African, Coloured and Asian workers to an inferior position from cradle to grave. They cannot take jobs reserved for the whites; they have no job security; let alone prospects of advancement; they have no right to belong to 'white' trade unions; they have no right to strike; they are not even allowed to live with their families while employed.

This is the condition of the non-white workers, notwithstanding the fact that they constitute the overwhelming majority of the population and labour force. Out of a total population of over 21 million (1970), African, Coloured and Asians total nearly 18 millions. Out of a total labour force of 8.33 millions at the end of 1971, African workers totalled 5.85 million, Coloured and Asian workers over 9 lakhs—in all 6.75 million or more than 75 per cent of the total labour force.

A significant feature revealed by the latest employment statistics of the Department of Labour is that white Collar jobs in education, public service, post office etc. are manned mainly by the whites. Whites also predominate in professional, semi-professional and technical, managerial, executive and administrative, clerical, sales and related work. Whereas Africans and other non-white workers are mostly found

per cent and coloured workers 17.1 per cent. Since then the percentage of white workers have further declined and those of African and other non-white workers have increased.

Apart from other forms of intolerable discriminations, the intense exploitation and discrimination in the matter of wages which the African Coloured and Asian workers are subjected will be apparent from the following table showing the monthly average wage of the different racial groups :

**Monthly Average Wage of Workers in Different Sectors (1970)**

Sector	White	Coloured	Asian	African
Mines	R. 360.8	75.2	98.9	18.3
Manufacturing Industries	R. 307.2	73.6	77.4	52.3
Building	R. 325.3	—	150.4	49.9
Electricity	R. 369.1	76.7	—	55.3
Banks and Building Societies	R. 298.2	80.4	106.8	66.9
Central Govt.	R. 282.1	114.3	114.7	44.8
Provincial Administration	R. 224.3	59.2	73.5	33.9
Local Authorities	R. 293.6	85.9	60.2	45.0
Railways	R. 295.3	70.6	53.8	52.3

in "production jobs" as semi-skilled workers and operators.

The composition of the industrial labour force also reflects the existing racial divisions. In 1970 factories employed 1,410,600 workers of whom Africans constituted 52.7 per cent, whites 24.1

No wonder, therefore, that the white minority in South Africa enjoys one of the highest living standards in the world, the basis of which is provided by the sweat and labour of the African, Coloured and Asian workers.

(Source : World Trade Union Movement, September 1973)

**AIRF PLANS CONVENTIONS TO FINALISE STRIKE DATE**

**T**HE General Council of AIRF which met at Nagpur between February 6-9, decided to postpone the date of strike which was earlier fixed on February 27. In pursuance of the earlier meetings with category-wise Associations, it decided to hold railwaymen's Convention on February 27, and fix up a date for strike in consultation with other organisations. To consider ways and means of co-ordinating the struggle with other Government employees, it also decided to hold another Conference in the middle of March at New Delhi in which representatives from all Central and State Government employees will be invited. The General Council invited all organisations irrespective of status and affiliation to participate in the Convention.

**Special National Convention of Category-wise Associations**

The Railway Employees Confederation, a body of some category-wise Associations, held a special National Convention at Madras between February 15-17. On the first day, the Executive Committees of different associations met to consider the next step. SMs & ASMs Association recommended that while work-to-rule should be started from April 15, the date for strike to win basic demands should be fixed on May 1. On the Second day, the National

Convention (about 600 delegates attending) decided to hold mass rally on April 2, and to start work-to-rule movement from the midnight of April 14/15. It also decided to cease work from an un-specified date. A Charter of demands was also formulated with 23 items which includes the demand of 'Bonus' to railwaymen, but does not include 'Need based minimum wage.' On February 17, Joint Convention was held in which all the Trade Union Centres and Central Government employees organisations were invited. Only the CITU and AITUC responded and the unions affiliated to these organisations participated. Com. K. Adinarayana, also participated on behalf of the Confederation of Central Government employees (S. K. Vyas Group). Com. R. Umanath, Secretary, Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU, addressed the Convention. In a powerful speech, he drew the attention of the delegates to the rising militancy of railwaymen and appealed to forge broadest possible unity through the Conventions called by AIRF. He cited the example of IAC struggle and warned about the disastrous effect it would have, if railwaymen fail to forge unity. The Chairman thanked Com. Umanath for the correct advice given to the delegates. Com. M. R. Sabapathy, President AILRSA, also addressed the Convention and stated that the

ILRSA has already decided to join the united struggle for securing common demands like need based minimum wage, bonus etc.

**Movement at Nagpur****Continues**

In protest against the Central Government decision to impose a wage cut for the December Food movement in Nagpur while the State Government paid wages to its employees, the Central Government employees there are continuing agitation. On January 30, a huge demonstration was led and on January 31, the employees including their family members staged demonstration in all the offices. This was followed by a pay boycott on February 1. Further programme including 'Nagpur Bundh' will be considered if the Government does not accede to their demand.

**SER Station Masters Stop Work**

The SMs & ASMs of Adra division of S. E. Railway stopped work from February 4 in protest against victimisation and for other demands. The authorities were forced to negotiate and settle the demands.

**Train Examiners Observe Work-to-rule**

Train Examiners all over the country observed work-to-rule for a week in order to press their demands. After withdrawing the agitation, they warned the Government that if their demands are not conceded, they would intensify their struggle.

**Casual Labour in Central Railway Agitate**

The Casual Labour working in Central Railway are agitating for increased wage and  
(On Page Thirteen)

## Com. Bhaskaran Murdered

Comrade M. N. Bhaskaran, a worker of Kerala Mangalam Rubber Estate in Trichur district, Kerala and the President of the workers' union was stabbed to death by the son of the estate owner and another person on January 31.

Comrade Bhaskaran, who was a militant leader of the plantation workers, had gone to discuss the workers' demand for implementation of an agreement signed by the estate owner a few days back. He was attacked on his way back and murdered. One of the assailants was caught by the people redhanded and made over to the police.

### Another Martyr

Comrade Nemai Chatterjee, a worker of Texmaco factory in Belghoria (West Bengal) and a member of the CPI(M) was kidnapped by the Congress gangsters on Republic Day and hacked to death in broad day light. Although the names of the assailants were given to the local police, none has been arrested so far.

## Railwaymen

(From Page Twelve)

permanent absorption. Dharnas and demonstrations have been held in different parts of the railway.

### Workers of R. D. S. O.

#### Lucknow in Ferment

As the Railway Ministry failed to settle the demands of the workers of Reserch, Designing and Standardisation Organisation at Lucknow, submitted in September last, the workers observed a pay-boycott on January 1, and led a massive demonstration before the Office of the Director General. Further movement is being planned if the demands are not conceded.

## Consumer Price Index Numbers

(INDUSTRIAL WORKERS/BASE 1960—100)

State/Centre	1973			U. P.	Kanpur	259	262	259
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.					
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>				<b>West Bengal</b>				
Hyderabad	249	249	257	Calcutta	240	237	238	
<b>Assam</b>				Howrah				
Digboi	230	242	252	Delhi	272	274	271	
<b>Bihar</b>								
Jamshedpur	254	254	259	<b>Other Centres</b>				
Jharia	262	270	276					
<b>Gujarat</b>				(On different bases)				
Ahmedabad	247	257	262	1973				
Bhavnagar	277	285	289	Oct. Nov. Dec.				
<b>Haryana</b>				Cuttack (1949)				
Yamunanagar	261	261	261	299	308	308		
<b>J &amp; K</b>				Berhampur				
Srinagar	216	218	213	(1949)	348	342	349	
<b>Kerala</b>				Jabalpur (1949)				
Alwaye	273	275	267	302	320	320		
Mundakayam	266	274	266	Beawar				
<b>M.P.</b>				(1951-52)				
Bhopal	257	263	262	294	302	309		
Gwalior	272	275	280	Himachal				
Indore	282	286	285	Pradesh (1965)				
<b>Maharashtra</b>				Goa (1966)				
Bombay	228	236	238	202	208	219		
Nagpur	260	279	278	<b>All India Consumer Price Index</b>				
Sholapur	279	282	298	Base				
<b>Mysore</b>				(Working Class/General Index)				
Bangalore	275	273	274	1973				
<b>Orissa</b>				1949				
Sambalpur	236	251	257	1960				
<b>Punjab</b>				June				
Amritsar	254	258	262	283				
<b>Rajasthan</b>				July				
Ajmer	260	262	265	295				
Jaipur	269	266	272	243				
<b>Tamilnadu</b>				August				
Coimbatore	214	223	226	300				
Madras	226	231	233	247				
Madurai	237	247	248	September				
				301				
				October				
				309				
				November				
				315				
				December				
				316				

Source : Index Sheet, Labour Bureau, Simla

## British Miners On Strike

**O**VER 2.79 lakhs workers in Britain's nationalised coal mines went on an indefinite strike from the midnight of February 9-10 in support of their demand for 8 pound rise in wages.

The pro-monopolist policies of the Tory Government, which plunged the country into the the wrost crisis since the Second World War, have already seriously eroded the wage and living standards of British workers through unprecedented rise in prices and unemployment and the introduction of a three-day week. The militant miners have shown that the working class in Britain will not take it lying down.

For sometime past, the miners along with railmen have been carrying on a "ban overtime" movement in support of their wage claims. The refusal of the Government to grant more than 2.5 pounds and the fierce barrage of villification launched by the pro-monopoly press merely strenghtend their determination to fight back. A strike-ballot taken recently revealed overwhelming support for an indefinite strike from February 10. They stuck to their decision despite a last minute appeal for postponement by the Prime Minister and the Union President Joe Gormley. Reports received so far indicate that the strike is complete. Coal production throughout Britain has stopped

## Doctors & Engineers On Struggle

**A**T the call of the A. I. Federation of Junior Doctor's Associations, over 10,000 junior doctors in 9 States and four Centrally administered areas have started an indefinite strike from February 17.

Over 7500 Doctors and Engineers of West Bengal are also going on indefinite ceasework from February 21 to press their demands for higher scale and appointment as heads of medical and technical departments.

Comrade B. T. Ranadive, President CITU issued the following Statement in support of the struggles of doctors and engineers :

"The CITU congratulates over 10,000 junior doctors in 9

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bringing the wheels of industry and railways to a grinding halt and precipitating a major political crisis.

In a telegram sent to the National Union of Mine Workers, Com. B.T. Ranadive, president CITU extended full support of the Indian workers to the struggle and demands of the British miners.

### West Germany

Facing similar attacks on their wage and living standards, 2.3 million State and Municipal workers in West Germany started an indefinite strike from February 10 demanding a 15 per cent wage rise.

States for their strike since February 17 for better allowances and service conditions. After prolonged fruitless discussions with callous authorities these doctors were left with no other altereative but to go in for direct action. The Union Health Ministry instead of appreciating the genuinness of their grievances resorted to vindictive measures against the junior doctors. The entire responsibility for the inconvenience caused to the thousands of patients therefore fully lies on the authorities and the Government. The CITU urges upon the Government to immediately accept the demands of the striking doctors and settle the dispute.

The CITU also fully supports the indefinite ceasework by 7500 doctors and engineers of West Bengal from 21st February demanding appointment of technical and medical officers as heads of Government departments and public sector undertakings and higher pay scales. The CITU welcoms the unity achieved by the doctors and engineers under the leadership of Confederation of the officers of the Technical and Medical services of West Bengal and condemns the hostile attitude taken by the West Bengal Government towards these resonable demands.

The CITU appeals to all the trade unions to rally behind the engineers and doctors and bring pressure on the Government to accept their just demands."

## Valiant Struggle By Coca-Cola Workers

**T**WO hundred workers of the Coca-Cola factory at Borim in Goa are carrying on a valient struggle since November 23 last against the illegal and vindictive lock-out imposed by the management.

The Coca-Cola factory and the Agency for distribution of Coca-Cola and Ashok Leyland in Goa are owned by Erasmo Sequeira, M. P. and Jack Sequeira MLA respectively of the United Goans Party.

The workers, who had been struggling all along against the anti-labour practices of the management, recently joined the All Goa General Employees Union (CITU). This was considered to be a crime by the vindictive management who promptly dismissed 3 leading workers without any charge-sheet and declared to a lock-out from November 23. They refused to accept the workers' right to form a union and even refused to attend conciliation proceedings. The workers, who were solidly united, refused to be cowed down by this and continued a determined struggle to lift the illegal lock-out.

Led by the Sequeiras, the management mobilised goondas and black-legs inside the factory in a bid to intimidate the workers and run the factory. On January 18 last, when the workers had assembled opposite the factory at Borim for a mass rally, Jagdish Rao and Roque Santan (two MLAs of the United Goans Party) along with

goondas resorted to indiscriminate rifle and pistol firing on the assembled workers seriously injuring 11 of them. The police led by the DSP were present all along but they refused to disarm the MLAs and goondas, nor have they arrested the M. P. and two MLA's who led this criminal attack.

This brutal attack by the management and the determined struggle of the workers have evoked widest sympathy for the workers cause in all sections of the people. Support and solidarity actions have come from Central Trade Unions—CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMP etc., from other trade unions in Goa and other States, from political parties and mass organisations of Kisans, employees, teachers, students, women, youth etc.

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU, in a letter addressed to the Chief Minister of Goa, condemned this brutal and reckless firing on the workers and demanded immediate lifting of the lock-out and settlement of all outstanding issues with the workers' union.

### GOA Bundh

Meanwhile the management have not only refused to take back workers who went to report for duty after the dispute was referred by the Government to an Industrial Tribunal, they are also defiantly running the factory with the help of blacklegs and anti-socials.

Under the auspices of the All India Railwaymen's Federation, a Joint Convention of State, Central and other Government Employees will be held at Delhi on March 15-16 next. The Convention will finalise demands of the Government employees and adopt a programme of movement to realise the same.

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The protest against the firing on Coca-Cola workers by the management and their blatant anti-worker attitude, the Action Committee of Trade Unions and Mass Organisations called for a 'Goa Bundh' on February 21 which was later advanced to February 18. Although the INTUC, along with the CITU, AITUC, HMS and HMP, was a participant in the Action Committee, it backed out at the last moment and betrayed the Bundh.

Reports so far received show that the Bundh was completely successful. Fifty thousand workers downed tools in the harbour, mines, engineering factories etc. Trucks, tankers, taxis and private road transport stopped plying and markets and shops in Vasco-da-Gama, Panjim, Mapuca, Margao and other towns as well as in villages remained closed. Armed police brought by the Government from Karnataka and Maharashtra resorted to lathi charge in two places against the peaceful picketers.

## Kerala State Unit Of UCTU Formed

A Conference of various T. U. organisations was held at Alwaye on 26th and 27th January 1974 to set up the Kerala Committee of the UCTU. The initiative to call the Conference was taken by the independent T. U. organisations under the leadership of S.C.S. Menon, T. U. organisations under the leadership of the CITU and the Socialist Party.

1,200 delegates attended the Conference. They represented among others the Kerala unit of the National Federation of P & T employees, NGO Union, General Insurance Employees' Association, Sectt. Employees' Union, All Kerala Bank Employees' Federation, Municipal Corporation Staff Federation, Kerala Lower Grade Union, Tea Board Employees' Association, AG's Office NGO Asscn., Government Corporation Employees' Federation, AKPCTA, KPTU, etc.

A presidium consisting of Comrades S.C.S. Menon, C.G. Janardanan and O. J. Joseph and a Steering Committee comprising of Comrades E. Balanandan, K.N. Ravindran, Thampyan Thomas, Kayikkara Shamsuddin, Shivarama Bharati, P.K. Sankaran Kutty, S.S. Potti, C.A. Peter, V. Viswanatha Menon were elected.

Com. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of the CITU addressed the Conference.

A 22-member State Committee with Comrades E. Bala-

nandan, S.C.S. Menon and K. Sankaran Kutty as Convenors was elected. The State Committee Office of the UCTU will be situated at the Ernakulam Dist. Committee office of the CITU.

The Conference concluded with a big demonstration and meeting participated by the workers from the Ernakulam District industrial areas.

## South Zone Bidi Workers' Conference

The South Zone Conference of Bidi workers was held on 26th and 27th January at Tellicherry. 400 delegates representing 10 lakh bidi workers in Andhra, Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka attended

It was presided over by Com. S. Suryanarayana Rao. The delegates session started with passing resolution on the passing away of Com. Muzaffar Ahmed.

The work report was submitted by Com. C. Kannan and discussions took place on this report. The Conference decided to send a deputation to Delhi under the leadership of Com. A. K. Gopalan on 13th March and also to resort to a token strike on that day.

Com. Suryanarayana Rao was elected President of the South Zone Bidi Workers' Federation and Com. C. Kannan as the Secretary. The Conference concluded with a 15,000 strong demonstration.

10,000 coffee plantation workers of Wynad resorted to an indefinite strike from 27th January in support of their demands for increased wages etc.

At the call of CITU and HMS unions one lakh plantation workers throughout the State resorted to one day token strike on 8th February demanding immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Board on minimum wages.

Workers of rubber, tea, coffee and cardamon plantations in Kottayam-Idikki districts picketed the village offices. Such pickettings also took place in Mundakkayam, Erumala in Mundakkayam area; Hosdurg, Taliparamba, Tellicherry in Cannanore Dist. etc.

Revenue employees of Vaikom (Kottayam Dist.) resorted to strike on 13th February protesting viotimisation, which paralysed work in 14 village offices.

Workers of Idikki Project area resorted to 2 hours' token strike on 12th February in protest against the arrest of the Joint Secretary of the CITU, Idikki Dist. Committee and other comrades.

Led by the Corporation Employees' Union (CITU), 1,000 workers under Calicut Corporation started an indefinite strike from 22nd January demanding payment of arrears as per Wage Board recommendations.

At the call of the Plantation Workers' Union (CITU), 2,000 workers of Kodumen and Chandanpalli estates struck work on January 23 in protest against the lathi-charge in front of the Chandanapalli Estate factory.

Plantation workers and agricultural workers etc. of  
(See Next Page)

# Bombay Textile Workers' Strike Betrayed

The heroic strike struggle by two lakh textile workers of Bombay for 41 days was betrayed and unilaterally called off by S. A. Dange after secret confabulations with the Maharashtra Chief Minister V. P. Naik and Labour Minister Tidke. He also unilaterally announced the withdrawal of the proposed Bombay Bundh of February 11.

Although the strike was called unitedly by the unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC and Sarva Shramik Sangh and supported by HMS, BMS and the Action Committee of Government owned Mills, Dange in his haste to oblige the mill owners did not even consult the other sponsoring unions before calling off the

Kondazhi struck work on February 1 in protest against the murder of Com. M N. Bhaskaran, leader of the Plantation Workers' Union (CITU).

Tile workers of Palghat Dist. resorted to a token strike on 10th February in solidarity with the struggle of the workers of Commonwealth Tile Co. of Olavakkode (Palghat Dist.).

Two unions of the Kerala State Transport Corporation—the Transport Association and the Ministerial Staff Federation have decided to merge their union and form one union. In a message sent to Com. O. J. Joseph, President of the Ministerial Staff Federation, Com. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of the CITU congratulated the workers on this decision.

strike. This was vehemently condemned by leaders of the other unions at a huge rally held on February 8, as a "great betrayal of the working class who were heroically fighting for the last 40 days".

The betrayal was all the more shocking as it came at a time when the workers had magnificently demonstrated their unity and fighting spirit through a mammoth procession and demonstration on February 5 and when people's solidarity and support for the striking workers were due to find expression through the proposed Bundh. In fact, the unity and fighting mood of the workers expressed on February 5 was of such magnitude that the panicky Chief Minister invited Dange for secret parleys which led to the betrayal.

And what did Dange's agreement achieve for the workers over the equally obnoxious agreement signed earlier by the INTUC? A paltry Rs. 4 as additional increment from April 1; an advance of Rs. 120 to be recovered in eight monthly instalments; and for the workers of Government Mills even 50 per cent less benefits than under the INTUC agreement, besides Rs. 4 as additional increment.

With regard to 7-day week, the management was to get consent from majority of the workers and once such consent was obtained none was to oppose it. But there are already reports of forcible collection of signatures of workers in favour of 7-day

week by the management. As regards the other issues like paid festival holidays, casual and other leave and Badli, temporary and other workers, a Tripartite Committee is to go through these questions. A fine tally of gains indeed:

This mighty let-down naturally evoked scorching denunciation from all sections of workers—Dange's own following included. The Action Committee of Government mills condemned the agreement and called upon its workers to continue the strike. They, however, withdrew the strike after 2 days after receiving some assurances directly from the Labour Minister. Workers in private mills went back to work under protest, but their condemnation of this great betrayal found expression in numerous demonstrations at the mill gates.

The left unions, other than the AITUC, met again after the unilateral withdrawal of the strike and called upon the workers to close their ranks against further attacks of the managements.

## Gherao of Assembly on February 25

The Joint Action Committee of Trade Unions composed of the CITU, AITUC, BMS, Sarva Shramik Sangh, HMS and HMP met on February 13 and decided to organise a massive Gherao of the Legislative Assembly on February 25 to protest against rising prices, scarcity of essentials, growing unemployment, Police repression and anti-people policies of the Congress Government.

## FORTY LAKHS STATE GOVT. EMPLOYEES TO OBSERVE TOKEN STRIKE ON APRIL 9

**F**ORTY million State Government employees all over India will go on a day's token strike on April 9 to register their protest against the failure of the Government to hold the price line and ensure supply of food articles at fair prices, as well as in support of a 7-point Charter of Demands.

The demands include steps to bring down prices and to ensure adequate supply of food and other essential commodities at fair prices, need based minimum wage, uniform D.A. at full neutralisation up to monthly pay range of Rs. 900, 8-33 per cent bonus, release of arrested leaders of A.I. State Govt. Employees' Federation, repeal of Articles 310 and 311 (2) of the Constitution and reinstatement of employees dismissed under these clauses and scrapping Govt. Service Conduct Rules.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Executive of the A.I. State Govt. Employees' Federation held at Bhopal on February 19 last. Strike notices will be served accordingly by the Federation and its State affiliates on March 16.

A ten-member Action Committee has been formed to conduct the strike with full powers to handle the situation as it develops.

The National Executive recalled the numerous efforts made in the past 10 years through demonstrations, representations and mass petition before the

Parliament emphasising the need for a uniform wage policy for State Govt. employees. But the Governments at the Centre and the States have virtually ignored all appeals.

In the meantime the disparity in wages of State Government employees, particularly Class IV employees, as compared to the wage scales in Reserve Bank, Nationalised Bank, LIC and other Public Sector undertakings, has continued. The retrograde recommendations of the 3rd Pay Commission have further aggravated this disparity and anomaly.

### RAJASTHAN ENGINEERING WORKERS OBSERVE STRIKE

Over 15 thousand engineering workers of Rajasthan observed one day strike on 14th February in support of the demand for a rise of Rs. 100/- in wages and other demands. The call of the strike was given by the Rajasthan State Committee of CITU and other unions. Several Action Committees were formed at plant level and city level to make the strike a success.

There was total strike in Birla's Ball Bearing, Roongta's Man Industries Corporation and Man-Structurals, Kamani's Jaipur Metals and Kamani Engineering Corp., R. S. Metals, Capstan Merres, Kamal & Company, Ashoka Foundry, and other various factories of Jaipur and Oriental Power Cables, Indo Engineering, Multi Metals, Kota Box and other Engineering Industries of Kota, and not a single person entered these factories during the period of strike. The management of Kota Box employed goonda elements and stationed them inside the factory to attack the workers passing in peaceful pro-

lous situation. The failure of the State Governments to compensate the fall in real wages due to soaring prices has accentuated the miseries of the employees.

The outdated conditions of service and Service Conduct Rules are being used by the State Governments, along with MISA, ESM Act and the extraordinary provisions of the Constitution, to crush the legitimate trade union activities of the employees.

The token strike is aimed at focussing the attention of the Central and State Governments, as well as the people at large, to the plight of the State employees and emphasising the need for a speedy solution of the same,

cession. They rained stones from inside the factory. In Jaipur Metals, Jaipur, all the splinter anti-CITU groups and lackeys of the management working in AITUC, INTUC, BMS etc. formed united front to break the strike, but the massiveness of the strike created panic in their heart and even not a single of them entered the factory. The Management had called hundreds of Police and RAC to protect these puppets.

After the strike, more than 5000 engineering workers rallied in Ramlila Maidan, where they were addressed by Rajasthan CITU President Mohan Punamia, Action Committee President, Pralhad Kumar, and General Secretary, R. C. Gupta. A procession terminated at the Labour Commissioner's Office, and demonstrated their support to the Charter of Demands placed by CITU on 3rd January 1974.

After meeting the Labour Commissioner, the Rajasthan CITU President declared that if settlements are not arrived at before 10th March, CITU will give call for further direct action any time thereafter.

# One Union in Railway Industry or an attempt to stem the rising struggle?

**T**HERE had been unprecedented rise in the struggles of railwaymen during 1973. The Railway Ministry admits that during April-October 1973 about 4.5 lakh man-days were lost due to the agitations i.e. nearly double the figure for the preceding two financial years. According to them, since the August struggle of Locomen, not a single day passes when there is no agitation. This trend has continued in subsequent months. All these struggles have broken out over the heads of the reformist leadership in the recognised Federations under the leadership of various category-wise or local organisations and many of them had started because the railway authorities have refused to negotiate with them about genuine demands of railwaymen.

During the winter session of the Parliament, the Railway Minister announced that such struggles are bursting out because there is organisational rivalry and only one strong union in the industry can check such struggles. He proposed to call a meeting of all organisations to discuss the problem. For some time, it appeared as if the Railway Minister would invite all organisations including category-wise associations for the meeting. There must have been some wire pulling behind the scene. Even after his announcement that Loco Running Staff Association would be given the facility of communication and negotiation, he took up a stand in the public that the Government was not prepared

to recognise the category-wise associations.

The Government have been pursuing a policy of recognising only those unions headed by their yes-men. Hence when actually the meeting was announced, it was found that only the AIRF and NFIR were invited to attend the meeting. Of course the AITUC, INTUC, HMS and UTUC were also invited. The CITU and all militant category-wise Associations including the LRSA were excluded. The reason was obvious. What the Railway Minister desired was that the recognised Federations would agree to stem the tide of rising struggles. Comrade B. T. Ranadiye, President CITU issued a statement protesting against this policy and declared that any decision of the said meeting would not be binding on CITU.

There was some surprise in store for the Railway Minister. Firstly even the NFIR had pointed out in the meeting held on February 5, that the refusal of the Government to accede the justified demands of railwaymen has created this situation and demanded bonus for railwaymen—which was supported by all organisations. The AIRF demanded that the bargaining Agent be decided through secret ballot and suggested some structural changes in the Federation to admit representation by category-wise associations. A frustrated Railway Minister then issued a Press Statement from Patna stating

that some political parties (excluding CPI) are engaged in a conspiracy to bring about a strike in the railways.

The fact is that the railwaymen today are creating a new kind of unity in action because their just demands have not been conceded. Unless the Government change their policy, the railwaymen all over the country would swing into an unprecedented united action very shortly.

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## Editorial

*(Contd. from 2nd Page)*

9th April 1974 will be an important step towards building a countrywide movement on most pressing issues.

The All India Convention of State and Central Government employees convened by the AIRF in New Delhi on 15th and 16th April will further pave the way for joint movement of 70 lakh Central and State Government employees.

The working class is thus heading towards bigger and bigger class battles. In these struggles it is not alone! Students, Doctors, Teachers, Engineers and various other sections are also joining or preparing for countrywide struggles.

Demands are raised in different States for the organisation of one day Bharat Bundh as an expression of countrywide protest against anti-working class, anti-people policies of the Government.

The skyrocketing prices of essential commodities, unemployment, retrenchment, closures, higher taxation, inflation all are forcing the people to join the path of struggle. The brutal police repression, gangster attacks by the anti-social elements are not going to deter the mass. The people of Gujarat and Maharashtra have shown that once the people are united and determined to fight no repression can cow them down. Repression has only made people bitter and firm in their struggles. Let the rising struggles shatter the foundations of the Congress regimes!

## CITU General Council Meeting

**T**HE CITU General Council meeting, which was postponed earlier, will now be held at Visakhapatnam on 4th-7th April.

The Working Committee meeting will be held on 4th April.

Meetings of comrades working in Engineering, Port and docks, Road transport, Paper, Electricity undertakings etc. will be held on 8th April. The Working Committee of the All India Plantation Workers' Federation will also be held on 8th April.

The Reception Committee is busy making preparations for the General Council. Several unions outside the CITU have offered their co-operation to make the meeting a grand success. The address of the Reception Committee is :

Comrade N. Prasada Rao  
Reception Committee,  
CITU General Council Meeting,  
Khamus Baba Dargah Road,  
Allipuram, Visakhapatnam 530004

## CITU Note on Women Workers

**T**HE CITU has submitted a note to the Committee on "Status of women in India" constituted by the Central Government with Smt. Phulrenu Guha as the Chairman with the purpose of 'examining the various administrative, Constitutional and legal provisions' having a bearing on the status of women in India,

which explained the position and the role of women workers in the capitalist society, how the different laws are violated by the managements and the callousness of the Government in this regard. It also pointed out the inadequate participation of women workers in trade union movement.

It further noted that unless the trade unions take up the cause of the women workers, the trade union movement would continue to remain weak. The note expressed its hope that the Committee would seriously consider the problem of working class women who constitute half of the total working population in India and suggest radical measures that would enable women to enjoy equal status in society which has been denied to them since time immemorial.

## Empty Thali Beating To Protest Inadequate Food

**A** novel method of protest, popularly known as Thali-beating, against rising prices and inadequate food ration was a grand success in Bombay and suburbs on the 22nd night from 10 to 10.30. The call was given by all the trade unions, Opposition parties and Anti-price rise Women's Committee. From Colaba to Andheri, King Circle to Fort, the people, many of them women, came out in the streets in processions and stayed on the house tops, beating empty thalis symbolising the inadequate food supply.

## Token Strike Of General Insurance Employees

**I**N response to a call given from a Trade Union Convention held in Calcutta on February 22, General Insurance employees all over India observed a day's token strike on February 27. Earlier, on February 15, they observed a token strike of one hour.

After the nationalisation of General Insurance in 1971, the employees were agitating for higher D. A. and other demands under the leadership of the All India Insurance Employees Association (AIIEA). Ultimately a settlement was reached in October 1973 under which the Government agreed to grant higher D. A. according to an agreed formula. Subsequently, the Government went back on this agreement and offered a new formula for D. A. under which the employees stand to lose heavily.

## 10th Annual Conference of Petroleum Workers' Union

62 delegates attended the Annual Conference of Petroleum Workers' Union held on January 20 at Calcutta which was presided over by Tarakrishna Roy. The Conference adopted Resolutions on high prices, supporting LIC workers and Jute workers, hailing Government participation in ESSO and demanding nationalisation of foreign Oil Companies. In a separate resolution it decided to disaffiliate from the AITUC.

The newly elected Working Committee has 29 members including Sunil Chakraborty as President and Kamal Mukherjee as General Secretary.