



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Resist Imposition Of Wage Freeze

A news item appeared in the Press on February 7 to the effect that there has been an agreement in the JCM that three more instalment of D. A. which have become due to the Central Government employees would be released subject to the condition that the arrears due upto March 1982 will be credited to Provident Fund till March 1983. It was also announced that six more instalments of D. A. upto 320 CPI will be merged with Pay, but the increase in CCA and HRA which may accrue as a result of this will be credited to PF till March 1983. It was stated that the staff side agreed no major economic demands would be raised till April 1983.

B. T. Ranadive, President and P. Ramamurti, General Secretary-CITU in a press statement said,

“The CITU strongly denounces the decision of Government of India for impounding of arrears of due dearness-allowance and also the increase in house rent and city compensatory allowances of Central Government employees consequent on merger of D. A. with basic pay. What is being publicised in the Press as an agreement is in reality the decision of the Government announced in an informal meeting of available members of the Standing Committee which some of the leaders of the Central Government employees are reported to have accepted. If there is any agreement, it must have been entered into behind the scene, as no formal meeting of the Joint Consultative Machinery or even its Standing Committee was convened. This presages a move for wage-freeze and reintroduction of the hated Compulsory Deposit Scheme of the emergency days”.

The CITU appeals to all sections of the Central Government employees to realise that by agreeing to such infamous proposal of the Government, they would virtually be betraying the movement of the working class and the toiling people of the country who, by their magnificent response to the call of One-day all-India industrial

general strike on the 19th January last, have started moving unitedly and resolutely for change in the anti-labour policies of the Government. Such agreement is bound to weaken the general struggle for betterment of standard of living of the working people and should therefore be shunned by them.

They further said “The CITU also appeals to the leaders of all Central Trade Union organisations and the Indian Working Class to lend their support to the struggle of Central Government employees, and prepare for a long drawn struggle so that wage-freeze can not be imposed on them”.

S.K.Vyas, Secretary General, Confederation of Central Government Employees, K.M Mathew, General Secretary, Defence Employees Federation and other leaders like O.S.Tyagi, C.S.V.Warrier, Pathik Banerjee, N.J.Iyer, S.K.Das, Jatrana and K.Adinarayana had addressed a letter jointly to the Cabinet Secretary lodging their strong protest and urged upon the Government not to go ahead with the plan of impounding of any portion of accrued incomes. S.K. Dhar, Secretary General, LRSA, in a circular stated that the take-home pay packet of railway employees would immediately get reduced.

The letter of S.K. Vyas and others point out that for two years negotiations were going on for settlement of some major demands including the demand of interim relief of Rs. 150/- p.m. and the already smouldering resentment among Central Government employees may cross the bursting point.

It is understood that Umraomal Purohit, (President AIRF) Secretary of JCM staff side had issued a circular no. 82/1 on 30 January 1982 stating that the decision would benefit all those who would be retiring after January 31, 1982. This amounted to acceptance of the proposal. It also confirms that a section of leadership in the J.C.M. has accepted this proposal which involves deferred payment, moratorium on demands and presages wage-freeze.

(On Page Twelve)

VIOLATIONS OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN INDIA

While Mr. Francis Blanchard was visiting India at the invitation of the Govt., a meeting with representatives of eight central trade union organisations who comprise the National Campaign Committee, viz. CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS, INTUC (Dara), UTUC, UTUC-LS and TUCC was arranged on January 27. P. Ramamurti M P., General Secretary and Jogender Sharma, Secretary Delhi State Committee represented CITU in the meeting. On this occasion, a memorandum jointly signed by the leaders of these organisations was handed over to him.

Referring to the joint memorandum submitted on December 14 regarding suppression of freedom of association and Right to Collective Bargaining in India, which has been registered as case no : 1100 in I.L.O. office, the memorandum stated :—

“Apart from the large number of cases of suppression of Trade Union Rights and severe repression we have given in our memorandum submitted to you earlier, the most glaring and blatant case of such suppression is the enactment, recently, of what is called the Essential Services Maintenance Act. Under the provisions of this Act the Government has taken powers to declare any industry or service an ‘essential service’. Any strike, or even ‘work to rule’, i.e. according to legally declared hours, is a criminal offence. So also any help given to the strikers a criminal offence, punishable with long periods of imprisonment and fine. Thus the Right to Collective Bargaining and Strike is at the mercy of the Executive Authorities.

Further Article 31(2)(c) of the Constitution of India providing for removal from service any

employee without assigning any reason is aimed at suppressing the trade union movement. It is noteworthy that while innumerable leaders and activists of trade unions have been removed from service under this provision, not a single officer has been so removed.”

Referring to the recent one day all-India protest strike on January 19 and the demands which were raised by the workers, the memorandum gave an account of repression unleashed by Govt. of India as follows:—

“Despite the solemn promise made by Government during the debate on the National Security Bill that, this measure will not be resorted to against Trade Union Workers and despite the solemn declaration over the Radios and T.V. networks that the National Security Act would not be used against the 19th January Protest Strike, over fifty thousand leaders and activists of the trade unions were arrested all over the country. The State and Central Governments were threatening the workers with dire punishment if they joined the protest strike such as break in service, cut in wages for seven days etc.

Reports of dismissal of trade union leaders and activists are pouring into our offices from various states. The most brutal one being in Haryana State where all the employees of Hansi Co-operative Spinning & Weaving Mills Ltd. and Haryana Concast, Hissar numbering about 2,000 were terminated from service for participating in strike on 19th January, 1982.”

Since the violation of trade union rights in India are of grave nature, the memorandum urged that a High Power Commission

be appointed on behalf of I.L.O. to visit the country and have a detailed probe into the entire question and hoped that I.L.O. would give serious consideration to this request.

Denial of Representation in ILO Conference

The memorandum drew attention to the method of nomination of I.L.O. delegation from India and stated that “Most of the Central Trade Unions in India have been demanding that the leader of the delegation should be on the basis of rotation. This practice is already prevalent in several countries such as France, Italy, Spain, Japan etc. and there is no reason why it should not be accepted in India. The Congress(I) Government, however, has been nominating only the representative of its patronised faction of INTUC on the plea that it was the largest organisation in the country. This deprives overwhelming majority of the workers in the country to send their representatives to the ILO Conference.

The Government wants unanimity among the Central Trade Unions. How could one expect unanimity, when the Congress(I) Government’s patronised faction of INTUC can enjoy the monopoly of representation and hence will always veto any proposal which would put an end to this monopoly?”

Referring to the present highly unscientific procedure of verification which is manipulated to the advantage of Govt. patronised union and not acceptable to the rest, the memorandum pointed out that :—

“Membership is inflated with the collusion of employers and the verifying officials act on the

(on page seven)

CENTRAL TRADE UNIONS EXPOSE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-PEOPLE POLICIES

Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of Finance, invited the Central Trade Union leaders to discuss "related policies" on 8-2-1982. Representatives from CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS, UTUC, UTUC-LS, HMS (Kulkarni), NLO & NFITU attended the meeting. Opening the discussion he said that, before finalising the budget, he is meeting all concerned about the economic health of the country informally and had already held meetings with economists and industrialists. He wanted the views of the labour in the back ground of the Prime Minister's declaration of this year as "Productivity Year". Repeating the usual claims of achieving increased production, curbing the rise in wholesale prices which have gone down and checked the inflationary trend and having removed the earlier constraints in infrastructure, he said that the gap in balance of payment and loss of man-days due to strike are worrying the Govt. He solicited co-operation of organised labour for increased production particularly in respect of food, cement, edible oils etc. He also stated that the Govt is trying to strike a correct balance between contradictory demands like remunerative prices for the peasantry and fair price to consumers.

The CITU was represented by Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary who said that since the 4th June Convention at Bombay, the Central Trade Unions had urged the Govt repeatedly for a serious dialogue. Even when the Govt. was adequately warned from the historic rally of November 23, the Govt. had shown no seriousness in the

matter. On the otherhand the Govt. brought ESMA into the statute books and repression was let loose on the workers who joined the one-day general strike on January 19. He referred to the throwing out of job of all workers of Hansi Spinning Mill, Haryana, who had participated in strike. It was also pointed out that mandays lost due to lock-out are much more than those due to strike. Similarly loss of production due to sickness and closure due to the fault and malpractices of the management has assumed menacing proportion throwing thousands out of job. Instances of AMCO, West Bengal and Kamrup Paper Mills, Assam etc. were cited. He referred to the widening gap between the rich and the poor as a result of the policy of indirect taxation and deficit financing and said that after every Five-Year Plan, more people have been thrown below the poverty line while assets of monopoly houses have increased. Referring to the question of price-rise it was pointed out that while the wholesale price were going down the Working Class consumer Index numbers were going up which means that either the former figures are incorrect or the market is being manipulated by a powerful group of middlemen. He urged that by removing the middlemen and ensuring supply through public distribution system both the peasantry as well as the consumer could be satisfied and there is no contradictory demands on this question. He indicted the Govt's policy of pegging down the D.A. neutralisation through B.P.E. and stated that the reported proposal of deferred payment of arrears of DA and impounding of accrued

dues of Central Government employees would accelerate the process of erosion in real wage of workers which were continually going down. He also referred to the Govt policy of wooing multinationals by relaxing FERA provisions and introduction of computers in many fields while the registered unemployment has crossed 15 million mark and the total jobless may be more than 50 million. Unless the Govt. changes its policy through a serious dialogue with the organised labour, the workers can not be enthused to increase productivity. Especially with ESMA hanging over their head, how could the workers be asked for co-operation, he questioned.

Other leaders raised questions like-IMF loan, fraud in Consumer Price Index, retrenchment, housing problem of workers, pension and other measures of social security, ensuring supply of essential commodities through co-operatives, the condition of migrant labour abroad who are earning a good amount as foreign exchange, workers' education, workers' participation in management etc.

Finance Minister closed the discussion by saying that there could be no unanimity on some of the views expressed in the meeting but he could find some areas of agreement which he would keep in mind.

It is ironical that while the Finance Minister was seeking Co-operation of labour the Home Minister was busy in issuing a notification declaring all the items covered by ESMA as essential for the purpose of applying National Security Act. (CITU statement elsewhere in this issue).

ILO Committee on Work on Plantation

THE Committee on Work on Plantations set up by I.L.O. has asked the Government of India to submit its report on plantations in India based on questionnaires formulated by it. The report will be discussed in the eight session of the Committee to be held in December, 1982.

Earlier on July 15, 1981 CITU had lodged a complaint to ILO on the violations of Freedom of Association and Right to Collective Bargaining by the Government of India in the tea gardens of Assam. Additional facts were further submitted on December, 29.

For the purpose of the discussions in the Committee CITU has submitted a detailed note to the Government giving informations about the plantation industry and the working and living conditions of the workers as furnished by the All India Plantation Workers' Federation (CITU).

Increase in production

The note highlighted that while productions and foreign exchange earned in the plantation products increased, the living conditions of the workers deteriorated. Production of tea increased from 4,18,517 tonnes in 1970 to 5,74,848 tonnes in 1980.

Foreign exchange earned through export of tea in 1978-79 was Rs. 340.45 crores, increased to Rs. 424.49 crores in 1980-81.

In Coffee the production increased from 92,506 tonnes in 1974-75 to 1,21,000 tonnes in 1977-78 and the export value went up from Rs. 66.65 crores in 1975-76 to Rs. 133.53 crores in 1978-79. Similar increase has

been recorded in rubber and cardamom also.

Decrease in employment

While the production is on the increase, employment has been systematically decreasing. Since independence employment in the plantation industry has gone down from more than ten lakhs to 7,13,106 in 1971. The workforce has been reduced by 30 per cent in a period of twenty years from 1951 to 1971 through some mechanisation only in the processing of tea and rubber. Moreover, a large part of employment in plantation is seasonal only with hardly three to four months work in a year.

Increase in Work load

As a natural consequence, increasing work-load is being heaped on the workers by the employers. Production of tea alone per worker went up from 278.6 Kg in 1952 to 568 Kg. in 1971,—a record of 103 percent increase per worker.

Conditions of Workers

Wages

Wages of the workers are abnormally low, even though after several strike actions they have been able to get some increase. There is no uniformity in wages between the states and within the states even. There is disparity of wages between male and female workers even after enactment of the Equal Remuneration Act in 1976.

Housing

The number of houses sanctioned in 1973 were 10,899 and the actual number constructed were only 2,859. The actual funds utilised for the purpose were Rs. 1,47,369 as against Rs. 2,98,512 sanctioned. Taking

advantage of the lacunae of the Plantation Labour Act which does not provide for housing for non-residential workers, the planters are recruiting workers from outside. In spite of subsidy and loans paid to the employers for housing, houses are not constructed. Workers are forced to stay in huts, sometimes 2-3 families sharing the same room.

Creche

Although the Plantation Labour Act provides for creche in all gardens where more than 50 women are employed and although 40 per cent of the workers are women, the planters ignore this provision and the Government remains indifferent in spite of repeated demands.

Hours of work

One of the major lacunae in the act is 54 hours of work in a week. Through bitter and prolonged struggles the workers have forced the managements in some places to reduce it to 48 hours. The Government was compelled to bring an amendment in the act to reduce the working hours to 48 hours a week. But to nullify the amendment the planters have resorted to piece-rate system of work, particularly for the seasonal workers.

Lack of medical facilities

The medical facilities are practically non-existent. In most of the gardens there is no dispensary, no doctors, pharmacists nor even mid-wives. Medicines are not available. Sick persons die while being carried to hospitals miles away for lack of ambulance. Even maternity leaves are not available and women deliver babies in the fields. Even after repeated protests workers are compelled to live under primitive conditions.

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CITU DENOUNCES NOTIFICATION ON N. S. A.

Com. B.T. Ranadive, President and Com. P. Ramamurti M.P., General Secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions have issued the following statement on Feb. 9 :—

The CITU denounces the notification issued by the Home Ministry of Govt. of India declaring all major economic activities of the country as "Essential" for the purpose of applying National Security Act. It is the height of deception for the Govt. that its Home Ministry comes out with the threat of application of N.S.A, when the Finance Minister is pleading with the labour for co-operation for increasing production, to cover the gap in balance of payment.

The notification brazenly flouts the solemn assurance given on the floor of the Parliament that NSA will not be applied against the trade union movement. This notification makes the ESMA more sinister in that it arms the executive with powers to detain trade union leaders without trial whenever they chose to do so on mere apprehension of break down of essential services. This monstrous provision now added to ESMA, is, in reality, a piece of emergency legislation taking away the workers' right to protest.

It is significant to note that such a notification has been issued just before the budget session. Everyone knows the terms of IMF and World Bank loans. The Notification coming closely following the 19th January Strike and the decision of the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions to chalk out further programme through a convention to be held in the middle of April, leaves no doubt in anybody's mind that the Govt. not only wants to inflict further

miseries on the people in the coming budget but also has armed itself with draconian powers in their drive towards authoritarianism, to ruthlessly suppress all struggles of the working people for betterment of their living standards.

The CITU warns the Govt, that the working class of the country will not remain a silent spectator to the taking away of fundamental trade union rights

and appeals to all trade union centres and other mass organisations to come closer to fight the onslaughts of the Govt. against the trade union and democratic rights. Many organisations like Bank Employees' Federation, W. Bengal; All India Co-ordination Committee of Engineering Workers' Unions, Steel Workers' Federation of India, etc. have issued statements denouncing the notification on N.S.A.

CITU Condemns Increase In P. & T. Service Charges

Com. B.T. Ranadive, President and Com. P. Ramamurti, M.P., General Secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions have issued the following statement on Feb. 3 :—

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the stiff increase in P & T Service Charges to the extent of Rs. 100 crores a year, as this increase in telegram, money order and registration charges will hit the common man very hard. The CITU also condemns the manner in which such increase has been announced just on the eve of budget session of the Parliament reducing its relevancy, as the increase would be presented as a fait accompli.

The CITU is of firm opinion that the recent hikes in railway fare and freight charges and now the P & T Service Charges are the result of the acceptance of the IMF loan. These presage further hike in taxes and other charges during the ensuing budget which would make the life of the common man who are already groaning under the sky-rocketing of prices and rampant inflation unbearable.

The CITU calls upon the entire working class of the

country to protest against these measures and carry forward the struggle against price-raise and against the anti-people, anti-labour policies of the Smt. Indira Gandhi's Governments.

Chowgule Matrix Hobs Workers on Indefinite Strike

Workers of Chowgule Matrix Hobs in Andhra Pradesh are on indefinite strike since November 27. The company in collaboration with Italy, manufactures Gare Hobs and Cutters in its plant at Patancheru near Hyderabad. The workers are extremely lowpaid. The minimum wage is even lower than that prescribed by the State Government. In an extremely high handed manner the management dismissed twelve workers, suspended four and issued show-cause-notice to twelve others when they formed the Chowgule Matrix Hobs Employees' Union and submitted a charter of demands. The Government of Andhra Pradesh remained indifferent to the union's demand for conciliations. Underterred, the workers are carrying forward their struggle with high morale.

Steel Workers to Launch Country Movements

THE first meeting of the working committee of the Steel Workers' Federation of India held at Bhilai on February 3 and 4 decided to launch movements in all the steel plants in India for acceptance of its 46 point charter of demands.

The federation was formed in the all India Convention held at Durgapur on January 8-10

The working committee expressed its deep indignation over the continuation of the contract labour system which has amassed seventy five thousands contract workers in the steel industry. Their wages are extremely low and they are denied even the elementary facilities as workers. The managements were not implementing the legal obligations as principal employers. The federation demanded fixation of uniform wages and terms of service conditions to all the contract workers and their absorption as regular employees in a phased manner. The federation also

demanding Rs. 1,000/= as minimum wage in the steel industry. The unions affiliated to the federations have already submitted the charters of demands to the managements.

The working committee congratulated the two lakh steel workers for joining the country-wide strike on January 19. The strike was successful in Durgapur Steel Plant, Alloy Steel Plant IISCO, Bokaro, Rourkela, Mysore Iron Works, Bhadravati and in the Central Marketing Organisation. The contract workers in all the steel plants also joined the strike as well as the workers in the captive mines under the steel plants.

The working committee condemned the vindictive actions taken by the managements by way of show cause notices and charge sheets to the striking workers and demanded their forthwith withdrawal. It further condemned arrests of about five hundred workers and the repressive measures taken by the authorities at various places, particularly at Jamshedpur, Bhilai and Kalta Iron Ore Mines. At Bhilai even women workers were inju-

red by brutal lathi charges by the police.

In a resolution the working committee congratulated the workers of the Barsua Iron Ore Mines for their heroic indefinite strike and also demanded implementation of the earlier agreements by the management in Kalta Iron Ore Mines. It further demanded withdrawal of all victimisation measures in all the steel plants including withdrawal of the dismissal of eight workers of TISCO during the recent strike of the contract workers.

In another resolution the working committee condemned the dastardly killing of fourteen harijans of Kestara village in Durg by the caste Hindu landlords in connivance with the police and demanded action against the culprits.

A rally was held on February 4 at Lal Maidan which was addressed among others by M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU, Dilip Majumdar, Working President, Jiban Ray, General Secretary of the Federation and P.K. Moitra.

I.L.O. Committee on Plantations

From Page Four

Social Security

Workers do not get sickness benefits nor other aspects of social security like gratuity, old age pensions, etc. Even maternity benefits are denied by the planters in defiance of the act and women workers are retrenched if they claim for pre and post natal leave.

Insecurity of Job

In retaliation to the growing struggles, the planters have started closing down the tea gardens on the plea of sickness. In West Bengal the Left Front Government intervened and when some of the closed tea estates were run by workers' co-operatives, it was found that the

gardens were viable.

Freedom of association

The Government of India has not ratified the ILO Conventions Nos. 87 (1948), 98 (1949), 135 (1971), 141 (1975) and Recommendation S No. 143 (1971) and 149 (1975), Concerning the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. This has given filip to the planters who try to curb the struggles of the workers with the help of police and anti-social elements. Complaints to ILO by CITU against barbarous attack on the workers in the tea estates at Krishnakali, Chaper, Nagrijuli, Titabar etc. have already been recorded, where workers were killed by police firing and in custody, their houses have been burnt down

and womenfolk molested. These unprecedented repressions are being escalated with the help of police and of INTUC-hoodlums to suppress the workers' struggles for bonus and other economic and social demands.

The intervention of ILO, the Human Rights Association and other international institutions do help to create an awareness amongst all concerned for upholding the basic rights of the workers. Despite escalation of repression the growing struggles of the workers to defend their trade union rights are bound to mount pressure on the Government of India to implement the ILO Conventions and recommendations and maintain the international standards. □

DILATORY TACTICS OF BHEL MANGEMENT

The BHEL management has been clearly resorting to dilatory tactics in considering the pending issues of the BHEL employees which has evoked strong reactions from the workers' side in the Joint Committee meeting of BHEL held in Delhi on 15 January.

The meeting was being held after 3 months and the management postponed on three occasions. Since signing of the agreement in January 1980 no pending issue has been settled in the Joint Committee meeting and the management had been giving evasive replies from time to time. The frequency of the Joint

meeting was reduced considerably to avoid discussing the issues with the workers' representatives.

The question of house rent allowance, city compensatory allownnce, conveyance allowance was discussed on several occasions but the management had been sitting tight over the issues while the Government and the BPE had been obstructing every concession even when the BHEL management accepted the genuineness of the demand.

The Delhi employees have been demanding 35 per cent house rent allowance as in many other public sector undertaking. The management in the Joint

Forum meeting accepted the demand as just but the Government had turned it down causing a crisis in the Joint negotiations.

Non-settlement of these allowances gave rise to agitations in Hyderabad and Tiruchi but so far the management has not conceded them.

The current agreement expires on 31st August 1982 and the negotiations on the new agreement has yet to commence. The trade unions have demanded that these negotiations should commence in right earnest so as to sign the agreement before the expiry of the current agreement.

M.K. Pandhe and Sambasiva Rao (Hyderabad) attended the meeting on behalf of the CITU.

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FORM IV

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| 1. Place of Publication | 6, Talkatora Road,
New Delhi 110001 |
| 2. Periodicity of Publication | Monthly |
| 3. Printers Name | M.K. Pandhe |
| Whether Citizen of India ? | Yes |
| Address | 6, Talkatora Road
New Delhi 110001 |
| 4. Publisher's Name | M.K. Pandhe |
| Whether Citizen of India ? | Yes |
| Address | 6, Talkatora Road
New Delhi 110001 |
| 5. Editor's Name | M.K. Pandhe |
| Whether citizen of India ? | Yes |
| 6. Name and Addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital. | Centre of Indian Trade Unions 6 Talkatora Road
New Delhi-110001 |

I, M. K. Pandhe, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/- M.K. Pandhe
Publisher

Date February 25, 1982

VIOLATION of T.U. RIGHTS

(form page two)

orders of the Government. The falsity of their so called verification has been proved, whenever a free ballot of the workers has been taken. The unions declared to be 'representative' unions by the authorities through their method have fared very badly, often receiving the least number of votes of workers."

P. Ramamurti, who was the chief spokesman (by common consent) explained the memorandum at length citing various instances supplemented by cogent reasons. Parvati Krishnan (AITUC) and others supplemented him with other instances. Mr. Blanchard assured the Central leadeas that he would place the matter before the Governing Body through the Committee on freedom of Association as laid down in I.L.O. procedure.

COUNTRY WIDE RESPONSE ON JANUARY 19

Despite the politically motivated malicious propaganda and the threats held out by the Government and despite the unprecedented repression unleashed by the police and the open gangsterism let loose by the Congress(I)-INTUC hoodlums, the countrywide response to the January 19 strike recorded the first post-independent united stir of the working class against the anti-labour and anti-people policies of the Government of India. The twelve million participants created a new history, making common cause with the peasantry, the agricultural labour and the entire toiling people, led by the working class.

Reports that are still pouring in, already confirm involvement of the workers in all the states, from Jammu-Kashmir to the Andaman-Nicobar islands.

The fake news broadcast by the All India Radio and the T.V. under instructions from the minister of Information and Broadcasting served to console the Government against the realities.

Reports received from the states are as under :-

Tripura

It was a virtual Bundh although the call given was for industrial strike only. Central and State Government employees, public sector, transport, rubber, tea, jute, ONGC, LIC, GIC, Banks, professional and self-employed people, agricultural workers, teachers, students, etc. all joined the strike. Massive rallies were held throughout the state. Anti-socials engaged by the Congress(I) tried to disrupt the workers, but had to retreat.

Assam

Efforts by the divisive forces abetted by the INTUC were pushed back to wall by the growing consolidation of the workers. The strike paralysed scores of factories, big and small, in the State. Sixteen thousand workers of plywood industry joined the strike. Workers in one hundred tea gardens struck work. In Hindustan Steel, I.O.L., Central Inland Water Transport Corporation, Bharat Jute Mills, etc. the strike was tremendously successful. Doom Dooma observed total bundh. The harijan mazdoors of Gauhati Municipal Corporation joined the strike. The banks, LIC and GIC remained paralysed. The Bongaingon refinery and the paper mill therein had to down their shutters. In Goalpara and several other parts of the State, transport remained totally paralysed. Police made unsuccessful attempts to drag the workers of Brahmaputra Jute Mills from their houses. At Dibrugarh the shops were forced to

open by the police. Workers of Soalkuchi joined the mainstream. The journalists of Gauhati and mill mazdoor of Nalsari struck work for two hours. Employees of Railways, Defence and State Government observed solidarity day through various programmes.

Bihar

The Bihar bundh call given by the State Campaign Committee was a glorious success inspite of the shoot-at sight order given by the Chief Minister. Facing wild threats, intimidation by the Government, the ministers and the Congress(I) hoodlums, workers in the industrial establishments and collieries overwhelmingly joined the strike. Transport remained suspended. Shops remained closed. Work in Banks, LIC and GIC remained paralysed. Pharmaceutical workers struck work. No newspapers came out on 20th. Even train services were affected. Anti-social elements attacked a massive two thousands strong torch light procession at Patna on 18th night injuring several workers. Youth Congress(I) hoodlums attacked the union office at LIC. Police lathi-charged bank employees in a meeting. Large number of arrests started from 18th itself. But despite all these repressive measures by the Government all the cities and suburbs of the State wore the deserted look. Only massive rallies symbolised the spurt of life in the State with slogans rending the people's demands and denouncing the shoot-at sight orders of the authoritarian regime. It is the first Congress(I) Government which met with an ignominious defeat against the call for Bihar bundh.

People's reaction to the lies broadcast by AIR found expression in a massive demonstration before the Radio Station at Patna on January 21.

The show of muscles by the Bihar Government on January 19 was rightly replied to by the fearless workers through massive joint rallies and demonstrations organised by the State Campaign Committee in all district headquarters on February 3 protesting against its repressive measures.

West Bengal.

January 19 in West Bengal was another occasion for a total frustration of the Congress(I) gangsters. The consciousness of the people and their overwhelming support to the left-front exhibited through a total peaceful bundh in the entire State was in sharp contrast to the gangsterist policies of the Congress(I) which unleashed unprecedented violence

on April 3 last when it called for a bundh and was rejected by the people.

Over one million workers participated in the strike. Apart from the big and small industrial plants, Government offices, banks, insurance offices and private establishments wore vacant looks. Workers in the tea gardens in Darjeeling, the steel plants and the Coal fields in Asansole, Raniganj struck work. Educational institutions were closed. Railway Stations-Howrah and Sealdah, the airport, Calcutta port and Haldia docks stood still. Determination was writ large in the people to consolidate the left and democratic forces to fight the authoritarian regime of Indira Gandhi.

Orissa

About one thousand five hundred persons were arrested. The police lathi-charged in several places, the INTUC and management thugs attacked the workers and army marched past at Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and other places. But nothing could stop the workers from participation in the strike in an overwhelming number all over the State. The strike was successful in Rourkela Steel plant, and in the mines and in the fertiliser plants. In all other industrial establishments in Bhubaneswar, Puri, Cuttack, Berhampur, Balasore, Sambalpur, Paradip Dhenkanal, etc. vast majority of the workers joined the strike. Total bundh was observed in these places also.

Jammu-Kashmir

Apart from total strike by the Bank, LIC and GIC workers, the State Government employees also joined the strike in a big way. One branch of P & T also joined the strike. In all places mass rallies were held. Central Government employees expressed solidarity by joining the rallies.

Himachal Pradesh

Facing severe police repressions workers resorted to complete strike in transport, electricity, Banks, LIC, GIC, Hotels, etc.

Punjab

Industrial centres like Rajpura, Mohali, Kharar, Abohar, Malout Mandi, Gobindgarh, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jullundur, etc reported total strike. Shop-keepers also closed their shops. The strike was by and large successful in Chandigarh also. A large section of the Government and public sector employees also joined the strike. Transport remained suspended in a number of places. Banks, LIC and

GIC workers observed complete strike. Big police and BSF took positions in all industrial centres. Report says that even the Congress(I) ministers and INTUC leaders joined the police force to break the strike. Big demonstrations and rallies were held in all the centres.

Haryana

Total strike has been reported from all the industrial centres. Facing barbarous repression, the workers at Hissar, Faridabad, Sonapat, Sirsa, Gurgaon, Hansi etc. came out with thumping success. Even the presence of the Chief Minister at Hissar instructing en-masse dismissal of all the workers could not deter the workers of Haryana Concast and Hansi Spinning Mills to join the strike. Brutal lathi-charge and large scale arrests had no effect on the determined workers of Haryana.

Delhi

The workers of the capital city equally shared the glory of the workers of the country. All the industrial areas observed almost total strike. In spite of CRP and BSF battalions and inspite of the efforts of the police and the Congress(I) leaders, workers could not be dragged to the work places. Hotel workers, university employees, students, teachers and newspaper employees, all joined the strike. Workers in banks including State Banks and Reserve Bank, LIC and GIC as in other states also observed full strike.

Uttar Pradesh

Despite clashes provoked by the INTUC and the anti-socials and despite lathi-charges arrests and firing by the police killing three persons at Varanasi, the strike was almost complete in all the industrial centres. Successful strike was observed in Indian oil, J. K. Jute Mill, Swadeshi Cotton Mill, Muir Mill, etc. in Kanpur. Strike was successful in Gorakhpur fertiliser factory. Reports from Banks, LIC and GIC, and also in sugar, engineering, textile, cement, tea-gardens, chemical, aluminium industries etc show complete strike. Similar report has been received from the Lime Stone and Dolomite mines, from Pantnagar Agricultural Farm, in BHEL Hardwar etc. Newspaper employees also joined the mainstream.

Rajasthan

Reports confirm successful strikes were observed in all the industrial places. Several cities like

(On Page Twelve)

Indian Locomen Express Solidarity With British Locomen

BROTHER Ray Buckton, General Secretary, Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen, London in a communication dated January 31 to S. K. Dhar, Secretary General, AILRSA explained in detail as to how the British Railway Board has gone back on an agreement on increase of pay unilaterally which has forced them to go into industrial action. Stating that the agreement on pay was specific and unconditional, the communication stated:-

“The fact that there was a clear commitment by the Railway Board, which was accepted by the Railway management at the time, is confirmed by a circular issued from the Board’s Headquarters to lower levels of management giving instructions how the new rates of pay should be implemented, saying that the 3 per cent would be added to the pay of railway workers in January 1982 with retrospective payment to August 1981. However, shortly before Christmas a letter was received from the Railway Board stating that the Board had unilaterally decided that there was insufficient progress on productivity matters and therefore the 3 per cent, as provided for in a ratified agreement, would not now be paid.”

S. K. Dhar in a telegram to Brother Buckton said:- “Loco Running staff Indian Railways full support to your struggle against unilateral scrapping of wage

Consumer Price Index Numbers

State/Centre	Base 1960			State/Centre	1981			
	1981				1981			
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.		Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa				
Gudur	469	463	466	Barbil		412	429	420
Guntur	505	501	503	Sambalpur		489	486	478
Hyderabad	479	480	476	Punjab				
Assam				Amritsar		479	485	472
Digboi	446	452	446	Rajasthan				
Doom Dooma	362	357	353	Ajmer		478	478	483
Labac	352	354	360	Jaipur		495	491	492
Mariani	362	366	363	Tamil Nadu				
Rangapara	384	381	361	Coimbatore		476	485	489
Bihar				Coonoor		473	477	471
Jamshedpur	435	435	430	Madras		454	463	461
Jharia	433	442	440	Madurai		478	497	492
Kodarma	478	497	490	U.P.				
Monghyr	503	513	496	Kanpur		454	449	440
Noamundi	432	426	431	Saharanpur		472	471	467
Gujarat				Varanasi		498	505	496
Ahmedabad	446	447	443	West Bengal				
Bhavnagar	458	462	464	Asansol		464	464	467
Haryana				Calcutta		429	426	426
Yamunanagar	488	493	487	Darjeeling		376	379	378
J. & K.				Howrah		411	407	405
Srinagar	492	497	477	Jalpaiguri		369	362	357
Karnataka				Raniganj		442	441	451
Ammathi	474	468	456	Delhi		481	480	474
Bangalore	518	523	523	Other Centres				
Chikamagalur	485	486	485	Berhampur ('49)		634	644	668
Kolar G.F.	468	483	471	Cuttack ('49)		569	568	567
Kerala				Jabalpur ('49)		589	585	589
Alleppey	479	477	470	Beawar ('51-52)		587	581	577
Alwaye	463	463	464	Tripura (1961)		404	415	414
Mundakayam	460	458	456	H.P. (1965)		334	335	335
Madhya Pradesh				Goa (1966)		324	326	327
Balaghat	479	478	478	Bhilai (1966)		313	315	310
Bhopal	481	483	480	Bhilwara ('66)		306	306	305
Gwalior	483	481	468	Chhindwara ('66)		257	254	253
Indore	484	488	483	Kothagudem ('66)		317	317	316
Maharashtra				Rourkela ('66)		324	331	327
Bombay	466	470	469	All India ('49)		559	562	559
Nagpur	488	484	479	-do- ('60)		460	462	460
Sholapur	501	508	521					

Figures in bracket indicate base year.

agreement by British Rail Board stop Wish you success.”

In another telegram to the British High Commission in New Delhi he said:-

“All India Loco Running staff Association representing eighty two thousand footplate staff of Indian railways protests against the unilateral scrapping of the wage agreement by British Rail-

Board which has forced associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and fireman to launch an industrial action stop We extend our solidarity and demand that the agreement be implemented stop Kindly convey our feelings to British Railways Board.”

*NB:-Other news on AILRSA's complaint to ILO etc. will be published in the next issue.

NATIONALISATION OF MULTINATIONAL DRUG COMPANIES

Dr. A.K.N. Sinha, **F.R.C.P.**, President of World Medical Association called for nationalisation of the multi-nationals in the drugs and pharmaceutical industry in India. Inaugurating the convention on Drug Industry and the Indian People, organised by Bihar State Sales Representatives' Union at Patna on February 7, Dr. Sinha made scathing criticism of the Government's policy of wooing the multinationals. He said that the dependence on the multinationals have not only subverted the public sector, but have also turned all efforts for self-sufficiency in fiasco. He said that even after thirty-four years of independence the Government has failed to provide health and drugs to the vast masses of the country. Supporting the demands of the pharmaceutical workers for nationalisation of the multinationals and reduction of drug prices, he expressed his expectations from the political parties

truly representing the Indian people to launch movements for the health of the teeming millions.

The Convention was presided over by S.R. Laskar, President of B.S.S.R. Union. C.S. Sharma, General Secretary of the Union moved the resolution demanding nationalisation of multi-national drug companies.

J.S. Majumdar, General Secretary of FMRAI and AICAPEF explained in details about the modus operandi of the multi-nationals to siphon out crores of money from the country. He squarely blamed the Indian monopolists as well who are collaborating with the multi-nationals in exploiting the people. He condemned the Government's policy to allow the multi-nationals to manufacture drugs even without license and marketing prohibited medicines in India. He pointed out that organised struggles of the pharmaceutical workers to expose the activities of the multi-

nationals have brought wrath on them and a large number of the leaders and activists have been dismissed from services. When workers have waged a struggle against such victimisations, the Government is trampling underfoot all democratic and trade union rights of the workers and thereby giving a filip to the monopolists, foreign and Indian. He denounced the strike-banning ESMA and hailed the eighty thousand pharmaceutical workers for joining nationwide strike on January 19 and called upon them to march ahead with the mass democratic movement in the country.

Among others who spoke were Dr. C. S. Sharma, President the Bihar State IMA, Dr. P. B. Prasad, immediate past president, Dr. K. Hazari, Vice-President, IMA, Yogeshwar Gope, Honorary President of N. G. O. Federation, N. K. Pathak of G. I. C. Hari-krishna of CITU, Chinta Prasad, General Secretary AICAPEF (Bihar) etc.

TURMOIL IN J.K. INDUSTRIES AT KANPUR

The insensate anti-labour policies of the management of the J.K. Group of industries have led to agitations in all their establishments at Kanpur.

Adamat attitude of the J.K. Jute Mill management has compelled the three thousand five hundred workers to go in for indefinite strike from February 13 on their long standing 29 point charter of demands submitted by the J.K. Jute Mill Mazdoor Panchayat (CITU). The demands include revision of wages, D A., grade and scale and house rents in line with the W.Bengal jute workers and reinstatement of the workers dismissed during the emergency.

In J.K. Rayon the management continues to harass the

workers with INTUC gangsters and the police, refusing to settle the two year old demands of the vast majority of the workers organised under CITU.

In J.K. Cotton, the management's manoeuvrings to deprive the workers of legitimate bonus have forced the workers on the path of agitations.

The J.K. Manufacturers (Kailash Mill) is under closure since the last several years. Thousands of workers thrown out of employment are on a grim struggle.

Addressing a mass meeting, Md. Jaef, the General Secretary of the J.K. Jute Mill Mazdoor Panchayat called upon the workers to carry on joint struggles against the Singhanias for their rightful demands.

STRIKE BY COAL WORKERS AGAINST JAN 19, VICTIMISATION

The National Coal Organisation (Govt. of India) Employees' Association (CITU) has given notice of strike to the Central Coal Fields Ltd., from any day after March 5, in protest against victimisations of the coal workers for participating in the all India strike on January 19 and against collusion of the management with INTUC in supporting anti-socials for intimidation of the workers and use of firearms during the strike.

Resist Wage Freeze

January 19, Strike

(From Front Page)

It may be recalled that even the General Council of INTUC held at Calcutta on December 27-28, 1981 recorded that "The council is of the considered view that any wage freeze will neither be feasible at this juncture.....to freeze wages alone, which if attempted, be counter productive". But it did not prevent the NFIR and FNPTO, affiliated to INTUC to accept this proposal.

The protests launched by various organisations had forced the Government to convene a formal meeting of the Standing Committee of JCM on 15.2.1982. In the meeting formal protests were lodged. The Cabinet Secretary had proposed some sort of option intended to divide the workers. This is an old game. Com. B.T.Ranadive and P.Ramamurti have issued another statement on February 16 in which they said,

"The CITU welcomes the resistance which has developed within the Staff side of the JCM against the infamous proposal of impounding of accrued incomes of the Central Government employees on account of grant of three instalments of due D.A. and other benefits arising out of a portion of D.A. with basic pay while imposing a moratorium on economic demands which were being discussed for the past two years. The Confederation of Central Government employees, leaders from NFPTE, Defence employees as well as a section within AIRF have stoutly opposed what was being passed on as an agreement between two sides.

The CITU denounces the proposal of implementing this for those who would accept the same, as this is intended to divide the ranks of the Central Government employees between those who are going to retire soon and those who have a long period of service ahead of them. The CITU appeals to the leadership of railway trade union in particular not to fall a prey to this divisive tactics of the Government as the present move presages a wage-freeze besides denial of the long pending just demands of the railway workers. Agreeing to such a proposal would tantamount to betrayal of the working class and weaken the united struggle that has been developed through the 4th June Convention at Bombay culminating in a glorious one-day countrywide general strike on January 19 last.

The CITU once again appeals to all Central Trade Unions to come together to render help to the Central Government employees in the larger interests of the working class of the country".

As days go on protests against this are mounting.

(FROM Centre Pages)

Jaipur, Kota, Bikaner, Alwar etc. observed bundh. Bus services were paralysed in the State. Apart from banks, LIC and GIC, hotel workers, students, teachers and pharmaceutical employees also joined the strike. Large scale arrests were made. Massive rallies and public meetings were held at several places.

Gujarat

Strike in the industrial area was by and large successful. Besides LIC, GIC, and the banks, workers in engineering industries massively joined the strike. Massive meetings have been reported from various places. Unprecedented strike and rally have been reported from Surat where thousands of municipal corporation workers including more than six hundred female sanitary staff joined the strike. Police arrested about 25 leaders from a meeting of the striking workers, which included leaders from LIC, GIC, Banks, professors, students, Mill mazdoors, Municipal Corporation and Central trade unions like CITU and AITUC. As the leaders were not released, the strike continued till 20th. After massive demonstrations in the Court, the leaders were ultimately released on 21st.

Maharashtra

Thousands of union activists were arrested throughout the State. Apart from LIC, GIC and banks, the strike was successfully observed by the Government employees. Eighty thousand pharmaceutical workers shook the citadal of the multinational drug companies in Bombay by joining the strike. Bombay dock workers also observed complete strike. Markets were closed.

Madhya Pradesh

Bundhs were observed in Ujjain, Indore, Jabalpur, Satna, Rewa, Sahdol, Bhind, Shivpuri, Seoni, Ambikapur, Neemuch, etc., where participation of the industrial workers were by and large successful. Employees of Provident Fund, Income Tax, P.W.D., P & T. etc. participated in day long dharnas and demonstrations at Indore, which was organised by the joint trade union council. Students, teachers, employees of the Agricultural University, also joined the strike. Eighty five percent of the workers in the heavy and light industries, engineering industries, and pharmaceutical industry joined the strike. Successful strike was reported from Gwalior and Bailadila also. Bauxite mines reported complete strike. In Bhopal markets were closed. The police started arrests from 15th January even.

Philippines Workers Congratulate Indian Workers For 19th January Strike

Comrade Bonifacio V. Tupaz Secretary General of Trade Unions of the Philippines and Allied Service, second largest trade union organisation with 4 lakh membership in Philippines in a letter to the CITU referred to the 19th January Strike as a "historic nation wide one-day solidarity action which made our workers cheer for the courageous

workers of India and gnash their teeth at the abominable reaction of Indira Gandhi's Government to what would have been a peaceful demonstration".

He further said, "with this letter allow me to express once more my firm solidarity with the workers and trade unions of India which you represent. The Filipino workers salute the Indian Workers".

CITU Condemns Repression on Workers in Turkey and Colombia

In a letter to the President of Turkey the CITU has condemned the persecution of 52 trade union leaders of Confederation of Turkish Progressive Trade Unions (DISK) and the Metal Workers' Federation (MADEN-15) organising meetings and demonstration demanding civil liberties and campaign against the danger of fascism in the country. The Military Prosecutor of Turkey has demanded capital punishment to these TU leaders.

The CITU demanded unconditional release of the leaders and restoration of T.U. and democratic rights to the working class of Turkey.

Manoranjan Roy, General secretary, West Bengal State Committee of CITU, on behalf of the working class of West Bengal, has also strongly condemned the military dictatorship of Turkey for their brutal repression unleashed upon the people of Turkey and demanded immediate release of all the trade union and political prisoners, cessation of torture and persecution and restoration of all civil rights and trade union rights.

In another communication to the President of Colombia the CITU has condemned the farcical trial of Comrade Jose Joaguin Romero, Executive Committee Member of the National Metal Workers Federation of Colombia (FENTRA METAL) imprisoned since May 1981. The Military Court is likely to impose on him 20 years imprisonment.

While demanding release of Com. Romero the CITU expressed full support to the struggle of the Colombian workers for trade union and democratic rights.

Sixth Congress of Korean Trade Unions

The Sixth Congress of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea was held in Pyongyang on 27-30 November 1981. About 2000 delegates and 1000 observers participated in the Congress.

The Congress elected Comrade Kim Bong Ju as Chairman and Comrades Kim Guk Sam, Mun Byong Pok, Kim Yong Nam and Kim Hi Su as Vice Chairman of the Central Committee.

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU sent a message of greeting to the Congress.

Conference of Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation

The second national conference of Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation was held at Dacca on December 24, 1981.

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU sent the following message to the General Secretary, Com. Nurul Anwar :

"Thank you for invitation stop regret inability to attend stop wish your Second National Conference success in defence of Trade Union Rights and workers standard of living stop friendship and solidarity between the People of our two countries is necessary for common advance and defeat of our enemy stop warm greetings."

Tenth World Trade Union Congress

Samar Mukherjee M.P., Treasurer CITU has left New Delhi on February 6 to participate in the Tenth World Trade Union Congress on February 10-15, 1982.

A report on this will be published in the next issue.

A Resolute 'No' To War

In a recent communication to CITU, Central Council of General Trade Union Confederation of Romania have explained the steps taken by them about building up a movement for peace and disarmament.

The CITU has pledged to carry forward the struggle against war danger in close collaboration with the world working class movement.

Successful January 19, Strike

(from page twelve)

Kerala :

It was a virtual bundh in Kerala also. Shops were closed and transport paralysed. Agricultural workers participated massively in the strike. The strike was widespread and overwhelmingly successful in all industries throughout the state including the private and public sectors. The reactionary forces and anti-socials led by the Congress (I), hoodlums made barbarous attacks on the strikers killing three CPI(M) cadres. The police under the minority Government made unprecedented show of brute forces, arresting about twenty thousand persons. But the unprovoked and determined toiling people led by the working class made the hartal a total success.

Karnataka :

In Karnataka also the strike was unprecedented. In Bangalore over one lakh workers in the public and private sectors joined the strike. All big and small factories in the state reported successful strike. Virtual bundh was observed in several places like Hubli, Mangalore, Dharwar, Davangere, Mysore, Belgaum, etc. Workers in the Kolar Gold Fields struck work. Banks, LIC and GIC remained completely closed. As per reports officers in the Hubli-Dharwar also joined the strike. A section of Karnataka Electricity Board also joined the strike in Udipi. Central and State Government employees expressed solidarity by wearing black badges. Over three thousand activists were arrested.

Andhra Pradesh

Despite massive arrests before the strike day and police firing at Mondikunta, killing two CPI (M) cadres, the strike had wide spread effect in Andhra Pradesh. Various places like Guntur, Pithapuram, Kothagudem, Razole, Tanuku, Vinukonda, Kovvur, Kakinada. Machilipatnam, Srikakulam Bapatala, Nellore, Vimavaram, Mandapeta, Markapur, Palakol, Khammam. Eluru, Tenali etc. observed successful bundh. In Vijayawada shops, business houses, hotels, etc remained closed. Majority of the shops remained closed in Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam. Strike was by and large successful in the industrial sectors and the mines. As per reports about seventy per cent of the workers joined the strike apart from complete strike in LIC, GIC and the Banks. Strike was also reported to be complete in IDPL, HAL. ECIL, BDL etc. At several places including Hyderabad brutal lathi charges were resorted to by the police.

Tamilnadu

The strike had a resounding success in the entire state. Apart from intimidations by the Government, the police resorted to firing in two villages in Tanjore district killing two agricultural labourers belonging to CPI(M). Also, random lathi charges were made by the police near Simco Meters Factory at Tiruchi where more than eighty per cent of the workers, mostly women joined the strike. About five thousand workers were arrested at different places. In Madras almost all industrial units including B & C. Mills, Ashok Leyland, Madras Rubber Factory, Metal Box, Union Carbide, Best and Co., Hindustan Teleprinters, Macneil and Magor, India Meter, Dunlop, English Electronic, Binny Engg., Standard Motors, etc. were on complete strike. Strike in the industrial estates in Ambattur and Guindy was also complete. Coimbatore, Thiruppur, etc. observed bundh. Workers in all textile, engineering, hosiery, powerlooms, etc. observed successful strike. Similar was the picture in the plantations in Coimbatore, and Nilgiri districts. Various textile units, tannery and handloom workers in Madurai district also joined the strike. In Salem district strike was successful in the magnesite factories and textile mills, municipal and power distribution workers also joining the strike. More than thirty thousand beedi, tannery, textile and municipal workers joined the strike in North Arcot district. Successful strike has been reported from the Ranipet industrial complex and Arkonam Steel factory. Workers of EID Parry Sugar factory, Ceramic factory and other industrial units joined the strike in South Arcot district. Similar reports came from Kumari and Tirunelveli districts. Electricity and transport workers also participated in the strike. Banks, LIC and GIC observed complete strike. Central and State Government employees expressed solidarity through demonstrations and wearing of black badges.

Protest day was observed in the State on January 22 against police firing and repressions by holding massive rallies and meetings under the banner of the State campaign committee and sending protest telegrammes to the Chief Minister.

Pondicherry

A total bundh was observed in Pondicherry on January 19. Workers in the industrial units in banks, insurance and government offices participated in the strike. Shops, hotels and commercial offices were closed. Hundreds of workers were arrested. (On page fifteen)

SUCCESSFUL STRIKE

(from page fourteen)
Andaman Nicobar

The strike in its depth and sweep made a tremendous impact in the Andaman Nicobar Islands also. Facing all wild threats, impediments and massive police posse and even being refused permission for using mikes, mass processions, rallies and demonstrations were organised all over the island from Campbell Bay to Diglipur on January 19 under the banner of the Co-ordination Committee of Government Employees and Workers. Grant of Andaman special allowance and resoration of credit note facilities were the additional demands voiced by the workers apart from the thirteen point demands of National Campaign Committee. At Port Blair a colourful procession was taken out participated by various union cadres and Government employees including those organised under the DMK Public Workers Labour Union and Andaman Sarkar Karshik Karmachari Sangh, which culminated at Ratnam market and held a rally. The rally demanded withdrawal of NSA and EMSA. The administration issued a circular prohibiting employees to take leave on January 19.

January 19 thus recorded one glorious chapter in the chequered history of working class movement in India. The irresistible urge for unity was demonstrated at a time when the situation demanded it to fight the successive authoritarian measures unleashed by the government and to keep the divisive forces at bay. Those who could not come under the vortex of the strike would surely join the mainstream in the future struggles. Preparations are afoot to make the all India protest day against the repressions on February 23 another successful mass action against the government. Let the second convention proposed to be held in the middle of April embrace still wider sections of all working and toiling people to surge ahead to force a change in the Government policies.

UNION BANK EMPLOYEES' STRIKE

Union Bank employees all over India went on a day's strike on February 16 against management's victimisation of trade union workers. The strike call was given by the All India Federation of Union Bank employees.

The Bank Employees' Federation of W. Bengal organised a mass rally on the day at B.B.D. Bagh, Calcutta in support of the strike. Addressing the rally, Naresh Das, General Secretary of the Federation called upon the workers to carry forward the struggle till the management accedes to the demands.

The All India Federation of Union Bank Employees have decided to go in for strike again on March 5 if the disputes are not resolved.

IN PARLIAMENT

BOMBAY TEXTIL STRIKE

On February 19, Dipen Ghosh M. P. CPI(M) said that "About 2 lakh textile workers in Bombay are on strike since 18th January, 1982 and as a consequence of this strike, six million man-days have been lost so far. Not only so many million man-days have been lost. but the textile industry being a revenue earning industry, government revenue and foreign exchange have also been lost."

Indicting the Govt. for its refusal to negotiate with the leaders of the strike on the ground that the management has already entered into an agreement, with a "so called recognised union" he said "But the fact that the strike is total fully proves that the union which has been recognised has no following among the workers. If this union has a majority following naturally no other leader could have kept so many workers away for so much of time. There is a statement that some strong arm methods are used. I am not at all sure whether strong arm methods have been used or not. At least, I can say that only a few workers could be kept away from duty by strong arm methods and not the entire lot of textile workers in Bombay. Strong arm methods cannot keep all the workers away from duty. So, this is not correct."

Questioning the Govt. statement that the textile workers have been getting increased pay, he said "It is true that the textile workers get around Rs. 650 or so a month. But is it not less than what an engineering worker gets in Bombay? It is not less than what other comparable industrial workers get in Bombay? In this regard, I would have been happy if the Hon. Minister had stated how the millowners have been amassing huge profits.

Justifying the workers' demand, he said that "So if there is a demand by the textile workers that let there be an interim relief of Rs. 200 or at least to bring them on par with the workers in a comparable industry, the Government should pay heed to this demand more sympathetically than simply saying that the demand of Rs. 200 is a very high demand".

He concluded that "The Central Govt. is also directly incurring loss as the National Textile Corporation is also involved in this strike. They own certain mills there. So, when the Minister is so anxious in seeing that the strike is ended at no time, I would appeal to him to kindly convene a meeting of all central trade unions, who have got interest in the textile industry in Bombay and evolve a formula on how to end the strike".

On Bonded, Migrant And Casual Labour

The first meeting of the Central Standing Committee on Bonded, Migrant and Casual Labour, constituted by the Labour Department, Government of India was held at Delhi on January 13. Jagjit Singh Layallpuri attended the meeting on behalf of CITU. The meeting was to discuss about the problems, identification and rehabilitation of the bonded, migrant and casual labour. But the report placed by the Labour Department in the meeting was inadequate for a full discussion on the subject.

Jagjit Singh Layallpuri impressed upon that the term "bonded and migrant labour" is to be interpreted more widely to cover all who because of poverty, destitution and lack of opportunities of proper employment at their places of residence are forced to work on less than normal and statutory wages and are denied the minimum facilities of housing, sanitation, health

care, etc. such labour has generally to migrate from their home for employment. They are recruited by the contractors and their agents mainly in the various projects of the Government and Semi-Government agencies. Layallpuri pointed out that such labour was engaged in Delhi itself in the construction works for the Asian Games. He further pointed out that the problem of bonded and migrant labour exists because even after 34 years of independence vast areas and regions of the country still remained utterly backward and undeveloped with the result that the people in these areas are suffering from abject poverty. Therefore emphasis must be given for the development of these areas so that suitable employment can be provided to the people at their places of residence. He also suggested that the committee should supervise the conditions of employment of such labour. He said

that most of the bonded and migrant labour belonged to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Regarding casual labour, he pointed out that the largest number of casual labour is under the Government itself, like in railways, P.W.D., various projects, etc. Through unfair labour practices their services are discontinued after 89 days and they remain casual and unprotected year after year in the same job. Government undertakings themselves do not abide by the model standing order in violation of the directive of the Labour Department. Layallpuri squarely placed the point that the model standing order for casual labour must be made applicable to all the Government undertakings forthwith.

The meeting finally decided to constitute a small sub-committee to study and deal with the specific issues and complaints regarding bonded, migrant and casual labour.

Tripartite Settlement In Medimpex

Led by Medimpex Workers' Union (CITU), the workers of Medimpex (India) Private Ltd. compelled the management to sign a tripartite agreement on January 12 at Patna. The company manufacturing pharmaceutical products laid off the workers for the second time even after a bipartite settlement was reached with the union a few months back. The undaunted workers launched indefinite dharna and held massive gate meetings daily alongwith other fraternal trade unions, forcing the management to attend con-

ciliations before the Dy. Labour Commissioner and sign the tripartite agreement. As per terms of the settlement the workers will get the arrears of wages. It was also decided that the management will refer all future disputes to the President of the union, C.S. Sharma before taking any punitive actions against the workers. Failing solution, the matters will be referred to the Dy. Labour Commissioner.

Indefinite Strike In Barsua Mines

Workers of Barsua Iron Mines under the Rourkela Steel Plant in Orissa went on indefinite strike from December 25 protesting against unilateral change in

the service conditions and increase in electricity charges.

Since the inception of the mines in 1958 the workers were paying electricity charges on point basis in subsidised rate due to extreme cold in the mining area. Suddenly the management took unilateral decisions to withdraw all existing privileges, changed the service conditions of the workers and enhanced the electricity charges by 600 to 700 percent. Joint struggles were launched by the CITU, HMS and INTUC unions through a joint action committee. All conciliation meetings having failed, the joint action committee called for the indefinite strike.