

THE WORKING CLASS



MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

VOL I. No 11

JULY 1972

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Fight The New Menace Of Automation

The Dandekar Committee on Automation has blatantly recommended opening of floodgates of automation in the country which will further push up the skyrocketing figures of educated unemployment to an alarming level.

With the registered unemployment crossing the figures of 51 lakhs the unemployment in urban areas alone is estimated to be above 2 crores. *The Economic Times* in an editorial dated 12th June has estimated that the unemployment in West Bengal alone reached the 4 million mark. The educated unemployment is stated to be above 25 percent of the total urban unemployment.

The full Report of the Dandekar Committee is not yet available. However, from the Press reports it appears that "The Chairman of the Committee, Prof. V. M. Dandekar, told reporters that the Committee had accepted in principle the need for using computers. A total ban on their use, he said, meant logically going back to primitive type of economy." (*The Economic Times*, June 3). The learned professor, however, did not care to explain how the absence of computers would take us to primitive type of economy. A poor argument to serve the interest of the big business.

A "study" made by the Committee is supposed to have showed that the impact on unemployment of establishments like LIC had been only marginal. The Committee appears to have deliberately ignored that after the introduction of automation in LIC new recruitment has been reduced from 7652 in 1962-63 to 858 in 1969-70. Though the total business increased from Rs. 3051 to Rs. 6303 crores during this period the employment increased only from 37,377 to 40,509 ! Moreover, during this period the LIC has taken up the work of General Insurance for which about 1700 employees were given jobs. This clearly shows that the computer has eaten up thousands of jobs in LIC which the Committee failed to see for reasons best known to them.

Similarly after the introduction of automation in foreign oil companies a large number of workers had to lose their jobs.

Committee Set Up

The Government of India set up a Committee on Automation in July 1969 with R. Venkatraman as the Chairman. Subsequent to the resignation of Venkatraman from the Chairmanship of the Committee, Prof. V. M. Dandekar was appointed as its Chairman in July 1971.

To boost the profits of the big business the Government granted licence to IBM monopoly to manufacture 100 computers every year. A proposal to manufacture computers in the public sector is also being given a final shape by the Government of India. The recommendations of Dandekar Committee are only meant to fulfil the requirements of the steps earlier taken by the Government. This example only highlights the fictitious character of the "Bekari Hatao" slogan of Indira Gandhi Government.

The Committee's recommendation that "the use of computers in industrial establishments should have the prior agreement of their workers" is just an eye-wash. The management can easily get a company union to sign an agreement approving automation. With the formation of National Council of Trade Unions by pro-Indira Gandhi T. U. Centres there will be less difficulties for the managements on this account. After all, the representatives of AITUC, INTUC and HMS have signed the Dandekar Committee Report.

In case no union agrees with the proposal to introduce computer and no agreement could be reached between the management and workers the Report suggests that the matter should be referred to a tripartite machinery at the national level comprising representatives of employers and trade unions. This so-called National level machinery will consist of class-collaborationist persons who will be readily amenable to pressure from the employers. Thus the whole idea of consultation is a desire to cheat the workers.

According to the Report even the farce of consultation with the union is not necessary if the computer is installed in the name of "re-

search and scientific purposes."

The Committee's recommendation that regional computer centres should be started in public sector to enable private sector to use them will further aggravate the unemployment situation. Already a large number of computers have created havoc in the country. In August 1971 there were 140 computers in India of which 55 were in the private sector, 39 in public sector undertakings, 10 in Government departments and 36 in centres of "research and development..". Majority of the computers are in a few industrial centres like Bombay (35), Delhi (20), Calcutta (14), Bangalore (11), and Madras (7). Statewise the largest number of computers (39) was in Maharashtra followed by Delhi (20) and West Bengal (18).

The most distasteful aspect of the Committee is the role played by the AITUC leadership. Its representative, Satish, Loomba did not bother to write a note of dissent and endorsed the views of the Committee.

Dange in his letter to the Union Labour Minister on September 11, 1970 announced the withdrawal of the AITUC nominee from the committee on Automation. Soon after this withdrawal the AITUC journal *Trade Union Record* wrote in its issue dated October 2, 1970 :

"The All-India Trade Union Congress and several organisations of professional workers have been opposing the use of computers and automation as these contrivances displace workers on a large scale. They are all the more dangerous in a country like India with its huge army of the unemployed. Use of these activities constitutes an attack against the working class."

All this is now conveniently for-

gotten and workers are asked to accept automation and bargain for nominal concessions.

The working class of India and the trade unions who oppose automation must unitedly resist this menace of automation and build up a powerful movement to oppose the introduction of these job killing devices.

Let the ranks of AITUC and HMS realise the dangerous position taken by their leaders and join the movement for ban against automation. If the recommendations are allowed to be implemented the unemployment in the country would be further increased in a menacing manner.

It is only through joint struggles that the menace can be fought and stopped.

HMP Leaders Condemn the National Council of Trade Unions

Sadashiv Bagaitkar, President of the 15000-strong Poona Labour Union affiliated to Hind Mazdur Panchayat, sharply criticised the National Council of Trade Unions comprising of the INTUC, the AITUC, and the HMS.

Mr. Bagaitkar said that as a matter of policy, the workers' representatives should not accept the managerial appointments in public sector undertakings and other organisations.

According to press reports it is learnt that the Socialist Party has asked S.M. Joshi to quit the directorship of the Reserve Bank. Though belated the realisation of the Socialist Party leadership about the futility of joining such schemes of the Government is welcome.

Earlier, in a statement issued to the Press on May 22 B.R. Dandavate,

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W. Bengal State Council Of CITU Meets **Unite To Resist The Offensive Of The Ruling Class**

The first session of State Council of CITU West Bengal Committee was held in the Indian Association Hall, Calcutta on 17th and 18th June. 262 members representing all industries and all districts participated in the meeting. Md. Ismail, M.P. President of CITU West Bengal Committee presided over the meeting. The president in his opening speech briefly described the purpose of convening the Council meeting and problems faced by the movement. After paying homage to martyrs the session began.

B. T. Ranadive, President of CITU inaugurated the meeting.

In his inaugural speech, B. T. Ranadive stressed on the international character of the movement of the working class led by CITU. He stressed the importance of conducting united struggle in support of the heroic people of Vietnam against American imperialism. He regretted that despite appeals by CITU, AITUC and others did not respond.

New Type of Repression

He then pointed out that terror has been unleashed by the ruling class against the organised working class movement of West Bengal as the working class have challenged the power of the ruling class. He wanted the gathering to remember that this was not the type of repression that the working class faced in early days during strike or any movement. Semi-fascistic attack is launched against militant trade union movement led by CITU and other left trade unions. So, he said that this was a new phase. The

trade union movement is faced with grave problem. So, new outlook has to be developed in order to carry on trade union movement in this period. He then referred to the formation of National Council of Trade Unions for disrupting the militant unity of the working class. In conclusion, he pointed out that the object of CITU was not only to fight for economic demands but also to fight for ending exploitation and establish socialism in the country.

Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary of West Bengal CITU placed the report.

Salient Features of the Report

The report stated that the council was meeting at a time when courageous people of Vietnam are fighting glorious battles against American aggression and achieving new successes. It demanded withdrawal of American forces from South East Asia. The report demanded that India Government should forthwith recognise Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and take effective steps against American imperialism. It greeted the heroic people of Bangladesh for establishment of sovereign Republic of Bangladesh. The report dealt at length with the semi-fascist attack carried on by Congress hoodlums in connivance with police and administration against the organised working class of West Bengal. It stated that after the last election which was won by the Congress through fraud and terror, 45 have been murdered. 300 unions have been forcibly captured.

Thousands are being prevented from going to their homes. The managements have dismissed many workers on the plea of their non-attendance. Important industrial belts have been subjected to barbarous attack by Congress goondas. Normal trade union functioning has become impossible in these areas. Complaints to the Government and the police have proved to be absolutely of no use. Though the unions led by CITU have become main targets of attack, unions belonging to other left trade unions are also being attacked; even the AITUC unions are not being spared though AITUC leaders are collaborating with the Government. So, the report pointed out, the trade union movement in West Bengal is faced with new problems—the main question is how to keep contact with the mass of workers. The report then pointed out about the united movement carried on by the CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC against terror. The report stressed that despite terror, the possibility of organising joint movement in this State was bright—the broad masses of people can be mobilised against price rise, unemployment and taxation. The report pointed out that the ruling class is passing through acute economic crisis so conflict with the broad masses of people regarding the policy of the ruling class is bound to happen. So, united struggle can be built up.

The report dealt with solidarity movement organised in other states—Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra, U.P. and other states. More than 18 thousand rupees have been sent by CITU State Committees of different States for helping the suffering brethren of West Bengal.

The report then dealt with the industrywise united movement in

Jute, Textile and elsewhere. It pointed out that it is due to the persistent effort of CITU affiliated Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union that united movement in Jute was possible and important victory for the jute workers was achieved gaining Rs.235.00 as minimum wage. The report pointed out about the importance of organising united movement in Engineering, Tea-garden, State Transport, Coal, Steel, Port and Dock industries, besides Jute and Textile.

The report pointed out about the conspiracy of the India Government for banning strikes and imposing compulsory arbitration on the workers and stressed the importance of fighting against this new menace. It also stressed the importance of organising movement on the question of unemployment and closed factories. It pointed out about the serious situation created in West Bengal due to continuous draught and demanded adequate relief measures for the affected people.

The report appealed to all the Central Trade Unions for organising united movement.

The report stressed the importance of functioning the unions democratically. It gave special importance about the task of carrying political education and propaganda among the workers.

More than forty workers and organisers belonging to various areas and industries participated in the discussion that followed. The speakers narrated about the terror and attack mounted by the anti-social elements belonging to Congress (R) and the police. They also spoke about the heroic resistance by the workers in many places. Some speakers narrated about their valuable experience gained in this period—they stated how unity even with Congress and AITUC led

workers are growing in some places, in factories on the common issues affecting the workers. Bimalananda Mukherjee, Biren Roy, Binoy Choudhury, Haridas Malakar and others spoke in the meeting.

New Phase

Jyoti Basu in his speech stressed about the new problem, new experience in this period. He pointed out that the attack by the ruling class was and is for political purposes. So, he pointed out that new method and tactics have to be adopted for meeting this challenge thrown by the ruling class. He stated that the situation has to be faced boldly and at the same time flexibility in tactics should be adopted.

Monoranjan Roy in his reply said that the purpose of the attack

Next Issue will Contain MOCKERY OF MATERNITY BENEFITS IN INDIA

By Vimal Ranadive

is to disrupt and smash the T. U. movement by removing and isolating the leadership of respective unions from the masses of workers. The main task before us is therefore to keep and maintain constant contact with the masses of workers, politicalise them and lead united movements.

He announced that the State CITU would bring out a monthly journal.

The meeting sent greetings to different State Committees of CITU for organising solidarity campaign.

Resolutions were adopted in the meeting condoling the deaths of Trade Union workers and leaders, on martyrs, on Vietnam, on the demand for confiscation of American capital in India, in support of peasants' demands and peasants' struggle, on reopening of closed factories, coalmines, tea-gardens and establishments, on release of

political prisoners, protesting against formation of national council of trade unions, on the demand for jobs or unemployment benefits for all unemployed persons, condemning the proposed legislation on compulsory arbitration, protesting against the ordinance banning strike in Bangladesh, condemning killing of workers in Pakistan, on improvement of ESI benefits etc.

Decisions

The report was unanimously adopted and the following decisions were taken:

1. Take steps to extend and strengthen the united struggle against terror and repression and attacks on workers, employees and trade unions. The working class should take lead to unite all sections of the people—peasants, students, youths, women and the democratic people in the struggle to defend democracy and trade union rights.

2. To intensify the drive for political education of the workers organised by CITU unions and take all practical steps to maintain contact with mass of the workers, to protect trade unions and the workers.

3. To unite all sections of the exploited masses on the demand for reduction of prices and taxes, reopening of all closed factories, coal-mines, tea-gardens and establishments, rapid industrialisation to give job to all unemployed persons and pending that payment of unemployment benefit, and radical land reform.

4. To organise conventions, meetings and demonstrations in various areas and factories jointly with other trade unions and mass organisations against terror and attacks on trade unions and democratic mass organisations, against

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The Management Of Jay Engineering Works Violating Court Orders

The workers belonging to Jay Engineering Workers Union (CITU) of Jay Engineering Works' Ltd. went to resume their duties on June 8 pursuant to the ad-interim injunction issued by the First Munsif of Alipore. But the Management refused to allow them to join their duties on the ground that "the matter is being looked into by higher authorities and further decision will be communicated".

The said workers were forcibly prevented by the rowdies and gangsters of Congress (R) from reporting to their duties after the election and the Management of Jay Engineering Works terminated their service on the ground that the incumbents "have left the service of the company of their own".

The injunction was issued on the prayer of the workers restraining the Management of Jay Engineering Works Ltd. and Usha Sewing Machine Works from giving effect to the notice of the companies on April 28 wherein they terminated the services of the workers.

The Court Order was duly served on the Companies. The workers concerned also showed the Management Certified copies of the Court order and informed them in writing about the injunction when they were refused to resume their duties.

When the workers went to the factory, about 50 rowdies—mostly outsiders, surrounded them in presence of police and security staff of the factory and abused and threaten them for coming to resume their duties with Court Order.

List of Contributors to Relief Fund for Evicted Workers in West Bengal

	Rs.
1. Ameer Batcha, Madras-26	40'00
2. Janamadi Narayan Sabha, Hardoi (U.P.)	20'00
3. Amar Chatterjee, Kambahal (Orissa)	50'00
4. The Nellore Co-operative Spinning Mills Workers' Union, Nellore-1	184'00
5. The Times of India & Allied Publications Employees' Union, Bombay.	201'00
6. Oriental Power Cables Employees' Union, Kotah, Rajasthan.	51'00
7. A Friend	10'00
8. Kerala State Committee of CITU (Trivandrum)	500 00
9. Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU (Madurai)	3,350'00
10. National General Kamgar Union, Thana, (Maharashtra)	75'00
11. M.C.I.C. Labour Union, Salem Dist.	30'00
12. Neyveli Lignite Workers' Union,	200'00
13. J. K. Rayon Workers Union, (Kanpur, U. P.)	101'00
14. Maharashtra State Committee of CITU, (Bombay)	12,500'00
15. M. Sreerangan, Methur Dam R. S. (Tamilnadu)	35'00
16. Mysore Aramane Nowkarara Sangha, (Mysore-1)	190'00
17. Salem Dist. Magnesite Labour Union, Salem-5 (T.N.)	70'00
18. Textile Workers' Union, Tirunelveli Dist.	10'00
19. Chingleput Dist. Committee of CITU,	600'00
20. Hindusthan Teleprinters Employees' Union, Madras	401'00
21. Ali Shalbar, Amravati, Maharashtra	4'00
22. South Kanara Tile Workers' Union, (Mangalore)	300'00
23. Cashewnut & Allied Workers' Union, „	100 00
24. Mangalore Workers' Union „	40'00
25. S. K. Press Workers' Union „	25'00
26. Beedi Kelasagarara Sangha „	25'00
27. Coondapur Kelasagarara Sangha, Coondapur	10'00
28. Bangalore Dist. Textile Workers' Union, (Bangalore)	35'00
29. Bangalore Engineering & General Workers Union	22'00
30. John Fowler Employees Union, Bangalore	50 00
31. Sm. Monorama Bai D. Umbarkar, Amravati, Maharashtra	1'00

We thank unions and comrades for their contributions. We expect much more contributions from several other unions who have not yet paid so far.

Durgapur Still Dogged By Many Ills

Of late, the problems of Durgapur Steel Plant have come to the limelight again and the very old story of labour trouble, inter-union rivalry, the existence of pressure groups is being cooked up by the press. As a panacea for the chronic disease, a three-tier Joint Consultative Council represented by three Central Trade Unions, the DSP Management and the State Government has been prescribed.

Whatever be the objective of this Council, this sort of forum cannot remedy the real maladies—the breakdown of the plant and machinery, technical defects, irregular supply of raw materials and other allied problems responsible for the low rate of production. The INTUC and officers' association have also denounced the management's bogey of labour trouble.

The Public Accounts Committee's report on Steel shows only marginal loss of man-days in DSP due to labour trouble in comparison with the number of man-days lost for other reasons. Though there was no labour trouble for the last six months, production in DSP could not be geared up. During the fortnight ending May 20, Coke Ovens batteries had to be sealed, Blast Furnaces had to be switched off and only 3 to 4 Furnaces in the SMS could be fed by the Coke Ovens and Blast Furnaces. The management explained that since the Hammer Mill and the Coal Handling plant was out of order, the production figure could not be maintained. But this was not the only reason. The Coke Oven, the mother plant in a Steel Mill, has been causing considerable loss in

production. Dismantled battery is still lying idle for years together.

Imported Fire Bricks which involved a considerable amount of foreign exchange caught fire thrice and again these had to be imported. This type of costly firebricks are kept in the open. In reconstructing the battery, off-grade cement was used. When it failed, the battery was piled with cement. As a result of this, the life of reconstructed battery will not go beyond 10 years. Now, when two batteries of the cokeoven out of four are out of commission, how the production target can be achieved is anybody's guess.

The report and recommendation of the Pandey Commission spotlighted the whole episode. In a widely-circulated booklet published by the CITU Union, the attention of all was drawn to the condition of plant and machinery of DSP. The situation has further aggravated in recent weeks. Corruption, for instance, has been more rampant than ever before.

Industrial relation in DSP was never happy and there was a time prior to 1966 when HSEU, the representative body of the overwhelming majority of workers, was not allowed to start even a dialogue on matters related to workers. However, they have established their rights through sustained struggles and sacrifices. But even now, the rapport between the management and the CITU-led Union is not conducive to better industrial relations. The management by-

passes the recognised Union on many occasions and encourages disruption in its own calculated way.

Workers Assaulted

Surprisingly enough, immediately after the election in March 1972, organised gangsterism has been let loose on the workers, both in the Steel Township and inside the Plant. Workers are being physically assaulted inside the plant in broad daylight. Outsiders with arms are having free access to the plant. It is a wonder how they are intruding under the very nose of the CISF. Identity cards of workers are being snatched off at gunpoint and the office of the CITU-led Union was thrice ransacked by the Goondas.

At a time when such assaults are being mounted daily an impression is being created that the forum of Joint Consultative Council will solve all the problems. The CITU has decided to participate in the Council but, at the same time, it wants to make it clear that this joint forum is not the only panacea for the deep-rooted ailments of the Durgapur Steel Plant. Unless the management changes its attitude to the workers and comes forward with an open mind on the maladies of the plant, improvement of production and establishment of industrial peace will be as remote as ever.

But, for the beginning, the Steel Plant Authorities and the Government will have to openly condemn the activities of the rowdies, must take effective action and ensure the security of the workers. And this will be the first step towards peace in the plant.

The Courts And The Determination Of The Wages

By Arun Prokas Chatterjee

A revolutionary trade unionist need not be reminded that, in a capitalist society, wages tend to revolve round the fulcrum of the subsistence level. That is to say, it tend to be such wages as would be necessary to buy the bare necessities of life

Is there no role then left to the Courts and Tribunals in the determination of wages of the workmen?

For one thing, it should be made clear that judicial determination of the wages are necessarily conditioned by the social system and the best of the judges even behave like "ineffectual angels fluttering their wings in vain."

But, as Marx has shown in "Wages, Price and Profit" the value of the labour power is formed by two elements, the one merely physical and the other historical and social. The mere physical elements is provided by the value of the barest necessities of life which would be necessary for a workman to maintain his physical existence and also to perpetuate his family. That is the ultimate value of labour. But the social and historical element of the value of labour is determined by the traditional and social standard of the life of the workmen. "It is not mere physical life, but it is the satisfaction of certain wants springing from social conditions in which people are placed and reared up". This historical or social element can be contracted or expanded or altogether extinguished. Trade Unions in their fight against the employers, both in Courts and out of Courts, in effect struggle to expand this element of

the wages, or to limit the employer's attempt to encroach on this.

It was after the second World War that the struggle of the workers for increasing their wages reached an intensity that was unknown in the pre-war years. The Minimum Wages Act, the Industrial Disputes Act, were enacted to cushion the post-war upsurge of the working class.

The Industrial Truce Resolution of 1948 laid down that labour should be paid fair wages. Article 43 of Constitution laid down the Directive Principle that the State shall endeavour to secure to all workmen a

Legal Notes

"living wage". The 15th Labour Conference formulated that the minimum wage should be need-based and the Fair Wages Committee Report introduced the three different concepts—minimum wage, fair wage and living wage.

The Labour Appellate Tribunal has accepted the principles enunciated by the Fair Wages Committee in B & C. Mills Case (1952 Labour Appellate Cases at page 490-1951 (2) Labour Law Journal at page 314.)

In the case of Crown Aluminium Works Vrs. Their Workmen, reported in All India Report 1958 Supreme Court at page 30, the Supreme Court eloquently referred to the "principal objective of the welfare State to secure to all citizens justice, social and economic", but further held that such social and economic justice is the ultimate ideal and the dispute as to wage structure has to

be settled in a way which would do justice to both labour and capital.

It is not understood how justice can be done to both labour and capital. Capital's raison d'être is its capacity to extract surplus value which is determined by the amount of unpaid labour. Justice to labour would mean that it must not be exploited, that is to say, all its labour must be paid by the capitalist, while the justice for a capitalist would mean that it must be allowed to extract as much unpaid labour as possible. It is not for the Courts to solve the insoluble contradiction between labour and capital which can only be solved by abolishing capitalist system.

Yet the Courts have insisted on the necessity to pay to the workmen the minimum wage irrespective of the industry's capacity to pay. And what is the amount of this minimum wage? In the case of Unichoyi and others Vrs. State of Kerala, reported in All India Reporter 1962 Supreme Court at page 12, Mr. Justice Gajendragadkar has observed, "... since the capacity of the employer to pay is treated as irrelevant it is but right that no addition should be made to the components of the minimum wage which would take the minimum wage near the lower level of the fair wage, but the contents of this concept must ensure for the employees not only his sustenance and that of his family but must also preserve his efficiency as a worker".

The Fair Wages Committee has indicated four factors for determining the fair wage, namely—

- i) Productivity of labour.
- ii) Prevailing rates of wages in the same or similar occupations in the same or neighbouring localities.
- iii) The level of national income and its distribution.

iv) The place of the industry in the economy of the country.

In the B & C Mills Case, the Labour Appellate Tribunal has said that the assessment on the basis of the first factor is difficult and uncertain. As to the place of the industry in the economy of the country the Labour Appellate Tribunal has observed in the same case that even with regard to such a well-organised industry as the Textile Industry it is difficult in the absence of suitable data to decide that question.

Regarding the prevailing rate of wages which is the second factor for the Fair Wages Committee, the Industrial Tribunal has held in the case of Burma Shell, Bombay, Vrs. Their Workmen in Port Okha (reported in 1962 (1) Labour Law Journal at page 297) that there are certain difficulties in attaching importance to that factor.

And, lastly, in regard to the level of national income and its distribution, no court has so far considered that factor in determining fair wage.

The Supreme Court has, however, held that the capacity of the industry to pay which is, according to the Supreme Court, an irrelevant consideration in the determination of the minimum wage is all-important as far as the fair wage is concerned. In the case of Ahmedabad Mill Owners' Association Vrs. Textile Labour Association, reported in All India Reporter 1966 Supreme Court at page 497, that Court has held :

"... in trying to recognise and give effect to the demand for a fair wage, including the payment of dearness allowance to provide for a d e u q a t e neutralisation

against the ever-increasing rise in the cost of living, industrial adjudication must always take into account the problem of the additional burden which such wage structure would impose upon the employer and ask itself whether the employer can reasonably be called upon to bear such burden..."

And, even where a certain wage structure has been settled on the capacity of the industry to pay in a particular period, if that capacity dwindles, the Courts should not be chary of re-examining the question, though, "once a wage structure is fixed, employees are reluctant to face a reduction in the content of their wage packet"

As far as the living wage is concerned, the Supreme Court in the case of Standard Vaccum Refining Company of India Ltd. Vrs. its workmen and another reported in All India Reporter 1961 Supreme Court at page 895 has held that the living wage should be such as would enable the workmen to claim the optimum diet as prescribed by Dr. Aykroyd, to have the requirements as to clothing and residences recognised in the tripartite resolution widened because those requirements are only appropriate only in regard to need-based wage, and also to have their requirements of good education for children, some amusement and some expenditure for self-development. In that case, the Court held that even the highest average of Rs. 370.11 paid by the company to its clerical staff is much below the standard of the living wage.

Thus, the living wage and, to a large extent, the fair wage also remain ideals to be attained in some uncertain future, depending on vague and uncertain factors like, "productivity of labour, prevailing

rates of wages... the level of national income and its distribution, the place of the industry in the economy of the country."

It cannot but be so, because in the exploitative capitalist society the law of wages of the workmen inexorably makes them revolve round the equilibrium position of such wages only as are sufficient for the workmen to maintain his barest efficiency and just to rear his family to supply the necessary labour force to the capitalists. The wages rise and fall but always their state of rest is the minimum wages which are only sufficient to keep their body and soul together. And the Courts cannot also break through the iron ring of the law.

I do not for a moment suggest that Trade Unions' fights for higher wages are therefore of no avail. In fact, Marxism has never tolerated such an attitude to economic fights. The entire tract of Marx's Wages, Price and Profit was, in fact, a reply to the contention of John Weston, a member of the First International, who maintained that higher wages cannot improve the condition of the workers and that Trade Unions' activity must be considered detrimental to the workers. Marx said in reply, "... the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the value of labour more or less to its minimum limit. Such being the tendency of things in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation" (Marx, Wages, Price and Profit).

It must be observed with regret that the Courts could not yet be persuaded to grant the wages which are not merely the physical minimum but also something more with which the workers can provide for education for their children, and adequate food, clothing and shelter, or, in other words, the "need-based" minimum wages formulated by the 15th Labour Conference or the Fair wages formulated by the Fair Wage Committee. The Supreme Court has held that such fair wage will depend on the capacity of the industry to pay. The future progress of Trade Union struggle and Trade Union Legislation as well as industrial adjudication is along this path of ensuring to the workers need-based minimum wage irrespective of the capacity of the industry to pay.

Minister's Assurances No Help To CSTC Employees

The offensive launched against State Transport Employees in Calcutta since March 15 shows no signs of abatement. Till date one worker has been murdered, 45 have been injured in assaults, 25 implicated in false cases, 115 prevented from reporting to work, and several hundred evicted from their homes.

What is most surprising is that the Government's assurances are of no help at all. A delegation of Calcutta State Transport Employees' Union led by Monoranjan Roy, M.P. President, Md. Ismail, M.P., Vice-President and Narayan Saha, General Secretary called on West Bengal Minister for Transport, G.S. Sohanpal on June 6 and demanded securi-

ty to the State Transport employees. The Minister undertook to take necessary steps so that all employees could return to work.

However, when 70 employees reported to work on June 10 at 6 different depots with prior notice, members of the Congress Union in collaboration with rowdies stepped in and threaten them with dire consequences. The workers now run the risk of losing their jobs for continued absence.

The Minister has been informed of the incidents, but he has taken no move so far. The ILO, Geneva is also being posted with the developments here.

STOP THIS GROSS INSULT TO INDIAN SEAMEN

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU in a letter to Union Labour Minister Shri R. K. Khadilkar has urged him to convene a meeting of all the trade unions concerned to discuss the gross insult done to the Indian seamen by the Fair Practices Committee of the International Transport Workers' Federation which has categorised Indian seamen as "Crews of convenience" depriving them facilities available to other seamen in Western countries.

The following is the full text of the letter dated 1st June, 1972.

"Perhaps you are aware of the decision of the Fair Practices Committee of the International Transport Workers' Federation treating Indian seamen as crews of convenience which will deprive Indian seamen of the benefits relating to wages and service conditions available to seamen belonging to

Western countries. As the Economic Times dated May 25, 1972 has reported, "This decision, if given effect to by foreign shipowners, would mean denial of standard wages or security of employment to Indian seamen. The usual facilities and amenities now being offered to them may also be withdrawn."

"Though it has been admitted that the Indian seamen are having the same standard of work as that of seamen from Western countries this decision of the International Transport Workers' Federation amounts to gross insult to Indian seamen.

"We have noted the disapproval expressed by the Government of India of this decision and its proposal to send a deputation to get the decision changed. However, mere verbal expression of opinion will have no impact on the Fair

Practices Committee which has deliberately downgraded the status of Indian seamen. We expect strong action from the Government in the matter. No self-respecting Government can accept such an insulting treatment to its citizens."

"What is surprising is that the National Union of Seamen of India which is affiliated to the International Transport Workers Federation has not yet condemned this insulting decision.

"We are further surprised to note that this along with another union has been recognised by the Government as the sole bargaining agent on behalf of seamen. The Government owes an explanation on this account to the people of India.

"The CITU therefore urges that the Government should immediately launch its strong protest at this gross insult to our seamen and take appropriate steps to ensure that this insult is done away with."

● On Page Twelve

Calcutta (West Bengal)

"The two years of CITU's activities throughout the country have convincingly proved the correctness of the line of unity and struggle adopted by the foundation conference of the organisation. The innumerable united struggles conducted by unions throughout the country since the foundation of CITU have forced the capitalist class to give concessions to workers. The fight will continue with more firmness and determination till the achievement of Socialism—the goal of the trade union movement" said B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU while speaking in the meeting convened by the West Bengal State Committee of CITU at the Thyagaraja Hall on May 30 to observe the CITU Day. Md. Ismail, Vice-President, CITU presided over the meeting.

Ranadive, who was the main speaker, paid tributes to the working class of West Bengal who fought several struggles despite repression and gangsterism. Referring to the martyrdom of over 600 comrades of the T.U. and democratic movement in the State Ranadive said their blood would not go in vain. The movement would spread further and the perpetrators of the crimes would not be allowed to go without punishment.

Ranadive castigated the leadership of AITUC, HMS and INTUC for giving up the path of struggle and ganging up with the capitalist class against the interest of workers. He criticised the National Council of Trade Unions as an instrument of class collaboration. He called upon the working class to continue the struggle for achieving recognition of trade unions through secret ballot.

Ranadive called upon the working class to take leadership of the democratic movement and build up

a mighty struggle for the overthrow of the yoke of big business and landlord classes.

Among those who addressed the meeting were M.A. Rasool of AIKS and K. G. Bose, Joint Convenor of 12th July Committee.

In the morning, Md. Ismail, hoisted the red flag at the CITU Central Office. Members of the CITU Central and State Committee Office as well as several leading comrades from West Bengal participated in the function.

Contai

A largely attended meeting was held on May 30 near the Salt Factory to observe the CITU Day. The meeting was presided over by Achinta Maity and was addressed by P Surendu Panchadhay, Chiranjib Kar and other workers.

Raniganj

At the call of Colliery Mazdoor Sabha, the CITU Day was observed on May 30 at Raniganj, which was presided over by J.N. Jadav. The main speaker, Robin Chatterjee, in his speech called upon the workers to unite and fight against the disruptive policy of vested interests.

Rishra

All the unions belonging to Rishra Trade Union Co-ordination Committee observed the CITU Day. A largely-attended meeting was held in Kalika Vidyalaya ground which was presided over by Shyamal Bhattacharya, a local T.U. leader. The meeting was addressed by the General Secretary, Co-ordination Committee, Dilip Chatterjee and Kamal Krishna Bhattacharya.

Bansberia

CITU unions working in Dunlop Rubber, Triveni Tissue, Rayon, Jute and other industries jointly observed the CITU Day on May 30 in Bansberia by holding a big rally on jute mill play ground. Md. Ismail presided over the meeting which was addressed by Kamal Sarkar, M. K. Pandhe and others. Workers came in processions to the meeting.

Kulti

A meeting was held to observe the CITU Day in ABK Metal and Engineering Workers' Union Office. Apart from union members and bidi workers a large number of unemployed youth participated in the meeting which was addressed by local CITU leaders.

Bombay

The CITU Day was jointly observed by Lal Bawta Mill Mazdur Union and Maharashtra State Committee of CITU by holding a rally at Worli on May 30. Workers from Andheri, Fort, Prabhadevi and other areas came in processions. The rally was addressed by P. K. Kurane, Bajaj, Delavi and Sawant.

Ulhasnagar

In Ulhasnagar the Second anniversary was observed by holding a meeting at Nehru Chowk where the policies of the CITU were explained. The meeting was addressed, among others, by Suryadeo Upadhyaya, Arjun Arya Narayan and others.

The speakers called upon the workers to rally under the flag of CITU to build more united struggle.

Gwalior (M.P.)

A mass meeting was held in Shivaji Park, Lashkar, on behalf of several CITU unions to observe the CITU Day in Gwalior on May 30. D.V. Tiwari presided over the meeting which was addressed, among others, by Motilal Sharma, Ajay Shinde, Dinesh Singh and Bhura Ustad. The meeting condemned the repression on CITU unions in West Bengal and criticised the AITUC, INTUC and HMS leadership for their class collaborationist policies.

Hatia (Bihar)

Hatia Mazdur Union observed the CITU Day by holding a meeting of union members in the union office. A. K. Dey, President of the Union hoisted the red flag. Speakers explained the policy of CITU to the

workers. At 2.30 p.m. a demonstration was organised at the gate of Heavy Engineering Corporation despite scorching heat. Chandi Prasad, Secretary Bihar State Committee of CITU addressed the demonstrators.

Ranchi Road

A well-attended meeting was organised by the Firebricks and Seramics Kamgar Union on the CITU Day. Several posters were pasted on the wall to popularise the message of the CITU. The mass rally was attended by workers of other factories in the region and was addressed by A.P. Singh.

Silli

The workers of Aluminium factory organised a meeting where the speakers explained the significance of CITU day. Posters were pasted on

the walls and handbills were distributed among the workers. Postering and distribution of leaflets was organised among the Lohardaga bauxite mine workers on the occasion of the CITU Day.

Katihar

Railwaymen and Coal Khalasis of Katihar (Bihar) observed CITU Day on May 30 with due solemnity. At a meeting, presided over by Satyanarayan Sarkar, different speakers laid emphasis on united struggles against the offensive of the ruling class.

A branch of the Coal Mazdoor Union (CITU) has been formed at Katihar.

Bulandshahar (U.P.)

The CITU Day was jointly observed by the CITU unions in the

town. A mass meeting was held in Panniji Sugar Mill Maidan in which workers in sugar mill engineering and dairy industries, agricultural and P.W.D. workers and teachers participated.

K. N. Bhatt, Vice-President, U.P. State Committee of CITU, explained the policy of the CITU and called upon the workers to rally behind the working class of West Bengal in their hour of trial.

Madras

The CITU Day was observed at Ambattur Industrial Estate near Madras on May 30. Red flag was hoisted by A.S. Murthy in front of Omega Cables factory gate. A procession of workers from a number of factories paraded the streets which culminated in a rally.

The meeting greeted the Vietnamese freedom fighters for their

victories, condemned semi-fascist repression in West Bengal and expressed solidarity with the fighting workers. The meeting further condemned the repression on Valparai Plantation workers in Tamilnadu.

Madurai

Red Flag was hoisted by A. Nallasivam, Assistant Secretary, State Committee, at CITU Office.

Ponmalai (GoldenRock)

In the morning of May 30 South Eastern Railway workers assembled before workshop gate and raised slogans. In the evening a well-attended meeting was held at D.R.E.U. Maidan at 6.30 p.m.A.K. Nambiar, Joint Secretary, CITU Tamil Nadu, hoisted the Red Flag. P. Ramachandran, R. Periyaswamy, V. Parameswaran, C. Ganpathy addressed the gathering. V. Sundaramurthy presided.

Thazayur

Red Flags were hoisted at different centres throughout the town in the morning of May 30. In the evening a well-attended meeting was addressed, among others, by M. Gomathy, S. N. Ramaswamy, P. Padmanabhan, N. Prunachalam, R. Elaya Parumal, N.S. Mani, Rajamani, Nellaiyath Dellar, and Palauinayakam.

Parriyakulam

Comrades with red flags in their hands explained the aims and objects of the CITU through several street corner meetings and criticised the anti-labour policy of the DMK Government.

Goa

The CITU Foundation Day was organised by unions in Goa by holding several meetings throughout the state.

Marmagoa dock workers participated in good number in a gate

CITU Day Observed

meeting organised on the Day which was addressed by Srikanta Nirlakar, Felizardo Fernandes and Ibrahim Sulaiman. A meeting mainly of engineering workers was addressed, among others, by Gerald Pereira, General Secretary, Goa State Trade Union Council.

The workers of Goa Pipe Factory Phonda stopped work for an hour to celebrate the CITU Day. S.V. Rao addressed the meeting of the workers. He also later addressed meeting of workers in Hume Pipe Factory and Jain Shipyards (Khandola).

A largely-attended meeting at Vasco-da-Gama was presided over by C. Alvares and addressed by Gerlad Pereira.

Assam

The CITU Day was observed in Rangapara—Darang, Assam, on May 30 by holding a largely-attended meeting. Workers of the tea garden came in procession to participate in the meeting which was presided over by Ramakanta Acharya, a member of Assam State Committee of CITU, addressed by Dhaniram Khochna and Hareswar Das. The State Committee sold one thousand pin flags on this occasion.

Mysore

CITU affiliated trade unions in the city observed the Second Anniversary of the CITU by holding a public meeting at Jayamuni Rao Circle which was Presided over by S. Suryanarayan Rao, president Karnataka State Committee of CITU and addressed by Sriyuthas A. Ananthaswamy Rao, P. Jaganatha and P. Sundar.

Kanpur

The workers of J.K. Rayon held a large meeting to celebrate the 2nd anniversary of the foundation of

CITU Condemns Moratorium on Strikes in Bangladesh

The working class of Bangladesh after overthrowing the yoke of Yahya regime have been fighting for their trade union and democratic rights.

Several trade unions have come into existence covering a large number of workers. The vested interests in Bangladesh made every effort to suppress trade union activities. Forcible occupation of union offices with the help of gangsters have taken place in several cases. Attacking striking workers with the help of armed goondas have become a matter of common occurrence.

The Police force on many occasions have openly sided with the unscrupulous employers. On June 9, the Police killed 17 workers and injured 7 in Khulna without any provocation.

The Bangladesh press reports that the vested interests have made attempts to spread communal feelings among the Sitalakha Jute Mill, Narayanganj, to disrupt the unity of the workers.

The railway authorities in Mymensingh have arbitrarily transferred 3 trade union leaders for their mere "crime" of forming a union of workers.

Despite these repressive measures the working class of Bangladesh continued their struggle for improve-

CITU. The meeting was addressed by Shivlal Singh, Bansidhar, Ram Asrey and Subhashini. The speakers told the workers the significance of the formation of CITU at a time when the AITUC leadership had adopted the line of class collaboration. At present also the CITU is resolutely opposing the treachery of AITUC, HMS and INTUC.

ment in the working and living conditions.

On top of this the, Bangladesh Government has recently announced a moratorium on strikes for six months in the nationalised undertakings depriving the workers of their legitimate weapon. Four Central T.U. Organisations in Bangladesh observed a protest Day on June 5 against the arbitrary ban imposed by the Government and demanded immediate withdrawal of the order.

The CITU strongly condemns the anti-working class order of Bangladesh Government. The CITU congratulates the working class of Bangladesh for their united struggles despite heavy odds and assures them fullest support in their struggle against attack on T.U. rights and repressive measures.

Indian Seamen

● From Page Nine

"We also request the Government to convene a meeting of all the unions working among seamen and consider ways and means of counteracting the anti-Indian steps taken by the so-called Fair Practices Committee."

M. A. Sayeed, President Forward Seamen's Union in a telegram to International Transport Workers' Federation condemned the decision of the so-called Fair Practices Committee and demanded reversal of this decision.

Gerald Pereira, Vice-President of the Union, expressed support of the seamen of Goa in the struggle against the anti-Indian decision of ITWF.

Persecution of Government Employees in W. Bengal

The two lakh State Government employees of W Bengal are faced with serious problems under the Congress ministry. The "offensive against State Government employees' movement and organisations assumed serious proportions during President's rule in 1968 ; it got further accentuated in 1970 and 1971 with a brief spell of respite during United Front regime in 1969 ; but it has surpassed all records under the present ministry.

Prior to March 1972, forty State Government employees were murdered by the anti-social elements with the connivance of the police and administration. Dozens were arrested on fabricated charges besides some being detained under MISA. A number of workers were brutally tortured in police custody and one unfortunate class IV employee was strangled to death in police lock-up. The official recognition of the State Co-ordination Committee of the West Bengal Government employees' Associations and Unions was arbitrarily withdrawn and stooge paper organisation was given recognition. Along with this a number of workers were placed under suspension on various pretexts, mass transfer of the leading workers effected in different districts and draconian orders and circulars were issued seriously curbing the normal trade union functioning of the employees' organisations.

This dark process reached its climax with the outright dismissal from service of 13 top leaders of the State Co-ordination Committee invoking extra-ordinary powers under article 311 (2) of the Constitution. Simultaneously all legitimate demands of the employees were denied and break-service, pay-cut etc.

continued for participation in cease-work and other programme. On top of all these, several thousand supporters of the ruling party were inducted into the administration trampling under foot all normal rules and regulations regarding appointment of Government employees.

This is the background against which the farce of election of March 1972 took place and the Government launched fresh offensive. Soon after the rigged election, two more State Government employees were murdered by those connected with the ruling party. The Chatra Parishad and Yuba Congress volunteers assaulted union workers, forcibly captured union offices and occupied the chairs of the employees in the offices. The Milk Commissioner's Office in Calcutta and Central Dairy Farms in Calcutta and 24-Parganas were attacked. Many union workers were prevented from joining their duties at the point of guns. The residences of union workers were also attacked and looted. Many union workers have been compelled to leave their residences along with their families. All these happened in Calcutta as well as in mafussil districts. Complaints lodged with the police or with the higher offices of the Home Department were of no use and the goonda-gangs committed all these acts of violence with complete impunity. The State Co ordination Committee and its affiliated unions submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister requesting him to take steps for stopping all such terror but that too appeared as crying in the wilderness. Recently, some prominent workers of the State Employees' movement have been arres-

ted under MISA. Warrants of arrests have been issued against some other workers.

On top of all these, even women employees are not being spared from attacks. On March 14, a group of anti-social elements attacked a student nurse of S S K M. Hospital in Calcutta inside the hospital compound while she was on duty and tried to molest her. The nurses protested but the local Congress leaders appeared on the scene and threatened the nurses. All these were reported to higher officials of the Health Department, Health Minister and local police. But strangely enough, no one was arrested, on the other hand a culprit who chased the nurse with an open dagger was given appointment in the same hospital and the General Secretary of West Bengal Nurses' Association who was a Staff Nurse' in the hospital and who led the protest movement was transferred to Cooch Behar, two hundred miles away from Calcutta.

The West Bengal Government employees have a long tradition of struggle and in fact their struggle constitutes an important part of the mighty democratic movement of the millions of West Bengal. So, despite terror, coercion and attacks, the employees could not be cowed down. The State Co-ordination Committee is taking steps to consolidate its organisational position and to prepare and organise the employees to meet this new offensive.

The 12th July Committee, the joint organisation of all public sector employees unions and associations of West Bengal held its State Convention on May 20 and 21 and resolved to fight the vandalism perpetrated against the State and Central Government employees and other sections of public sector employees. Steps are being taken to build a powerful movement which is expected to start in the near future.

AITUC LEADERSHIP AS STRIKE BREAKERS IN S. E. RAILWAY

It is well known that Indrajit Gupta, President of the AITUC affiliated South Eastern Railwaymen's Union gave an undertaking to the General Manager in August 1970, that his union will not sponsor or support spontaneous strikes. In pursuance of this agreement the leadership of the SERU is acting as strike-breakers.

In Bhojudih and Jamadoba yards several staff had lost their lives or were maimed due to non-observance of safety rules during train examination. On May 2 last year, one worker lost his life and the officers gave an undertaking that the safety rules would be observed, which however, was not implemented. So, on May 26, 1972, when another worker escaped death narrowly at Bhojudih, the carriage workers downed their tools spontaneously demanding implementation of earlier undertaking and formation of a Safety Committee with the representatives from the workers. The local branch of the union supported the action and communicated it to the General Secretary of the Union. He, however, did not turn up. Some other Branch Secretaries came to the spot and saw that only three out of 400 staff were on duty.

Gour Hari Chatterjee, Assistant General Secretary of the SERU sent a message to the Branch Secretary of the neighbouring branch, "You should exercise your influence to see that the strike at Bhojudih does not spread at Jamadoba."

This message was repeated by an Inspector of the railways through Control Phone and, as such, known publicly. It is understood that similar messages had been issued to others.

The Jamadoba workers however downed their tools from May 27. The Loco Running Staff and the SMs & ASMs Association of Bhojudih served an ultimatum that they would also cease work if the issue is not settled. Upto this time, the Administration did not show any urge for negotiation, because they knew that union officials were trying their best to ensure that the strike does not spread. The INTUC was openly acting as strike-breaker.

During negotiations that followed, the Administration demanded that the SERU should take action against the Branch leadership and the General Secretary assured that the question would be discussed in the Central Council and annual meeting of the Union. This has raised apprehensions in the minds of the railway workers whether the leadership of this union agreed to act as strike-breakers?

The authorities however conceded the demand of the workers and had to agree that there would be no victimisation.

Dakhsina Railway Employees' Union

Guntakal Division

The Divisional Executive Committee of DREU was held at Guntakal on June 11 under the Chairmanship of S. Kamal Sale, Divisional President. K. Venkataswamy, Asstt. General Secretary explained the increasing anti-labour policies of the Administration. A.M. Alagundigi, Divisional Secretary spoke on the local grievances of railway employees. The meeting adopted several resolutions on railway workers' problems and general T.U. movement.

Oil and Chemicals Solidarity for Durgapur Workers

Durgapur Chemicals Employees Union (CITU) informed the Trade Unions International of Chemical, Oil and Allied Workers (WFTU) at Budapest, Hungary about infringement of Trade Union rights and large scale attacks on its members at Durgapur perpetrated by the rowdies and gangsters of Congress (R).

Paul Forgacs, General Secretary of the Trade Unions International of Chemical, Oil and Allied Workers in a message to the union, in response to the appeal for solidarity help said: "In keeping with the spirit of its Constitution and its policy, our Trade Union International always protects Trade Union rights wherever they are threatened and we are therefore naturally in full solidarity with your union activists and union who have been the victims of oppression."

The General Secretary of the T. U. I. further informed:

"We are placing the facts in your letter before our affiliated organisations and we are convinced that they will express their international solidarity in the most suitable form."

Reiterating full solidarity with Durgapur Chemicals Employees Union, the T. U. I. has asked the union to keep them informed of further developments.

Seven union leaders of Durgapur Chemicals were evicted from their quarters and are still prevented from reporting for their duties. The union office is forcibly closed and workers are terrorised and forced to join the union of Congress (R).

The Condition of Central Government Employees

The Directorate General of Employment and Training, Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation, Government of India have recently published Census of Central Government Employees 1970 which gives factual information regarding the strength of the Central Government employees.

The data shows that the total number of Central Government employees increased from 20.94 lakhs in 1961 to 28.51 lakhs in 1970, a rise of 36 per cent or 3.6 per cent per annum. Table 1 gives the total employment position every year in Central services.

Table 1

Trends In Central Government Employment.

As on 31st March of	Number (lakhs)
1961	20.94
1962	21.56
1963	23.49
1964	25.36
1965	26.37
1966	27.10
1967	27.46
1968	27.93
1969	28.07
1970	28.51

Of these employees only 26.49 lakh constitute regular employees and Ministry-wise classification is available only for these employees.

The study reveals that railways account for 13.60 lakh employees and constitute the largest single employment group among the Central Government employees. The civilian employees of the defence services form the second largest group which comes to about 4.73 lakhs, followed by employees in communication services (3.72 lakhs). The Finance Ministry employees 1.15 lakh employees. Table 2 gives distribution of regular employees by Ministries.

Table 2

Distribution of Regular Employees by Ministries

Ministry/Department	No. of regular employees	Percentage to total
1. Cabinet Secretariat	2,735	0.10
2. Communications	3,72,436	14.06
3. Defence (Civilians)	4,72,523	17.84
4. Education and Youth Services	23,268	0.88
5. External Affairs	4,064	0.15
6. Finance	1,15,457	4.36
7. Food, Agriculture, Community Development & Co-operation	14,430	0.55
8. Foreign Trade	6,046	0.22
9. Health, Family Planning, Works Housing and Urban Development	49,545	1.87
10. Home Affairs	73,624	2.78
11. Indian Audit and Accounts Department	47,655	1.80
12. Industrial Development Internal Trade and Company Affairs	9,007	0.34
13. Information and Broadcasting	14,809	0.56
14. Irrigation and Power	7,933	0.30
15. Labour, Employment & Rehabilitation	18,444	0.70
16. Law	1,332	0.50
17. Petroleum, Chemicals and Mines & Metals	9,329	0.35
18. Railways	13,60,035	51.34
19. Shipping and Transport	5,309	0.20
20. Social Welfare	1,032	0.04
21. Steel and Heavy Engineering	804	0.03
22. Supply	6,500	0.25
23. Tourism and Civil Aviation	14,153	0.53
24. Miscellaneous	18,635	0.70
Total	26,49,205	100.00

The details of the rise in employment of major employing Ministries is given in Table 3.

Table 3

Trends in Employment in Major Industries

As on 31st March of	Railways	Posts & Telegraphs	Defence (Civilians)	All other Ministries Departments	Total
1961	11.47	2.40	2.79	3.21	19.87
1962	11.80	2.50	2.95	2.26	20.51
1963	12.29	2.69	3.52	3.51	22.01
1964	12.81	2.89	4.31	3.72	23.73
1965	13.15	2.94	4.32	3.79	24.20
1966	13.51	3.16	4.44	4.01	25.13
1967	13.59	3.33	4.47	4.07	25.46
1968	13.58	3.45	4.57	4.25	25.85
1969	13.55	3.53	4.67	4.33	26.08
1970	13.60	3.70	4.73	4.46	26.49

Other significant facts which emerge from the census data are (a) rise in the number of women employees (b) a comparatively steady ratio of permanent employees to total employees and (c) a declining trend in the number of non-gazetted staff per gazetted staff. The number of women employees went up from 1.58 lakhs in 1961 to 2.41 lakhs in 1970. The percentage of permanent employees to total employees has more or less remained steady at around 70, while the average number of non-gazetted staff per gazetted staff came down from 68 to 51 during the same period.

It is also revealed that of the 26.49 lakh Central employees, those belonging to Class I were only 23,820 (0.90 per cent); Class II 44,621 (1.68 per cent), Class III, 13,14,901 (49.63 per cent) and Class IV, 12,54,639 (47.37 per cent). Thus, Class III and Class IV accounted for more than 97 per cent of total regular Central employees. There has not been much variation in this ratio over the years.

Table 4 shows that about 50 per cent. of the employees were in the pay range of below Rs. 150. The average income (including allowances) of 50 per cent. of the employees can be approximately put at Rs.300. Taking a five-member family, the per capita disposable income comes to Rs 60 per month.

It must, however, be noted that more than one-fifth of the employees are concentrated in four Class A cities namely, Bombay (4.99 per cent), Calcutta (6.8 per cent) Delhi (6.26 per cent) and Madras (3.23 per cent) while Class B1, Class B2 and Class C Cities absor-

bed as much as 39 per cent, and the rest by other cities/towns. Since many of these employees have not been provided with any mode of accommodation, and in the context of exorbitant rent payable even for a 'chawl' or 'Jhuggi' their consumption expenditure will not be more than Rs.200 to Rs.210 thus reducing the per capita expenditure to a niggardly sum of Rs. 40 to Rs. 42 per month. If one were to exclude railway fares and other inescapable travelling expenses to reach the work place their pitiable standard of living can very well be imagined. An interesting research project on a socio-economic problem indeed.

Table 4
Distribution of Regular Employees by Pay-ranges

Pay ranges	No. of Employees	Percentage to total
Below 75	64	—
75-99	3,193	0.12
100-149	13,13,592	49.59
150-199	4,70,620	17.76
200-299	4,93,697	18.64
300-399	2,12,440	8.02
400-499	77,285	2.92
500-749	49,247	1.86
750-999	15,463	0.58
1000-1499	10,239	0.39
1500-1999	2,241	0.08
2000-2499	603	0.02
2500-2999	332	0.01
3000-and above	189	0.01
Total	24, 49, 205	100.00

Massive Port Strike In U.K.

A massive strike which began on June 16 has since paralysed all major ports in U. K. This is in protest against the British Government's attempt to curb the workers' right to strike.

The strike began with the walk-out by about 50,000 strong shoremen in sympathy with three dock leaders facing arrest for defying a Court order. Britain's Industrial Courts, it may be mentioned, are taking a blatantly anti-labour stand in recent issues.

West Bengal State Council

From Page Four price-rise and taxation and for jobs or unemployment benefit for all unemployed persons and observe "Anti Repression Day" throughout West Bengal jointly with other Central Trade Unions and democratic organisations.

5. To organise a massive demonstration in November 1972 on the demand for jobs or unemployment benefit for all unemployed persons.

It was reviewed in the meeting of the State Council that membership of CITU unions in West Bengal which was 4, 70,000 at the time of formation of CITU has increased to 5,35,000 in December, 1971.

After two days' deliberations and decisions, the meeting ended with greater determination and confidence to face the challenge thrown by the ruling class.

newsletters

TAMILNADU

The New Offensive

Nobody expected the working class to keep on winning in Tamilnadu, least of all the CITU. Now after a season of stormy, fluent victories scored in breath-taking succession, the working class movement is entering a phase in which it will have to take a fresh look at its strategy. There is no mistaking that the hitherto dormant forces of reaction have stirred themselves and started hitting back.

The ball was set rolling by Ashok Leylands when the factory reopened on May 31 after 17 days of closure. Workers while reporting for duty raised slogans reiterating their outstanding demands—higher of bonus and others. All on a sudden they were set upon by a group of armed men and were severely assaulted. Later, angry workers staged a protest sit-in strike in front of the factory's offices, and decided on go-slow action.

On June 2, the situation took a turn for the worse. A number of workers, including the General Secretary of the Employees' Union, were manhandled inside the plant and then, amazingly, put under arrest on charges of rioting and wrongful assembly. R. Kuchelar, President of the union, denounced the arrests in a statement.

The impression that the powers that be were in no mood to bear with those who did not fall in line with them was strengthened when, three days later, workers arriving in the city for holding a demonstration were pulled out of buses and beaten up. S. Krishnamurthi and V. P. Chintan of the CITU called on Tamilnadu's Chief Minis-

ter the same day and demanded full protection for the workers. The general body of the Employees' Union later decided to accept the Chief Minister's assurances about security and go back to work. On June 9, Madras City observed an industrial strike in support of the Ashok Leyland workers' struggle.

Simpsons Again

The management of the Simpsons Group of Plants, which was caught on the wrong foot by a sudden turn of events a couple of months ago, was perhaps waiting in the wings. Taking a cue from the Ashoke Leylands affairs, it soon set one group of workers off against another in a very calculated attempt at breaking up the all-conquering unity workers had forged in recent times. Clashes, engineered expertly by subversive elements, continued for some days resulting in the death of a former union office-bearer and injuries to numerous others. The offices of an evening daily, a consistent critic of the Government's anti-labour policies, were attacked as many as four times in a day and ransacked. Workers in different Simpson Plants who had struck work spontaneously in protest were assaulted.

Every possible move, in fact, was taken to throttle the voices of dissent. V.P. Chintan, Vice-President of the Simpson and Group of Companies Workers' and Staff Union, reported that the police had swooped down upon a meeting of union representatives and arrested a number of them.

In the wake of these incidents came, not unexpectedly, the declaration of closure of the plants. The forces of reaction will, no doubt, be

pleased with their first round performance. But, for the workers, very important tasks lie ahead now that there is a real threat to their unity.

Valparai

The heroic strike by 30,000 workers of the Valparai tea gardens was called off on June 7 when the management after weeks of dilly-dallying agreed to negotiations on issues not covered by the so-called agreements of May 5.

The workers, it may be recalled, repudiated the above agreement on the quantum of bonus, which the management had arrived at with unions led by the INTUC, AITUC and DMK, and launched a strike from May 11. They had to undergo terrible hardship in the process; as many as 800 people were arrested in connection with the strike. The town of Tanjore observed a complete hartal on June 3 in solidarity with them at the call of the CITU and the Kisan Sabha.

K. Ramani, President of the Tamilnadu Committee of the CITU has been taking part in the negotiations which would be rounded off in July. In the meanwhile, arrested workers have been released and all cases against them withdrawn.

Other Struggles

Workers of the Indian Cable and Wire Industries, Chempakkam, who were denied bonus payments since 1969 wrested their due through the path of struggle. Once they resorted to a stay-in-strike in April 1972, the management came forward and awarded them 6 per cent bonus for the following year.

The management of another factory, the Deccan Safety Glass Works, Ambathar, also saw reason and came to an agreement with the CITU-led workers on issues relating

to change in grades, leave benefits etc.

At Chenkottai a hartal was observed on May 24 on the demand for the reopening of Balaram Mills, locked out for some time now. 293 persons have so far courted arrest in the current agitation for the mill's takeover by the Government.

The 40-day old strike at the Madurai Mills was called off on June 19 with the signing of an agreement. The main issue of additional workload was resolved with the management's undertaking that workers in the Spinning section would be given no more work than what they were given prior to April 22. All cases of disciplinary action against the workers were also withdrawn forthwith.

Workers of the LRC Mills, Thirupur, observed a day's hunger strike on May 29 before resorting to an indefinite tool-down strike two days later. The management, however, is making no move on their 19-point charter of demands.

The A. F. Quarry of Nellai Thiruthu suddenly declared a lock-out on May 26 without even caring for the formality of showing a reason. The 100 workers who are working in a temporary capacity for the last two years and a half had not been paid their wages when the gates were closed on them. S. Balavigyangam, President of the Workers' Union, has, of course, appealed to the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) for intervention in a case of gross violation of labour law, but trade union justice is not done very often in this country today.

KERALA

FACT And Fiction

The continuing strike at the Fertiliser and Chemicals Travancore

plant (FACT) of Alwaye has, once again, proved beyond doubt that it is no more possible to hand down half-measures and win over workers.

But that was how some trade union leaders thought—at least until June 14. The strike which was launched by 4,000 workers of the plant on May 17 was strikingly different—the issue involved was not an economic one. The main demand was the reinstatement of 2 workers suspended on the eve of the strike.

Several conciliation meetings had failed and T.V. Thomas, Kerala's Minister for Industries, declared that the State Government did not intend to interfere in the affair. At another tripartite meeting on June 13, six of the seven trade unions in the plant finally accepted the Government's compromise formula which provided for the withdrawal of the suspension order but agreed to an enquiry to be held subsequently. The only voice of dissent came from the CITU which refused to be a party to the agreement.

When the agreement was referred to the general body of workers a day later, the 4000 men turned it down in one voice. The stand taken by the CITU was vindicated at a meeting which caused not a little embarrassment to several other trade union leaders.

The FACT strike is continuing as vigorously as ever and the 'progressive' Government of Kerala, according to reports, has declared it illegal and has referred the issue for adjudication.

Cashew Strike

Another massive strike has paralysed the cashew industry in the State. The 1.5 lakh cashew workers, whose pleas have so long fallen on deaf ears, went on another indefinite strike from June 15 and are led by the CITU, UTUC and AITUC.

Their demands include extension of the provisions of the Industries and Development Regulation Act to the Cashewnut Industry and enhanced Central aid to the Cashew Development Corporation to enable it to take over more factories.

Workers and employees of the Koduman Rubber Estate run by the Plantation Corporation have launched an indefinite strike from June 12 under the joint auspices of the CITU and AITUC. The strike is in protest against the management's decision to recruit casual workers from outside without giving priority to those already on the list.

At the A.G.'s Office in Trivandrum, the entire staff observed an hour's pen-down strike on June 7 in protest against the dismissal of the Secretary of the A.G. Employees' Union. Thirteen other workers had been suspended earlier.

Contractors' labourers at the Fibre Division of the Rayons Factory, Mavoor, held a big demonstration recently demanding priority when casual workers were appointed. Most of these workers have been denied permanent status.

ASSAM

Organising Resistance

The stormtroopers of the Youth Congress and Chhatra Parishad are on the rampage throughout the country, and Assam is no exception. Attacks are mounted almost daily on trade union activists. In Gauhati, the striking employees of the LIC were subjected to assaults recently.

Fortunately, the incident has not passed without a protest. On May 3, several trade unions held a joint public meeting in which the semi-fascist methods employed by the ruling class were denounced

Dr. D. P. Barua, President of the Assam Committee of the CITU, presided. Later, on May 24, a Trade Union Convention was held in defence of democracy and trade union rights. The Convention which was attended by about 50 delegates from 35 unions of Greater Gauhati chalked out an elaborate plan for a month-long campaign against repression, closure of factories and rise in prices. A 9 member Committee has been formed to work it out.

The Assam Committee is shortly bringing out a bulletin in Assamese. A publication through which it can reach a wider section of the public has become an absolute necessity.

Jute Mill Managements Violating Tripartite Agreement

On July 7, workers of all Jute Mills will organise mass deputations and submit memoranda to their respective managements protesting against the violation of the Tripartite Agreement which was signed on the night of May 7. Excepting for the flat rate increase in wages of Rs. 45.60, the managements are deliberately violating the other terms of the agreement, which include provision for a bipartite meeting between the workers and the management within three months to fix the wage rates of casual workers, grades and scales of clerical and other staff, etc. But no meeting has been called by the IJMA as yet, though nearly two months have elapsed. On the other hand, workers are being harassed by way of departmental transfers, suspensions, retrenchment, imposition of abnormal workload, deduction of wages, deduction of Rs. 15 as house rent, etc. in violation of the agreement.

Kamal Sarkar (CITU), Jatin Chakravarty (UTUC), Fatik Ghosh (UTUC-Lenin Sarani), and Arabinda Ghoshal (TUCC) have issued a joint statement protesting against the spotic behaviour of the managements and have appealed to the Government to immediately intervene in the matter, failing which the workers will be forced to take the path of struggle once again.

Reports From Unions

Victory of Jaipur Spinning Mills Workers

A largely-attended meeting of the workers of all the 3 shifts of Jaipur Spinning Mills was held on May 31 which was presided over by Mohan Punamia, President, Rajasthan State Committee of CITU. The meeting unanimously decided to withdraw the 35-days strike as the management had undertaken to start negotiations with the union about the long standing demands of the workers and had agreed to pay Rs.100 to each worker to be adjusted when a decision would be taken in regard to wages during the strike period. The management also agreed not to allow any goondaism inside the mill.

In support of the striking workers a 24-hour token hunger strike was observed on May 23 at the call of Rajasthan Employees and Workers Organisation Co-ordination Committee:

Crisis At IISCO, Burnpur

Production at the IISCO, Burnpur, is reported to have gone down by about 30% in recent months and the blame, as usual, is being laid entirely at the door of the workers.

If there is anything amiss at the plant, it is, in fact, due to administrative failure. In a statement issued on behalf of the Metal and Engineering Workers' Union (CITU), Bamapada Mukherjee has pointed out that after the abolition of the over-time system from February 27, the management has not recruited an adequate number of substitutes (one for every six). As a result, workers are being forced to shoulder additional workloads. Refusal to do this, it is reported, brings

threats of forfeiture of overtime personal compensatory allowance.

The CITU union in the plant had some time ago come to an agreement with unions led by the AITUC and HMP about the constitution of a Board of Enquiry and the conduct of joint movements. The AITUC has now quietly backed out of the agreement.

Closure Of Cuttack Factory

The Ferro-Chrome Plant, Cuttack has been closed down from June 3, throwing 1000 workers out of employment in Orissa. The closure, according to the management, was caused by uneconomic running and persistent labour trouble.

It may be recalled here that the management had, some time ago, suspended 22 workers while 9 others were arrested by the Police.

Ajeya Rout, Secretary of the Ferro-Chrome project Employees' Union (CITU), has demanded the re-opening of the factory and the appointment of a high-power Committee to look into the plant's problems.

Goa Workers Wrest Wage Arrears

About 50 workers employed in the mines owned by Shantilal Kushaldas, Goa, walked all the way to the Company's Head Offices at Margao on May 30 to demand their wages for the month of April. The Company, it may be mentioned, is a notorious defaulter in wage payments.

The reaction was quick. Policemen were called in and 4 of the demonstrators promptly taken away. The workers now marched to the police station and started a sit-in demanding the release of their comrades. All of them were detained for the night and subsequently produced before the Deputy Collector when they were let go.

The management, however, has been forced to pay the wage bill as demanded by the workers.

RAILWAY EMPLOYEES LAUNCH UNITED STRUGGLES

Winds of change are unmistakably blowing over railwaymen's movements. The first symptoms have been the gradual erosion of old allegiances and a process of realignment of forces. This has been generally welcomed with enthusiasm by the workers who think they can now embark on movements with confidence.

A growing unity was in evidence on June 6 which was observed by the AIRF as 'National Demands Day'. Meetings were organised at a number of stations in West Bengal in which demands were voiced for the publication of the Third Pay Commission report by June 30. A welcome feature of the day's programmes was the participation at Naihati and Asansol of organisation other than the AIRF—the Joint Council of Action of Sealdah Division, the Divisional Co-ordination Committee of Assansol and the Eastern Railwaymen's Union.

Order withdrawn

The Union Government speaks of the workers inalienable right to strike but would, obviously, do all it can to curb it. The railway employees of Garhara, for instance, were punished with a break in service immediately after their recent strike. Since this was a flagrant breach of a previous agreement the workers staged a continuous sit-in in front of the Railway Minister's residence from May 14. The issue was eventually taken up by the opposition M.P.s who persuaded the Minister to withdraw the notices.

Chittaranjan

At the Chittaranjan Locomotive works, resentment is mounting against the recent transfer orders served on CLW Labour Union Executives. On May 14, a massive demonstration was held and was addressed by K. G. Bose, followed by another on June 8

Meanwhile, the General Secretary and a Vice-President of the CLW Labour Union who had been detained under the MISA have been released. The Union has scored another significant victory. All its 13 candidates were elected to the Committee of the Sreelata Institute recently, defeating a motley crowd of opposition.

The whole township has been transformed into a virtual prison house by erecting wall and digging around the township thus isolating it from the rest of the country.

On top of all these, the Railway Authorities with the help of the police and anti-social elements, let loose repression on the workers and employees and on their leaders and on their organisation, Chittaranjan Locomotive Works Labour Union. Attempts were made on the lives of the two leaders, Sri Umapati Chaudhury and Sri Rathin Dev who had a narrow escape but who had to spend long time in hospital. Sixty persons are being prosecuted under false charges thirty of whom have been suspended.

Elsewhere

Speaking at a meeting of railwaymen held at Fairlie Place on

June 8, Paritosh Banerjee, President Eastern Railwaymen's Union said that as the Vice President of the West Bengal HMS he was opposed to the formation of the National Council of Trade Unions which would, for all practical purposes act as the extended wing of the Congress Government.

At Adra, Vietnam day was observed at a largely-attended meeting on June 12 under the auspices of the Adra Divisional Action Committee. Md. Ismail, Vice-President of the CITU, was the main speaker. The meeting passed a resolution demanding early recognition of the PRG of South Vietnam.

At Sahibganj, the Eastern Railway Coal and Ash Handling Mazdoor Union (CITU) held its Third Annual General Meeting with great enthusiasm. Delegates from Loco-Sheds of Eastern and N. F. Railway attended. The meeting which adopted several resolutions on the issues facing the working class today ended with a mass rally addressed by Md. Amin.

Council Of Trade Union

★ From Page Two

Secretary, Maharashtra branch of Hind Mazdur Panchayat, said that the leadership of AITUC and HMS have accepted the INTUC policy of acting as agent of Congress to break the militant trade union movement.

B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, in his letter to George Fernandes on June 6 has proposed that all the militant trade unions should come together to defeat the anti-working class move of the INTUC, AITUC and HMS leadership.