



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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Let All T.U.'s Unitedly Fight Attack On IA Employees!

B.T. Ranadive, President CITU

THE efforts of the Indian Airlines authorities to break down the resistance of the employees to their demand for surrendering the trade union rights constitute the beginning of an all-round attack on the trade unions in the public sector. It is necessary for the trade union movement to recognise the danger and address a rebuff to official policies.

It is a matter of deep regret that the leaders of the Air Corporation Employees Union in face of this grim attack, trusted too much in prolonged negotiations and did not press upon the trade union movement the need of immediate and swift solidarity. In fact, the leaders failed to unite the several unions for a common front and allowed the authorities to operate through the AIR INDIA. If even the Air India employees were not called in for solidarity action, how could they impress the rest of the working class about the seriousness of their struggle?

An ex-Air Marshall was inducted in service to introduce drill sergeant methods in dealing with the employees. After talking a lot about shift system, overtime and what not, he demanded complete acceptance of the charter of slavery prepared by him.

When the negotiations were on, the authorities declared a lockout, an unprecedented step for a public sector concern to take. They supplemented this illegal and indefensible action by refusing to pay the wages earned by the workers before the lockout. Here was thus an open attempt to coerce and starve workers into submission by the nominee of a garibi hatao government. A fine example was being set for private sector capitalists whom some times official spokesmen sermonise on the necessity of humane relationship in industry.

The real purpose of this onslaught was neither the question of shift system, nor the elimination of wasteful practices, but just abrogation of all trade union rights, liquidation of all organised strength of the workers, so that mass retrenchment can be effected along with increased workload.

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The memorandum of settlement demands that the workers agree to observe constitutional means and eschew agitational steps and/or concerted action or any other means which may have the effect of interrupting or disrupting the Corporation work, etc.

This is demanded when the fundamental rights are not yet abrogated under the Constitution. What remains of trade unionism if you cannot agitate, if you cannot take concerted decisions and action, cannot bargain concertedly. Since when agitational steps have become unconstitutional? This is a demand to agree to banning of all propaganda, agitation, strike, a demand that each individual worker may individually represent his case but not in union with his fellow workers.

It is in pursuance of this demand that the authorities compelled individual workers to sign the bondage agreement by-passing the union. This is how the public sector authorities are promoting healthy trade unionism.

Consistently with this outlook, the authorities claim arbitrary rights to alter the working conditions of the workers. The memorandum lays down "The workmen concede that there are certain fundamental management functions as enumerated below—"The management from time to time shall lay down the duties and responsibilities of each category of workmen and the workmen shall perform all such duties and all duties incidental and ancillary thereto—The establishment strength including both the number and designation

of posts in the various categories and grades shall be determined by the management—The management will promote employees only when it is necessary to fill up a vacancy in a higher cadre and that too on the basis of suitability cum seniority.

No worker shall be entitled to take leave as matter of right unless it is sanctioned by a competent authority. Privileged leave shall be admissible on not more than three occasions in the financial year. Any workman may be required to avail such PL as the sanctioning authority may decide on giving him reasonable notice. If leave so offered, is not availed of by the workman, he shall forfeit it and his leave account shall be debited accordingly.

What remains of trade unionism and collective bargaining after this? You are not supposed to agitate or combine with others. All your working conditions are to be determined solely by the management. The duties will be laid down from time to time by the management—the load may increase, more work may have to be done but union will have no right to say anything about it. The staff strength may be reduced, higher posts may be abolished, but union has no say. All this is the job of the management. Promotions are also made dependent on the whims of the management. Leave also is dependent on the mood and whims of the authorities and if you oppose it, you will forfeit your leave. And again discipline is the responsibility of the management and union shall not say anything if

its member is unjustly punished by the authorities. Collective bargaining, right to represent individual workers, right to oppose unilaterally imposed adverse changes in the conditions of work, and insecurity of jobs—all are done away with. Trade union organisation is liquidated. At best the signboard may remain as a victory trophy for the authorities.

The Government with nauseating hypocrisy utters phrases about labour's participation in management while their nominees are doing their best to illegalise all trade union rights and organised movement.

The trade union movement cannot allow this onslaught to succeed. It will be soon extended to unions in other public sector undertakings and then to workers in the private sector. Some of the rights claimed by the IA authorities will find a place in the new Industrial Relations Bill whose main purpose is to curb working class resistance. The Union Labour Minister has been secretly confabulating with Govt. favourites—the INTUC, and AITUC leaders to forge this new attack against the trade union movement.

The shameless manner in which the railway ministry is breaking its plighted word to the Loco Running Staff again shows that the Govt. is bent on attacking the organised movement now that it can no longer be controlled by its underlings. The IA developments constitute a part of this concerted offensive. Let all Central Trade Unions and employees' organisations come forward to defeat the designs of the Government.

Indian Jute Workers Rise Against Jute Magnates

TWO and half lakh jute workers all over India downed tools from January 14 with remarkable unity and continued their struggle with firmness and determination despite the disruptive tactics of the INTUC leadership.

The INTUC leadership signed an agreement with the IJMA bosses behind the back of the other Central Trade Unions with whom they joined in framing the demands, and even without the knowledge of their own supporters, without winning a single demand of the workers. The leadership of the tiny NFITU and a section of HMS joined their bandwagon. They, however, miscalculated the mood of the jute workers, as all the traitors normally do.

The entire jute workers repudiated the agreement and the strike on January 14 was complete and unprecedented in West Bengal. Not a single one of the 62 mills in West Bengal was working. In U.P., Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Bihar and Andhra also the workers went on strike displaying a magnificent country-wide unity of the jute workers under the banner of CITU, AITUC, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), TUCC and HMS.

The tripartite meeting convened by Union Labour Minister Raghunath Reddy on 10th and 11th January was infructuous due to the recalcitrant attitude

of the IJMA. The West Bengal Labour Minister fully sided with the millowners, while the Chief Minister repeated what the jute barons were trotting out all these days. The INTUC deal with the management was thus a product of secret confabulations between the IJMA bosses, the Government and the INTUC leaders. They, however, so miscalculated the mood of the workers that the IJMA bosses openly vaunted that there need be no strike at all. The State Labour Minister angrily threatened that if the strike materialised he would not call any tripartite meeting at least for 3 weeks. And the INTUC leaders boasted that it is they alone who can lead the strike; others are no factors at all. Even on the 14th, the INTUC leaders, the Government and the IJMA declared that the strike started as there was a communication gap and the workers could not be informed in time of the 'agreement' signed at midnight. They boasted that as soon as the workers come to know of the 'agreement' the strike would be over. While they continued with the same story on the following days, the All India Radio dutifully continued to broadcast that more and more workers are coming back to work.

To-day, after 14 days, the strike is fully on with full participation of workers including the supporters of the INTUC. This

has brought utter confusion and discord amongst the IJMA bosses INTUC leadership and the Government. The IJMA bosses are reported to be in disagreement amongst themselves. The West Bengal Labour Minister is blaming the INTUC leaders for misleading the Government and the IJMA. The INTUC leaders dare not face the workers. The INTUC leader Kali Mukherjee even declared that he did not sign the agreement and not even read it. At this stage Shri Siddhartha Ray, the State Chief Minister, descended from Delhi with a plan to break the strike with the only weapon he has—use of goondas. Attacks on workers' processions and assault and intimidation of workers have been tried out by the goondas, but so far they have failed due to the dour resistance put up by the workers.

The determination of the workers to fight till victory was amply demonstrated in a magnificent rally of about a lakh jute workers held on the Shahid Minar maidan in Calcutta on January 22. Presided over by Niren Ghosh, M.P. (CITU), leaders of Central Trade Unions including AITUC exposed the 'betrayal document' signed by the INTUC leaders. They pointed out how the notorious 'agreement' surrendered all the basic demands of the workers and accepted only Re. 1 to 2 annual increment, two Committees in which the ultimate arbiter will be the Labour Minister—a good friend of the magnates, and Rs. 45 as 'settlement grant'—actually a bribe

Successful Bundh For Food & Against High Prices

The 'Bihar Bundh' called on January 21 by the Samyukta Sangharsh Samity composed of 200 Trade unions, and supported by opposition parties including CPI(M), CPI and Socialist Party, on the demand for food and against high prices proved to be a grand success.

On the Bundh day all forms of transport including trains were completely paralysed. Government and commercial offices, shops and markets, courts

for strike-breaking. In return the workers were to undertake not to raise any demand whatever till 1976. Naturally workers not only in the central rally but in all mass meetings in jute areas scornfully rejected the 'agreement' out of hand.

The strike and the just demands of the jute workers have been supported by all Left Parties and other mass organisations in West Bengal. The six Central Trade Unions CITU, AITUC, two UTUC's TUCC and HMS, have called for a General Strike in West Bengal on January 31 in support of the jute workers. The call has been supported by nine Left Parties.

In a Press Conference held on January 24, the leaders of six Left Trade Unions urged upon the Union Labour and Commerce Ministers to intervene for a settlement satisfactory to the workers and declared that unless "a satisfactory settlement is reached, the strike will not be withdrawn".

and educational institutions remained closed. Factories and industrial establishments were affected. Police opened fire at the Koderma railway station injuring six persons. Many more were arrested.

Bihar State UCTU Meets

The Bihar State Committee of United Council of Trade Unions met on January 3 at Patna. Shanker Singh (UTUC-Lenin Sarani) presided.

Trigger Happy Police on Rampage in Gujarat

SINCE 9th January throughout Gujarat peoples' outbursts against high prices and scarcity conditions have been widespread. Lathi charge, teargas, police firing and curfew have become order of the day. As we go to the press, 32 persons have been killed in police firing but the actual number is stated to be much more. Boroda, Rajkot, Modasa, Visnagar, Ahmedabad, Surat have been the main target of police attacks and toll of persons died in police firing is mounting. There is however no account of the persons injured in these firings. But the number is said to be high. Police also resorted to firing in Veraval, Dhoraji, Tejpur, Jamnagar, Kadi, Sidhpur, Kalol and other towns.

Though the movement was initially started by the students

The meeting congratulated the workers, employees and the people for successfully observing 'Patna Bundh' on January 2 at the call of Bihar UCTU to protest against high prices, unemployment, etc. It extended full support to the "All India Demands Day" of the State Government employees on January 19.

The meeting also called on the people to resist the recent bus-fare rise and condemned the victimisation measures adopted by the LIC authorities on its employees for T.U. activities.

of Ahmedabad, Baroda and Rajkot universities it spread in all direction, setting all Gujarat aflame.

Several local Bundhs were organised in protest against police brutalities. Hundreds who have been arrested during the agitation were beaten up in police lock-ups. Journalists and women were also arrested by the police.

The struggle of the people in Gujarat is still continuing. The resistance of the people is growing despite reign of terror and repression. A Gujarat Bundh has been called by the 14 August Committee on January 25 to protest against the police killings and in support of the people's movement for food. The blood of the heroic martyrs who led down their lives will not go in vain.

All India Steel Workers Convention Finalised Charter of Demands

SEVEN hundred delegates and observers from all the Steel centres in India, who assembled at Rourkela on 13th and 14th January in the All India Steel Workers Convention, enthusiastically approved the Charter of Demands on the basis of which countrywide campaign would be launched soon.

S. Mudali, Chairman Reception Committee while welcoming the delegates gave a brief review of the struggle of the Rourkela Steel workers under the banner of CITU.

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU while inaugurating the Convention pointed out that the last agreement was heavily loaded against the steel workers. "Whatever gains we registered four years back have been completely wiped out by rising prices which have made both the minimum wage and the dearness allowance a complete mockery" he said.

Ranadive emphasised the payment of need-based minimum wage within a specific time and justified the demand of Rs. 600 as the wage to meet all the requirements of a worker's family at to-day's prices.

Regarding the fraudulent Indices he sharply attacked the defective price collection machinery of the Government and asserted that the Government was trying to introduce a new series of index and perpetuate the present fraud. He demanded that the T. U. representatives should supervise the new family budget studies undertaken by the Government.

He characterised the contract labour as "the most exploited section of the workers". "Thousands of casual labour, without any provision of Provident Fund, medical and ESI benefits or DA are employed in the Steel undertakings", he pointed out.

He further attacked the "scandalous treatment" given to the workers in captive mines of the Steel plants. "The workers do not know the wages which are collected by Sardars. These workers are kept under armed guard with no freedom for organisation and agitation. It is not known internationally that such slave labour camps exist in India in the so-called Socialist Sector".

Criticising the functioning of the public sector and the manner in which the workers are blamed for the ill-functioning, he then said, "It is part of the class struggle of the authorities against us. It is part of their effort to prejudice the public opinion against us, isolate us, and crush us when we fight encroachment on our rights".

He continued, "The authorities in private and public sectors alike demand arbitrary powers to alter our conditions of work, to deprive our wages, increase work load and pass on the difficulties created by their corruption and jobbery to our shoulders. Having the press at their disposal, they malign us for being strike happy, for failure to do our job. The Prime Minister joins this capita-

list chorus and sermonises the starving workers."

Pointing out the loss of Rs. 223 crores in Hindusthan Steel, upto March 1972 Ranadive observed.

"Faulty lay-out, over capitalisation, use of sub-standard materials, corruption in management and chronic under-production below capacity have been the reasons behind this drain on national resources which has to be footed by the people. Our Durgapur union took a lead in exposing these evils and guarding the interest of the nation. But there was no response from the high placed patriots for whom patriotic sermons constitute a ritual addressed to the workers. The entire roof of Rourkela Plant collapsed causing a loss of Rs. 16 crores. What did they do to the guilty criminal?"

He criticised the atrocious standing orders in public sector undertakings making workers slaves in the industry.

He therefore called upon the Steel workers to build a powerful movement to win their legitimate demands.

Jyoti Basu, Vice-President of the CITU while addressing the Convention explained how the Congress Government is imposing miseries on the working class and the toiling people. "Let our immediate struggle merge with the peoples struggle against Congress misrule, against attack on democratic rights for peoples food", he said.

The Convention chalked out programme of action to achieve the demands mentioned in the Charter.

LIC Employees' Successful Struggle

THE arbitrary lock-out imposed by the LIC authorities on 8th January in Madras, Bangalore, Patna and Delhi divisional offices was a clear attempt by the LIC authorities to browbeat the 40 000 LIC employees who had been fighting for better wage structure and other demands. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU in a Press Statement condemned, "the LIC bureaucrats for their unilateral actions and considers that LIC authorities will solely be responsible for any inconvenience caused to the policy holders." He also congratulated the LIC employees for their determined struggle against the highhandedness of the LIC authorities.

The All India Insurance Employees Association gave a call for strike in all the divisions where lock-out was imposed. The LIC employees throughout India continued their agitation and they received solidarity from the T.U. movement.

George Fernandes, President AIRF and S. K. Vyas, Secretary General, Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers while supporting the just struggle of the LIC employees asked their affiliates to observe an All India Solidarity Day with LIC employees on 25th January. The CITU welcoming this move called upon its affiliates to join the solidarity action.

During negotiations the management tried to go back from the commitment. However the firmness showed by the AIEA ultimately forced them

to come to a settlement on 24th January and withdraw victimisation measures.

B. T. Ranadive, President while congratulating the LIC employees for their successful struggle said in a press statement on 25th January :

"The CITU congratulates the LIC employees and the All India Insurance Employees' Association and its allies on the victorious end to their struggle.

By their unity and united action, they have achieved their

minimum economic demands, defeated the game of the disruptors and warded off the victimisation attack of the authorities. The lock-out and victimisations were intended to intimidate the workers and sow disruption among them. Instead the feeling for unity got strengthened and leaders of all unions were compelled to take a common stand in the interest of the employees. Let the united strength of the employees grow further. May a strengthened and more powerful AIEA continue to guide the employees and strengthen their movement".

Reports From Unions

Jamshedpur Workers Win Demands

Protesting against dismissal of 3 workers and suspension of 4 others, the workers of F.M. Mills of Indian Tube Co. went on indefinite strike from September 12. In their support, 5000 other workers of the Company observed token strike on September 14. The Management declared a lock-out in the F. M. Mills. After 44 days of struggle, the management was forced to come to a settlement and the strike was withdrawn on October 26.

After a prolonged struggle, the workers of Provin Engineering Co. forced the management to sign a tripartite agreement conceding their major demands: 12 per cent bonus, Rs. 103 50 as minimum wage (formerly it was Rs. 85), arrear of bonus etc.

Mica Workers Win Demand

Led by the Mica Workers' Union (CITU) the workers of

Goenka Mica Company's Dharbe factory at Giridih (Bihar) gave notice of hunger strike from December 23 in protest against denial of benefits under Factory Act and for other demands. In the face of the unity and determination of the workers, the management came down and a settlement was reached as a result of which the workers will get 5 paise per Kg increment in wages and all benefits under the Factories Act.

A.I. Conference of Standard Pharmaceutical Employees

Convened jointly by the Standard Pharmaceuticals Workers' Union (CITU) and Standard Pharmaceuticals Labour Association, an All India Conference of employees and workers of the factory, Head Offices and other branches of the Standard Pharmaceuticals Lid. all over India was held in Calcutta on December 22, 23 and 29 last.

The open session on December 29 at Serampore Town Hall was largely attended and addressed by the union leaders from various branches.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF C.L.W. LABOUR UNION

FOR the first time, the CLW Labour Union was allowed to hold their Annual Convention in Railway Institute. Though this union enjoys confidence of overwhelming majority of the workers of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, it was denied recognition. On the otherhand, a reign of terror was let loose. Seven of its office-bearers were transferred, nineteen were arrested under MISA and sixtyseven workers were falsely implicated in court cases and suspended. A powerful movement was built up against this and combining defence in court of law and negotiation backed by mass movement, they could withstand the onslaught. Now all workers have been brought back to duty. The annual Convention on January 6-8, therefore, unleashed tremendous enthusiasm amongst the workers. Comrade Dipen Ghosh, the leader of Central Government Employees, inaugurated the Conference. Comrade Jyoti Basu, Vice-President CITU, addressed the concluding Session and mass rally attended by over ten thousand people. N. N. Singh, N. K. Mukherjee, S. R. Das and all other tested leaders have been re-elected in their posts.

Government Attempt to Back-out From Loco Agreement

The Government and the Officers of the Railway Board are still trying to back out from

the agreement with the AILRSA. The Locomen's struggle in December was settled with clear understanding that penal measures and D.I.R. cases would be withdrawn, all workers will be released from jail and put back to duty, period of strike will be treated as leave due, etc. But none of them have been implemented in full. Decisions given by Railway Minister on December 28, have not been implemented.

The Grievance Committee is meeting between January 14-17 and the L.R.S.A. working Committee has been fixed on January 20-21. In the meanwhile the authorities at lower levels continue to cancel passenger trains and blame the same on the Loco Running Staff. It appears that an attempt is being made to vitiate the public opinion and pit the democratic masses against the LRSA. The Committees of the SER and LRSA (Eastern Rly.) met on January 12 and 14 respectively and urged the Central body to take appropriate steps in this regard. Unless the Government change its attitude, the discontent amongst the locomen may burst out again.

Railwaymen Struggle For Food and Against High Prices

Along with other sections of the people, railwaymen have participated in recent Bundhs in

a greater number to register their resentment against high prices. The workers of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works participated in November Bundh, in spite of break in service threat. Trains did not move in and out of Victoria Terminus during Maharashtra bundh on January 2. Besides, the railwaymen themselves have started movements on their own at Nagpur and Khargpur. The democratic masses rallied round them. The powerfull unity at the bottom forced the authorities to concede the demands. At Khargpur, the AITUC affiliate S. E. Railwaymen's Union bye-passed the work-shop Staff Committee, LRSA and various organisations in the Co-ordination Committee and negotiated a settlement on their own and called upon the workers to resume work. The workers, even the followers of the said union, refused to call off till all the organisations are consulted and the agreement is approved by the workers. The authorities were forced to negotiate with these unrecognised organisations and a huge rally of seven thousand workers approved the terms of settlement before the strike, which paralysed Khargpur for 5 days, could be called off.

Urge for Unity Growing Amongst Railwaymen

In persuance of the decision of Secundrabad Convention, the AIRF is consulting with various organisations of railwaymen and Central Government employees for building up united
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The Partial Lock-outs

OF late, we are witnessing a peculiar phenomena in the public sector, namely, that of sectional lock-outs. First, in the Indian Airlines Corporation, and now in the Life Insurance Corporation, category wise lock-outs are being ordered.

The Indian Big Bourgeoisie of which Indira Government is till now the cleverest representative has discovered this latest weapon in its class war against the organised working class. Once more the mask is off and the present Government is appearing in its true colour of the lackey of big business interests.

Lock-out is itself an oft tried counter-attack against the workers on the part of the bourgeoisie. Its nature was never in doubt. In the case of Praboo Pandey and others vs. J.K. Jute Company Ltd. (1) was observed, while bringing out the difference between closure and lock-out, that "a temporary closure of a mill for reasons beyond the control of the management (like shortage of raw materials) under the standing orders applicable to the mill will not amount to lock-out as lock-out ordinarily involves an element of malice or ill-will."

Again, in the case of Shri Ram Chandra Spinning Mills vs. State of Madras (2), the vicious nature of lock-out has been delineated by the Court itself:

"The lock-out is the corresponding weapon in the armoury of the employer. If an employer shuts down his place of business

as a means of reprisal or as an instrument of coercion or as a mode of exercising pressure on the employees or, generally speaking, when his act is what is called an act of belligerency there would be a lock-out... Where an employer suspends work and the question is whether that suspension is a lock-out or not, we will have to enquire, why did he shut down? Was it a *bonafide* business decision or was it a move vis-a-vis the labourers employed?...If, for instance, it is

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seen that profits were being made and profits can still be made but nevertheless the employer shuts down it would be legitimate to conclude, in the absence of another acceptable explanation, that the closure was lock-out..." In another case, it was observed, "in the constant tussle between employee and employer the strike is the weapon of the former and lock-out is the weapon of the latter".

Thus, lock-out has, even in the courts and tribunals, been characterised as a belligerent action of the employer, a counter attack, an act of malice or ill-will, a means of reprisal or an instrument of coercion or a mode of exercising pressure on the employees. Lock-out leaves no doubt as to the nature of the bourgeois, red in its tooth and claw, with its fangs bared.

The Indira Government has mounted a two pronged attack on the workers. By unprecedented inflation, it has forced the workers to starvation level. The minimum means of subsistence is being forced out of the pockets of the workers by an insidious economic process. Secondly, when the workers resort to collective action for protecting their irreducible minimum of wages against spiralling inflation, there is a further counterattack by lock-out.

The Government is, in its fight against the workers, keeping no holds barred. As they say, nothing is unfair in love or war. The same principle(?) holds good in class war also for the exploiters.

Till now, lock-out was known as prevention of the entire body of workers from coming in. Sectional lock-out was unimaginable. That is what the Supreme Court has also said while drawing out the distinction between lay-off and lock-out. In the case of Kairbetta Estate, Kotagiri vs. Rajamanickam and others (3), Mr. Justice Ganjendragadkar observes, 'In the case of a lay-off, owing to the reasons specified in section 2 (kkk), the employer is unable to give employment to one or more workmen. In the case of a lock-out the employer closes the business and locks out the whole body of workmen for reasons which have no relevance to causes specified in S. 2(kkk)'. The reasons referred to in section 2(kkk) of the Industrial Disputes Act are shortage of coal, power or raw materials or the accumulation of stocks or the break-

down of machinery and any other similar reason.

As we noticed in the beginning, first, in the Indian Air Lines, and, thereafter, in Life Insurance Corporation, both public sector organisations, the management has locked out only sections of employees. In the Life Insurance Corporation, the management has locked out only certain divisional offices and only class III and class IV employees therein. This amounts to using the weapon of lock-out not only in a sly, fox-like manner but also illegally. It is hitting below the belt. Once more it is proved that, in a class war, no quarter is given.

One cannot help, referring to the International Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention of 1949. Various States who are parties to the Convention have solemnly agreed that the workers shall enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti union discrimination in respect of their employment. Such protection prohibits acts calculated to cause the dismissal of, or otherwise prejudice, a worker by reason of union membership or because of union activities (vide Article 1 (2) of the Convention).

Article 23 (4) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises that "everyone has the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests". I believe, India is a signatory to the Declaration of Human Rights. Accordingly, it is expected that the Indian Government will not do anything whereby the recognised human right of a worker to organise for

the protection of his interests would in effect be taken away.

The present spate of selective or sectional lock-outs in which the Indian Government or the management of the Government Organisations is indulging is calculated to prejudice the workers in their Union activities as well as to threaten and intimidate them so that they may cease from uniting to realise their economic demands.

1. 1956 (1) LLJ 588
2. 1957 (1) LLJ 90
3. AIR 1960 Supreme Court 893—1960 (2) LLJ 275

Railwaymen

(From Page Seven)

action. A meeting was held on December 26-27, with various category-wise associations, in which P. K. Barua, Secretary General of LRSA was present amongst others. It was decided to hold another meeting on January 24.

The S. E. Railwaymen's Union, which decided to build up unity with all category-wise associations in the meeting held on November 30, has not done anything about this. Hence the LRSA (S. E. Rly) has decided to take the initiative about this and addressed a letter to all unions in SER.

The Eastern Railwaymen's Union has decided to call a meeting of all organisations on January 29.

In Southern Railway, a powerful campaign for unity has been built up by the DREU which has forced the AIRF Union to join in the common platform. The LRSA (S. Rly.) is still keeping out of this.

Was Postponement Of PF Strike Correct ?

THE postponement of the All India strike of Provident Fund employees which was to begin from 2nd January 1974 has been deferred by the All India Employees Provident Fund Staff Federation without achieving any demand. This action would only strengthen the hands of the authorities who are determined to oppose every genuine demand of the PF employees.

Mathew Kurian M.P., President of The Progressive Provident Fund Employees Federation of India in a Press Statement condemned the dilatory tactics adopted by the PF authorities in settling the long-standing demands of the workers and criticised the unilateral postponement of the strike. "I appeal to all the employees of the Provident Fund Organisation irrespective of the Federation colour to forge unity in action with a view to achieving the vital demands of the workers," he added.

The CITU, while fully supporting the just demands of the PF employees, appeals to the leadership of both the Federations to come together and jointly fight the PF authorities. Since none of their demands are settled, the PF employees will have no other alternative but to struggle. This struggle can succeed only if the unity of the employees is achieved. Even now a new struggle can be planned unitedly and CITU hopes the PF employees will enthusiastically support the move towards unity despite all other differences.

Tamilnadu State Conference

THE Second Conference of the Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU was held in Madras from December 20 to 23. Com. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of the CITU inaugurated the Conference which was presided over by K. Ramani, President of the State Committee of CITU.

The Conference was attended by 433 delegates, observers and fraternal delegates representing 149 unions and other fraternal organisations.

A message greeting the Conference was received from the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam. The Conference was also greeted by comrades Kuchelar (Simpson Workmen's Council and staff Union), N. Sankariah (Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers Association), V. Ramachandran (S.F.I.), Pappa Umanath (Democratic Women's Association) and Rengarajan (Madras Trade Union Council).

After the hoisting of the CITU flag and adoption of the resolution on martyrs, V. P. Chintan, Vice-President of the State CITU and Chairman, Reception Committee welcomed the delegates and the President K. Ramani, made an introductory speech.

Com. Ramamurti then inaugurated the Conference after which R. Umanath, Secretary of the Tamilnadu Committee submitted his report. The report reviewed the growth of the CITU in the State in the last two and half years, the progress of the movements and struggles

of the working class with particular reference to development of united actions, the achievements and weaknesses of the movements and the tasks before the CITU. A. Nallasivan, Assistant Secretary reported on the activities of the CITU during this period. 38 delegates took part in the discussions on the reports after which these were adopted.

The Conference adopted resolutions on Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and the struggle of the Arab people against imperialism. Resolutions were also adopted on price rise, index fraud, bonus, on solidarity with Central and State Government employees against automation, on need-based minimum wage, in support of demands of sugar workers, cane growers and textile workers etc. Separate resolutions were also adopted covering various other industries, condemning repression and DIR and other repressive laws etc.

The Conference, in a resolution, called upon all the affiliated unions to observe January 10 as "Solidarity Day" in support of the struggling State Transport workers of Kanyakumari district (on strike since October 15) and 7000 textile workers of Vikramasingapuram (on strike since October 22).

On December 23, Conference concluded with a rousing procession of 50,000 workers which marched through the street and ended in a one lakh strong mass

rally on the Marina Beach. The rally was addressed by Comrades Rammurti, Umanath, Chintan, Kuchelar and Krishnamurthy.

The Conference also elected a new State Committee with K. Ramani as President, R. Umanath as General Secretary, 4 Vice Presidents, 3 Secretaries, a Treasurer and 31 other members.

Madhya Pradesh Convention

Despite dislocation of railway transport, 120 delegates and observers from all over the State attended the CITU Convention held at Bhilai on December 25-27, 1973. This was the first Convention in the State after the foundation of the CITU.

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU, who was to have inaugurated the Convention and Com. Samar Mukherjee, Treasurer CITU could not reach Bhilai due to cancellation of trains.

Apart from Bhilai, representatives from Gwalior, Bhopal, Indore, Nagda, Ujjain, Mandasur, Ratlam, Itarsi, Damoh, Jabalpur, Surkachar, Korba and Bishrampur attended the Conference. A presidium consisting of A. John (Bhilai), S. N. Kashyap (Mandasur), Motilal Sarma (Gwalior), Shyamlal Choubey (Damoh) and Sudevan (Bishrampur) conducted the deliberations. The Convention was greeted by comrade Ayodhya Singh (Editor *Swadhinata*) and Vimal Ranadive, Secretary All India Plantation Workers' Federation. After

State CITU Conferences & Conventions

flag hoisting and placing of wreaths on the martyrs column, M. Butchayya, Chairman, Reception Committee welcomed the delegates.

Inaugurating the Convention, Md. Ismail, M.P. Vice-President CITU reviewed the growth of CITU unions in different States and highlighted how the line of unity and struggle was gaining popularity among all sections of workers.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU presented a general report on the activities of CITU in the State and emphasised the need for co-ordination of activities all over the State. He referred to the recent struggles of Steel, Coal, Rayon, Beedi and other workers in the State and the developing struggles of Central and State Government employees, railway workers, LIC employees and others in the State. A number of delegates participated in the discussions on the Report.

Resolutions were adopted at the Convention greeting the struggle of Locomen, supporting the demands and struggles of workers in various industries in the State, condemning the M.P. Professional Tax, the Pandey Commission Report and the repressive measures of the Government. Separate resolutions were also adopted on Chile and rising prices.

The Convention elected a new Co-ordination Committee with S. Kumar as Convener and

Motilal Sharma, S. N. Kashyap, Shyam Lal Choubey, Vijayan and Sudevan as members.

A well-attended mass rally was held on the Lal Maidan on December 26 which was addressed, among others, by Md. Ismail, M. K. Pandhe, Motilal Sharma and Vimal Ranadive.

Delhi State Conference

The Second State Conference of the Delhi CITU was held at Karampura (Delhi) on January 2-3, 1974. Comrade B. T. Ranadive, President CITU inaugurated the Conference and guided its deliberations.

Delegates representing 13 unions with a membership of 11, 397 in the Textile, Engineering, Food and Drink, Building construction and commercial establishments attended the Conference.

Inaugurating the Conference, Comrade Ranadive congratulated the working class and people of Maharashtra for the magnificent Bundh observed by them and their solidarity with the striking textile workers. He referred to the success of the policy of unity and struggle not only in winning workers' demands but also in exposing the class collaborationist policies of the AITUC. He laid stress on the political education of workers without which the development cannot be sustained.

T. M. Nagarajan, General Secretary, in his report reviewed

the growing influence of the CITU in Delhi and the efforts of the CITU to build up organisation among workers in the Textile, Hotel, Building Construction and other industries. He referred to the strike struggles launched by the workers of Delhi since 1970 under the banner of CITU despite goonda attacks launched by the employers and the betrayal by reformist and revisionist leadership of the AITUC, INTUC, and HMS. He also pointed out the organisational weaknesses and said that unless these weaknesses are removed and the political consciousness of the workers raised to a higher level, it will not be possible to consolidate these gains. In order to build up united struggles of workers against the anti-people policies of the Government, he suggested that a "Demand Day" be observed in March on the common demands already formulated.

Several delegates took part in the discussions on the Report after which it was adopted.

The Conference also adopted several resolutions condoling the deaths of comrades Muzaffar Ahmed, Ram Asrey, Raghavan, Chandrasekhar, Tilak Raj and Moti Lal; congratulating the strike of Delhi textile workers; congratulating the working class and people of Maharashtra on their successful Bundh; congratulating the struggling workers of Haryana and Ghaziabad (U.P.) and condemning the repression launched by the Bansi Lal Government; etc.

The Conference elected a new Executive body with T.M. Nagarajan as President and Ghanashyam Saran Sinha as General Secretary.

Rajasthan State Convention

A special Convention of the Office-bearers of the CITU Unions in Rajasthan was held in Bikaner on December 30-31, 1973. Com. B.T. Ranadive, President CITU inaugurated the convention and guided the deliberations. Com. Mohan Punamia, President of the State CITU presided.

Inaugurating the Convention, Com. Ranadive congratulated the working class of Rajasthan for their achievements during 1973 and wished them further success during 1974. He also congratulated the Locomen of Bikaner Division for their militant and victorious struggle against victimisation. He pointed out how the line of 'Unity and Struggle' being pursued by the CITU in various States has not only generated an urge for united struggles among all sections of workers and employees, but has also led to the unmasking of the treacherous role of the leadership of reformist and revisionist trade unions. Dealing with the politico-economic issues, he explained how the capitalist path being followed by the bourgeois-landlord Government has landed the country into deep economic crisis and pointed out the need for developing Left and Democratic unity for fighting the anti-people policies of the Government.

The Convention at the outset adopted a resolution condoling the death of Com. Muzaffar Ahmed and paid a 2-minute standing homage to his memory.

In his presidential address, Com. Punamia pointed out how during the last 14 months after the Second State Conference held in October 1972, the CITU has developed as the most militant mass organisation in Rajasthan leading the struggles of the working class and the people. But this has also invited severe repression on the CITU at the hands of the ruling classes and the Government. Pointing out that the year 1974 will be a year of unprecedented mass struggles, he called upon the working class of Rajasthan to fulfil its historical role by uniting and leading the peasants, employees and other sections of the toiling masses.

Com. Durgadas Shirali, General Secretary, in his report reviewed the struggles waged by the working class and people against rising prices, unemployment, famine etc. He specially referred to the strike struggles of 2.5 lakhs Government employees for 26 days leading to the historic Rajasthan Bundh, the struggle of textile workers of Bhawani Mandi, Ganganagar, and Beawar, of the workers of Multimetal in Kota, as also struggles of workers of Ashoka Foundry, Shalimar, J. K. Synthetics, etc. against lock-outs, victimisation, retrenchment and Police repression. Several delegates took part in the discussions after which the report was adopted.

The Convention called upon

the working class to participate massively in the demonstration against price rise, unemployment etc. on January 15 and to observe January 22 as 'Protest Day' throughout the State to voice the grievances of the workers in the E. S. I. It also took a number of important decisions, viz. (a) to direct the State Committee to serve notice for a State-wide token strike in the Engineering industry on February 14; (b) to hold a State Conference of Sugar and Distillery workers on January 20-21; (c) to demand Rs. 232 as minimum wage and Mathur Committee VDA @ Re. 1 per point of rise in index; (d) to demand abolition of casual, work-charged, muster roll, temporary and contract systems and permanency for those employed in these categories; etc.

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Rising Struggles of Plantation Workers

Karnataka Plantation Workers' Strike

AT the call of the Joint Council of Plantation Trade Unions in Karnataka, consisting of the Plantation Workers' Unions affiliated to CITU, HMS and INTUC and an independent Union, plantation workers in Karnataka went on strike from December 27 last to realise their demands for rise in wages and D.A., 20 per cent Bonus, additional wages for additional work, employment to family members of workers, foodgrains at subsidised rates, implementation of Plantation Labour Act and Rules, etc.

The strike was originally scheduled to begin from December 10 and preparations were afoot in full swing. But to disrupt the strike, the employers held a sham bipartite meeting on November 13 at Bangalore with some puppet representatives. This was given wide publicity through Press and radio to confuse the workers.

At the conciliation meeting held at Bangalore on November 22, the Labour Commissioner asked the T.U. representatives to sign a draft agreement on bonus and extra wages which provided for surrender of the workers' claim for higher wages up to December 31, 1974. While the representatives of the Joint Council outright refused to sign, seven stooges of the employers including three of the AITUC—one of whom was the General Secretary of the KPTUC—signed the agreement, thus virtually

agreeing to the wage freeze policy of the Government. At the insistence of the CITU, the Commissioner agreed that the agreement will bind the signatories only.

In view of this, the representative of the Joint Council met the same afternoon and decided to advance the date of the strike to December 27 and to hold a Convention of workers at Chikmagalur in December-end to consider the new developments. The venue of the Convention was later shifted to Jayapura due to the communal disturbances at Chikmagalur.

The response of the workers to the strike call was magnificent despite importation of thousands of blacklegs from outside, deployment of goondas and armed police and sabotaging role of the AITUC Union. Some of the AITUC leaders even moved about with the police along with other stooges in vain effort to break the strike. According to reports received by the Joint Council, over 40,000 workers in Chikmagalur, Hassan and S. Kanara districts participated in the strike. The strike was suspended with effect from December 30 as per the decision of the Workers' Convention in view of the assurances of the Dy. Labour Commissioner and the intimation received from the Commissioner that a conciliation meeting has been fixed to discuss the demands in question.

Karnataka Plantation Workers' Convention

422 delegates representing

over 10,000 plantation workers attended the Convention held at Jayapura (Chikmagalur) on December 27-29. A presidium composed of CITU, HMS and INTUC representatives conducted the proceedings.

Com. C. Nanjundappa (CITU) placed a report on the problems of plantation workers in Karnataka and proposed a phased programme of struggle which was supported by all the delegates taking part in the discussions.

Resolutions were adopted demanding nationalisation of all plantations, against price rise, on problem of Government rubber plantations, etc. The Convention also decided to suspend the strike for the time being.

A huge procession of workers joined the open session of the Convention on December 29. Presided over by Shri Halappa, it was addressed by Com. Monoranjan Roy, M.P., Secretary CITU and General Secretary of the All India Plantation Workers Federation. He greeted the Convention on behalf of the CITU and AIPWF and congratulated the Karnataka workers for their united struggle. Com. Suryanarayan, President of Karnataka State CITU and V.S. Gobindan (INTUC), also addressed the open session.

Token Strike of West Bengal Tea Garden Workers

Tea garden workers in all the gardens in North Bengal successfully observed a day's token strike on January 14 at the call of the Tea Garden Workers' Co-ordination Committee. The main demands were nationalisation of Tea industry and trade

(On Page Fourteen)

Number Of Registered Unemployed

Consumer Price Index Numbers (INDUSTRIAL WORKERS/BASE 1960—100)

State	Number of applicants on the live register of Employment Exchanges at the end of	
	January '73	August '73
Andhra Pradesh	3,73,314	4,46,760
Assam	82,022	1,03,659
Bihar	7,51,103	10,90,856
Gujarat	2,04,064	2,41,956
Haryana	1,25,029	1,41,146
Himachal Pradesh	55,781	66,040
J & K	38,984	30,153
Kerala	4,54,531	4,92,789
M. P.	3,98,466	4,39,059
Maharashtra	6,19,113	6,64,582
Manipur	51,814	58,941
Meghalaya	6,628	7,121
Mizoram	3,752	2,401
Mysore	2,95,646	3,15,543
Orissa	2,55,229	3,07,186
Punjab	1,62,834	2,10,295
Rajasthan	1,71,945	1,94,663
Tamilnadu	4,87,783	5,77,102
Tripura	37,627	40,611
U. P.	8,32,858	8,60,209
W. Bengal	14,02,334	15,20,826
Chandigarh	21,583	23,807
Delhi	1,85,654	2,06,177
Goa	14,031	18,247
Laccadive	1,453	1,457
Pondicherry	13,934	17,477
	70,47,512	80,79,063

Source : Indian Labour Journal.

(From Page Thirteen)

and immediate take-over of closed and sick tea gardens. At present 12 tea gardens in North Bengal are lying closed and more are on the verge of closure.

The strike was completely successful in all the 80 tea gardens of Darjeeling district. Besides, large number of workers also participated in the strike in tea gardens in Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and West Dinajpur districts.

State/Centre	1973		
	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Andhra Pradesh			
Hyderabad	247	249	249
Assam			
Digboi	230	230	242
Bihar			
Jamshedpur	244	254	254
Jharia	247	262	270
Gujarat			
Ahmedabad	242	247	257
Bhavnagar	266	277	285
Haryana			
Yamunanagar	252	261	261
J & K			
Srinagar	211	216	218
Kerala			
Alwaye	273	273	275
Mundakayam	269	266	274
M.P.			
Bhopal	253	257	263
Gwalior	258	272	275
Indore	278	282	286
Maharashtra			
Bombay	228	228	236
Nagpur	261	260	279
Sholapur	281	279	282
Mysore			
Bangalore	275	275	273
Orissa			
Sambalpur	238	236	251
Punjab			
Amritsar	246	254	258
Rajasthan			
Ajmer	254	260	262
Jaipur	267	269	266
Tamilnadu			
Coimbatore	212	214	223
Madras	224	226	231
Madurai	231	237	247

U. P.			
Kanpur	255	259	262
West Bengal			
Calcutta	222	240	237
Howrah	234	249	251
Delhi	264	272	274

Other Centres

(On different bases)

	1973		
	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Cuttack (1949)	292	299	308
Berhampur (1949)	340	348	342
Jabalpur (1949)	295	302	320
Beawar (1951-52)	291	294	302
Himachal Pradesh (1965)	185	188	189
Goa (1966)	155	163	168
Tripura (1961)	204	202	208

All India Consumer Price Index

(Working Class/General Index)

	Base		
	1973	1949	1960
May		277	228
June		283	233
July		295	243
August		300	247
September		301	248
October		309	254
November		315	259

Source : Index Sheet, Labour Bureau, Simla

NEWSLETTERS

Maharashtra

Maharashtra Bundh—T o t a l

The unprecedented Maharashtra Bundh on 2nd January was an expression of united determination of the entire people in the State to launch militant struggles to protect their living standards. The call for Bundh was given by left parties as well as CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMP, Sarva Shramik Sangh and other T.U. organisations in protest against spiralling prices of essential commodities and in support of the demand of 12 kg of ration per head per month. More than 2 million workers in various industries including defence establishments downed their tools on the day.

Two lakhs textile workers in Bombay were already in the arena of battle since 30th December last. They were joined by workers in 2000 small and big factories in Bombay city and suburbs on the Bundh day. City buses and taxis were off the road. State Transport cancelled all their services to and from Bombay and other centres in Maharashtra. All local and outgoing trains had to be cancelled. It is said that Deccan Queen was cancelled for the first time in 75 years.

According to reports in Poona industrial complex more than one lakh workers in 500 establishments struck work. Notable was the strike of 14000 workers of Ammunition factory in Kirki who struck work for the first time

since the inception of the factory in 1859.

In all other districts the industrial activity came to a grinding halt while shutters of shops were down throughout the Bundh day,

When attempts were made by the railway authorities to run the trains people spontaneously squatted on the track. When police lathi charged the squatters more joined them leading to complete stoppage of trains.

In Wani near Yeotmal when the authorities tried to run the bus service 3000 people gathered to picket the buses. The police came to the scene and resorted to firing resulting in killing of 7 persons. In Wardha when 2000 people gathered to prevent the buses from coming out of the depot the police resorted to lathi charge and tear gas.

A noteworthy feature of the Bundh was that all commercial establishments including LIC, general insurance, all shops and markets, all educational institutions in every city were closed on the Bundh day. Even cycle rikshaws did not ply.

On the eve of the Bundh a huge rally was organised in Bombay at Shivaji Park which was presided over by Mrinal Gore, Socialist MLA and addressed by George Fernandes (HMP), Jyoti Basu and S. Y. Kolhatkar (CITU), Yeshwant Chavan (SSS), Vasant Khanolkar (HMS) and B. S. Dhume (AITUC).

Com. B. T. Ranadive President CITU issued a statement

from Delhi congratulating the working class and people of Maharashtra for the magnificent Bundh they organised on January 2 and condemning the Maharashtra Government for resorting to indiscriminate Police repression and firing leading to death of 7 persons and injury to several others. The CITU Centre also issued a similar statement from Calcutta.

Seeing the angry mood of the working class and the people of Maharashtra the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had to cancel her programme at Bombay despite earlier fanfare and publicity. Workers and people enthusiastically supported the plan of organising black flag demonstration when she was to visit the city. The memory of Nagpur where people did not allow her to speak was perhaps still fresh in her mind.

The defeat of the Congress Party in 4 bye-elections in Maharashtra immediately after this was yet another expression of peoples determination.

The unity of the working class and the toiling people in Maharashtra is thus being strengthened with each passing day in the struggle on common issues.

Workers of 10 Engineering Factories in Bombay on Strike

More than one thousand workers of 10 Engineering Factories in Bombay are on indefinite strike in support of their Charter of Demands and protesting against victimisation and anti-labour practices of the management.

Workers of one factory (Devidayal Rolling Mills) are on strike since December 3. Workers of Aleast Foundry, Precision Diecast Industries, Hararwala Engg. Works, Ghandi Engineering Corpn. and Bhimani & Sons are on strike since December 7. Workers of two more factories—Haji Patrawala and Bombay Iron & Sheet Metal Works—are on strike since December 16 and workers of two other factories—Peacefort Chem-Ind. and Mazagaon Containers Fabricators—are on strike since December 25th and 27th.

The managements of Ghandi Engineering and Haji Patrawala factories retrenched 105 and 400 workers respectively for forming union. Similarly, managements of two more factories—Devidayal Rolling Mills and Mazagaon Containers—dismissed some active leaders of the union.

Despite the hardships, the workers are carrying on the struggle resolutely. The General Workers' Union (CITU) has in a statement urged the Maharashtra Government to intervene and bring about a satisfactory settlement of the disputes.

Nagpur Rocked by Struggles

The month of December, 1973 saw the working class and other sections of the toiling masses in Nagpur reacting to the anti-people policies of the Govt. with a series of determined struggles.

It began with the Locomen's strike from December 16 in support of their demands which virtually paralysed movement of

trains. Despite sabotaging attempts by the AITUC and INTUC-led unions, locomen in Nagpur and other centres joined the strike en mass. Even workers belonging to these unions defied their leaders to join the strike.

Following the lead given by the Locomen, railway workers of the Carriage and Wagon departments of Central Railway at Ajni-Nagpur started a tool down from December 19 demanding 12 Kg of food ration per month. They were later joined by railwaymen in the Divisional Offices of S. E. and Central Railways and other departments paralysing movement of trains in all direction.

From December 21, the movement for 12 Kg. rations was joined by Central and State Government employees who boycotted their Offices and joined the strike. A 10,000 strong procession, including ladies, marched to the Divisional Commissioner's Office on this demand which later culminated in a mass meeting. Defying prohibitory orders imposed by the Police, the employees continued their processions and demonstrations. On December 22, a 5000 strong procession was lathi charged and tear gassed by the police and another procession was stopped. On December 23, railway employees gheraoed the Divisional Superintendent, S. E. Rly., the Divisional Commissioner and the Police Commissioner and forced the authorities to release the Railway employees arrested during their agitation.

CITU General Council Meeting Postponed

The CITU General Council Meeting which was scheduled to be held at Vishakhapatnam from February 7 to 10, 1974 is postponed. The industry-wise meetings planned along with the meeting have also been accordingly postponed. The new dates of the General Council will be announced by the Secretariat after consulting the Reception Committee, Vishakhapatnam.

Then came the Nagpur Bandh of December 24. The call was given by the Leftist Trade Unions, CITU, AITUC, HMS, RPI and others—in support of the striking Government employees. The Bundh was a grand success and paralysed normal life in the city with Buses, Rickshaws and other road traffic completely stopped and with shops, hotels, and commercial establishments closed. Six out of seven textile mills in the city remained closed and work in LIC, Reserve Bank, other Banks, Zila Parishad, Nagpur Corporation and other offices were paralysed.

TAMILNADU

Led by a Joint Action Committee of CITU and other unions, 6500 workers of a Cotton Mill at Singai were on strike for over 2 months demanding fresh

wage agreement and reinstatement of 16 workers. But as a result of the betrayal of the INTUC and AITUC unions, who signed an agreement without achieving any of the major demands and without consulting any other union, the strike had to be withdrawn.

Led jointly by the CITU and other unions, weavers of Nellur in Madurai Dist. had been on strike since December 15 demanding 50 per cent wage rise and 15 per cent bonus. During the struggle 500 workers had been arrested. The strike was withdrawn from January 1, after a satisfactory agreement was signed conceding their major demands.

Led by the CITU union, Tata Fison workers at Ambathur near Madras were on struggle demanding interim relief. The united struggle ultimately forced the employers to agree to pay Rs. 8 more for 1972 and Rs. 46 more for 1973.

Sugar Mill workers of Tamilnadu went on strike from December 31 last demanding 50 per cent bonus. The strike was withdrawn on January 2 after the management agreed to pay 43 per cent. T.P. Govindan and R. Janakiraman of CITU signed the agreement on behalf of the workers.

Under the joint leadership of CITU and other Trade Unions, the Textile workers of Tamilnadu are to go on indefinite strike from February 1 on their 10 point Charter of Demands including wage rise, bonus and better working conditions.

State Transport workers of Kanyakumari district are still

continuing their strike (from October 15). The State Government has gone back on their assurances for reinstatement of 225 retrenched workers and on other issues. The entire working class, peasants and students of Tamilnadu among others, have given whole-hearted support to their struggle. The CITU has appealed to democratic people in other States to lend all support to the Kanyakumari transport workers.

Led by the CITU, Johnson Lift workers are on strike demanding wage rise, leave and better working conditions.

In the Canteen Committee elections at the Ranga Vilas Mills and Vikramsinghapuram Harvey Mills, the CITU nominees have won by big margins.

The 17th Conference of the Tamilnadu Kisan Sabha was held in Palani near Madras town from January 4 to 6 last. P. Ramamurti, Hare Krishna Konar and State CITU and SFI leaders attended the conference along with 250 delegates and 25 observers. A 50,000-strong mass meeting was held on 6th addressed by P. Ramamurti, H. Konar, Pappa Umanath and other Kisan, T.U. and SFI leaders.

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West Bengal

Indefinite Strike in Engineering Industry From FEB. 11

More than 3 lakhs Engineering workers in West Bengal will go on indefinite strike from February 11 in support of their demands for implementation of the Tripartite wage settlement of June 1973 and wage rise for workers of factories employing less than 50 workers.

The call has been given jointly by four Engineering Federation affiliated to CITU, two UTUC's and HMS. They have also appealed to the Engineering workers following INTUC and AITUC Unions to join the strike.

Bankura Beedi Workers on Strike

Led jointly by the CITU and AITUC unions, Beedi workers of big factories in Bankura district are on indefinite strike since January 4 last demanding higher minimum wage etc. Solidarity actions in support of the striking Beedi workers have been undertaken by Trade Unions and other democratic mass organisations like the SFI, Mahila Samity, 12th July Committee, Central and State Govt. employees etc.

Token Strike by Oil Mill Workers

Oil Mill workers all over the State observed a successful token strike on January 21 at the call of the CITU, UTUC and NFITU unions, in support of their charter of demands and protesting against high prices.

Demonstration by SEB Workers and Employees

At the call of the State Elect-

ricity Board Workmen's Union (CITU) more than 3000 workers and employees participated in a demonstration at the Head Office of the Board in Calcutta on January 16. Similar demonstrations were held on the day in other Divisional Offices. Their demands are implementation of Wage Committee recommendations, withdrawal of victimisations etc. Sukhomoy Paul, General Secretary of the Union congratulated the workers and employees on their magnificent participation. He also congratulated the Bihar SEB workers on their struggle.

T.U.'s Condemn Lock-out in Bengal Lamp

In a statement issued on January 22, the West Bengal units of CITU, AITUC, two UTUC's and TUCC condemned the management of the Bengal Electric Lamp Works for declaring a lock-out in the factory since December 5 last throwing out 1200 workers and for suspending 37 workers before declaring lock-out. They demanded immediate lifting of the lock-out, withdrawal of suspensions and payment of wages for the lock-out period.

Road Transport Workers Prepare For All India Convention

The Coordination Committee of Road Transport workers convened a meeting of the representatives of road transport unions in West Bengal on 5th January at Calcutta. The meeting decided to hold the All India Road Transport Workers Convention at Calcutta in the last week of April. A Reception

Claims Of Membership Of Central Trade Unions

The claims of membership for 1972 submitted by Central Trade Unions for the purpose of Verification to the Government of India are as follows :

INTUC	22,21,810
CITU	9,12,328
AITUC	Claims not furnished
HMS	Do
Bharatiya	
Mazdoor Sangh	6,27,968
UTUC	3,62,087
UTUC (Lenin Sarani)	2,48,594
National Labour Organisation	1,80,416

Committee was also formed with Md. Ismail as Chairman, Sujit Das as Secretary and Pralay Das Gupta as Treasurer. Steps have also been taken to popularise the Convention all over West Bengal.

Kerala

8,000 workers of Coffee plantations of South Wynaad went on a one-day token strike on 7th January demanding implementation of wages and D. A. recommended by the Minimum Wages Advisory Committee etc.

5 lakh Coir workers of the entire State resorted to a one-day token strike on 15th January at the call of the workers' unions affiliated to the CITU, INTUC and UTUC in support of their demands for implementation of minimum wages, nationalisation of foreign trade in coir, ban on coir husking machines, etc.

Women Workers Organise

Maharashtra

A conference of women workers, under the auspices of the Maharashtra Shramik Mahila Sangh, representing seven districts in the State was held in Bombay on January 18-19. More than 2000 women participated in the open session held on January 19. Special mention must be made of a delegation of 62 Adivasi and working class women from Dhulia district, 23 women workers in Powerloom and 13 landless labourers from Ichalkaranji, 12 Beedi workers from Sangli and 43 labourers from Dahanu adivasi area. Besides more than 1500 delegates from Bombay and its suburbs, there were delegates from Uran, Nasik, Kolhapur, Hingalghat and other centres.

Godavari Parulekar, Vice-President AIKS presided over the conference. Ahilya Rangnekar,

Chairman Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates. Kanak Mukherjee inaugurated the Conference, while Vimal Ranadive and Bibha Ghosh, M.P. greeted the delegates on behalf of the West Bengal Ganatantrik Mahila Samity.

More than 25 delegates spoke on the various resolutions, including the Charter of Demands, atrocities on Harijan women, on minimum wages etc.

A 19-member ad hoc Committee with Ahilya Rangnekar as

President and Prabha Savant as the Secretary was elected by the Conference.

Tamilnadu

On January 21 last, 300 women workers went in a procession to the State Secretariat at Madras to protest against the Price rise on behalf of the Democratic Women's Association. A delegation led by Maithily Shivaraman, Vice-President of Madras District Committee of CITU, presented a memorandum to the Food and Labour Ministers demanding cheap and adequate food.

State CITU Working Committee Meets

THE Working Committee of CITU—West Bengal State met on 25th December with Hrishu Banerjee, Vice-President in the Chair. 81 members attended the meeting. The meeting at the outset passed a condolence resolution on Comrade Muzaffar Ahmed.

Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary in his report observed that after the successful 'Bundh' of 17th November last, terror was let loose in Raniganj and Durgapur. In Raniganj three comrades—Robin Sen, Mansur Ali and Nikhil Bose, and in Durgapur Ranjan Biswas were murdered by the Congress goondas in connivance with the police. A team of 5 M. P.'s visited the areas and met the Prime Minister on 19th December demanding arrest of the murderers.

The meeting decided to start a campaign for popularising the peasants' struggle and emphasised worker-peasant unity. It deci-

ded to observe "Working Class Peasants Unity Day" on 8th January, and to organise a Convention of the workers and peasants jointly with Kisan Sabha.

The meeting adopted a number of other resolutions on pressing issues before the working class.

While endorsing the Memorandum on D. A. Fraud submitted by CITU, UTUC, and TUCC to the Expert Committee, the meeting decided to approach all the Central Trade Unions for organising a General Strike demanding recitification of D. A. Fraud. The meeting noted the joint letter by all the Central Trade Unions to the State Labour Minister demanding a meeting of the State Labour Advisory Board for implementation of the unanimous decisions regarding restoration of T. U. rights and safety and freedom of T. U. functioning. It also condemned the continued attack on Trade Unions.

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Two Lakhs Textile Workers of Bombay On General Strike

AN indefinite General Strike of two lakhs textile workers in Bombay, which was to begin on December 30 last, materialised a day earlier with workers in all mills coming out spontaneously in protest against the treacherous agreement between Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (INTUC) and the Millowners Association. The strike was sponsored by CITU, AITUC and Lal Nishan's T.U. wings in support of the demands of minimum wage including D.A. of Rs. 425 at 900 index, annual increment, full neutralisation of rise in cost of living with a new D.A. scale, end to index fraud, guaranteed weekly off on Sunday, 20 per cent Bonus etc. The agreement between RMMS and Millowners' Association secured only an average monthly wage rise of about Rs. 21 to Rs. 40 and that also linked up with productivity. This agreement was continue for 3 years.

The last General Strike in textiles was in 1966. After the formation of Lal Bawta Mill Mazdoor Union (CITU), united actions were organised with other unions like AITUC and others on Bonus, price rise etc. The last two general strikes on 15th and 22nd July, 1973, against 7 days week, were united actions of the whole working class in opposition to the INTUC, which brought all the militant unions on a common platform.

This time, after serving the strike notice the unions organised joint meetings, including gate and chawl meetings, postering, etc. In a statement after the strike, P.K. Kurane, General Secretary LBMMU, challenged the right of RMMS to negotiate an agreement on behalf of the 2 lakh workers. He said, "the agreement was an insult to the workers who have given a fitting reply to the millowners and the RMMS by organising a total strike." A joint statement was also issued by LBMMU and Kapad Kamgar Sanghatana (Lal Nishan) condemning the INTUC-management agreement which did nothing about the D.A. or wage scales. "There is no increase in basic wages, no new scales. And yet this is being forced on the workers for 3 years."

The General Strike is continuing. The workers are determined to continue it till their demands are met fully. The RMMS and Congress goondas are trying to disrupt the strike by resorting to gangsterism and intimidation, but they could not succeed since strike is total.

The Maharashtra Government continues to support the INTUC despite the fact that the workers have repudiated the treacherous agreement.

It openly encouraged the Shiv Sena hoodlums to attack the workers and intimidate them.



Ranadive To Attend Vietnam T. U. Congress

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU will attend the Third National Congress of Vietnamese Trade Unions to be held at Hanoi from February 11 to 14, 1974 as per decision of the CITU Secretariat.

The Dalit Panthers, militant group of Scheduled Caste youngsters were the target of attacks because of their support to the strike. The Maharashtra Police joined the Shiv Sena and shot dead one worker of Dalit Panther at Worli area.

B.T. Ranadive, President CITU in his letter to Union Minister of Labour on January 23, criticised the refusal of the Central Government to intervene in the dispute and demanded immediate steps to settle the strike on terms acceptable to the genuine representatives of workers.