



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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### Editorial Board

B. T. Ranadive (Chairman)  
 P. Ramamurti      Monoranjan Ray  
 Niren Ghosh      Sudhin Kumar

## Rally Behind The Central Government Employees

THE decision of the Central Government on the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission Report has evoked strong resentment among the Central Government employees throughout the country. The dilatory tactics adopted by the Government through farce of negotiations in the Joint Consultative Machinery are now clear to every one. Even those who were assuring the Government employees that Government would be forced to grant them satisfactory wage rise have now come to grief. Those who were criticising the militant section of the Government employees as "verbose" for their emphasis on struggle are now compelled to talk about struggle.

The UGTU Convention against recommendations of the Third Pay Commission held in New Delhi on 25th and 26th July was an expression of mounting discontent among all sections of Government employees who were veering round the path of struggle. The Convention warned the Government employees about the tactics of the Central Government to keep them watching at the outcome of the negotiations and blunt the edge of their struggle. The decision of the Government now has proved the correctness of the warning.

The Government has now categorically rejected the employees' demand for a need-based minimum wage on the basis of 15th Indian Labour Conference. The Pay Commission itself had worked out Rs. 314/- as the need-based minimum wage on the basis of official statistics but refused to recommend the wage to its own employees. Rs. 196 was a fictitious figure arrived at by changing all accepted norms of wage fixation. The employees proposal to bring their wages at par with the employees in public sector undertakings, which comes to about Rs. 260/-, as a first step was also rejected by the Government.

The paltry rise in the emoluments of the Government employees

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would still keep them below the poverty line, even according to the norms of poverty fixed by the Government. The Approach to Fifth Five Year Plan has estimated Rs. 20/- per head as the absolutely minimum requirement for a human family at 1960 prices. In 1973 when the price index with 1960 base has increased to 250 the poverty line would be Rs. 50 per head. The requirement of 4 units per family, would thus come to Rs. 200 in August prices. The prices have gone up phenomenally during September-October period and if they are taken into account in the light of rise in wholesale prices during this period the total emoluments of Rs. 21- after the decision of the Government keeps them just on the poverty line. It should be noted here that poverty line is arbitrarily determined by the Government and the actual poverty line is far ahead of the quantum thus determined.

The Second Pay Commission fixed Rs. 80/- as the minimum wage at 115 index taking 1949 as the base year. When the price index has shot up to 300 in August 1973 the minimum wage to maintain the same standard would be Rs. 209. Thus the real wage of the Central Government employees to-day after the Government decision would be almost the same as awarded by the Second Pay Commission. It should be noted here that the real wage of the lowest paid Government employees did show a marginal rise between 1947

and after the publication of the Second Pay Commission Report.

To cover up the reality the Government has devised a mechanism of asking the Government employees to wait for a period of 12 months. This deprived the Government employees of compensation of point to point rise in the Consumer price index numbers. The Second Pay Commission recommended that the Government should consider granting DA after the average index for 12 months goes up by 10 points taking 1949 as the base year. The Third Pay Commission recommended 8 points taking 1960 as the base year keeping the earlier mechanism intact. Thus when the All India Consumer Price Index Number with 1960 as the base reached 247 in August 1973 the Central Government employees were awarded compensation only upto 216 points. Thus they were deprived of neutralisation for 31 points.

The Third Pay Commission by using this trick of 12 months average has made a ridiculous attempt to show that the wages of the Government employees are above the poverty line by calculating the poverty line at 200 index when the index is 247. It has further observed that Rs. 196/- would be the need based minimum! Cruel joke indeed, played against the Central Government employees!

The same trick is played when the Government claimed that the employees drawing up to Rs. 300/- would be paid cent per cent neutralisation can be full only if point to point adjust-

ment is made every month. The time lag between the rise in index and payment of DA is so big that it curtails the rate of neutralisation substantially. As we have seen when the price index has reached 247 (1960 base) and the DA is paid at 216 index the neutralisation works out to be only 87 per cent. The rate of neutralisation for employees drawing Rs. 300/- will also be far below 75 per cent as claimed by the Government.

The other fringe benefits accepted by the Government are marginal in character and will not satisfy the Government employees.

Thus the decision of the Government only amounts to wage freeze.

This policy if allowed to succeed will be followed in other industries resulting in further inroads in standard of living of working class. Therefore it must be defeated by united movement of all section of the trade union movement.

The Central Government employees have already started mobilising their strength against the Govt's decision. The united observation of All India Protest Day on 19th October at the call of Confederation of Central Government Employees Associations shows the urge for concerted struggle against the Government decision. The All India Railwaymen's Federation has given a call for a countrywide strike from 27th February in support of the demand of need based minimum wage and others.

With the election of George Fernandes as President of AIRF

# Trade Unions Call Bengal Bundh on Nov. 17

Five Central Trade Unions—the CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), TUCC and HMP—have called upon the working class to observe State-wide General strike in West Bengal for 24-hours on November 17 to register their massive protest against the anti-people food and other policies of the Congress Government and in support of the ten-point demands.

They have called upon the workers and employees of all industries and all trade unions, irrespective of affiliations, to participate in the General strike. They have also appealed to all other Central Trade Unions to participate in the Bundh to make it a great success.

at its Hyderabad Convention possibilities of co-ordination between the Railway T. U. movement and the other Central Government employees have improved considerably. So far the leaders of the AIRF were systematically trying to keep the railway workers away from the mainstream of Central Government employees movement. The developments within the AIRF only reflects the growing urge of the Railway employees to launch a countrywide struggle for improving their working and living conditions. The initiative now taken by the AIRF to bring together Central Government employees organisations will be welcomed by those who were fighting for unity of the Central Government employees movement.

The tremendous urge for

unity among the Central Government employees is bringing together various organisations to chalk out common programme of action. This has created favourable atmosphere for a countrywide struggle. The UCTU has made it clear that whatever decision the Government employees organisations will take for united action the UCTU will fully support the struggle.

The entire T. U. movement must rally behind the Central Government employees in their struggle against the wage freeze policy of the Government. It can be defeated only if the T. U. movement make the struggle of the Central Government employees as their own struggle and mobilise their full strength in support of the Government employees.

## Greetings To People's China

*The Working Committee meeting of the CITU sends its warmest fraternal greetings to the working class and the people of China on the occasion of the Great Chinese Revolution.*

*The historic Chinese Revolution inspired the people of the whole world in their struggle against imperialism and for Socialism. Despite innumerable hardships the Chinese people overcame the difficulties and carried forward their march towards Socialism.*

*The remarkable achievement of the Chinese people in socialist construction and spectacular victory they have won in development of science and technology including nuclear and space research, have amazed even the people in advanced capitalist countries.*

*The imperialist game to isolate People's China met with complete failure and even the U.S. Government has been forced to normalise relations with China.*

*The Working Committee of the CITU hopes the unity of the Socialist camp would be strengthened which alone would pave the way for final defeat of imperialism.*

# Defeat The Line of Disruption And Suppression

## P. Ramamurti's Address to the CITU Working Committee

Placing his report before the Working Committee of the CITU, P. Ramamurti, the General Secretary, observed that CITU-led unions have scored singular success in the struggle for unity.

At the same time, the struggles conducted by these unions, said Comrade Ramamurti, formed "only a part of the big strike-wave sweeping the country". A large number of struggles were led by local organisations or unions not affiliated to any Central trade union body. Another important feature was that in many cases workers showed an awareness of their duty towards the movements of the peasantry.

Speaking of the struggles which were not led by the CITU, Comrade Ramamurti mentioned the "inspiring victory" of the loco strike in August which was conducted by the All India Loco Running Staff Association. This was "the first victory of railway workers after a number of years scored through direct action", he said, a victory which "has given a big jolt to institutionalised betrayal and strike-breaking on the railways".

Comrade Ramamurti severely criticised the Union Railway Minister's handling of the issue and condemned the role played by the AIRF and NFIR which

"as the agents of the railways opposed a settlement on the basis of eight-hours a day". But the railway mughals had to yield in the long run, "compelled to resort to direct action for saving themselves from sweated labour, for the right to organise", he said, "the workers acted with unprecedented unity and militancy which took the administration and the Government by surprise." The locomen's strike, according to him, has "unmasked the criminal role of the Railway Board" which must be held responsible for involving the country in a strike. Comrade Ramamurti declared that "the trade union movement and all democratic forces must unitedly demand dissolution of the Railway Board, installation of a management with democratic outlook and a complete reversal of the present policy of denial of recognition and right of bargaining to the real representatives of the workers".

Com. Ramamurti said that ever since its inception, the CITU has stick to the line of united action and trade union unity "despite the obstacles and sabotage created by the reformists and revisionists." It was significant, in the circumstances, that the INTUC and AITUC were compelled, on several occasions, to take a united stand

with CITU-led unions. During the disputes at the blast furnace of the Durgapur Steel Project and at the Hindusthan Motors, the INTUC had to make common cause with the CITU.

Describing the July 27 bundh in West Bengal as the "biggest reply to the terror" in the state, Com. Ramamurti said that it was "a glorious achievement of the united action of the democratic forces and the working class". The CITU threw its full weight behind the action. Although the AITUC had given a call for the bundh, "it was clear that they were shying away from a united front with us," said the General Secretary. Anyway, terror was let loose on a large-scale on the eve of the bundh. More than 600 workers belonging to the CITU and other leftist organisations were arrested; even the cadre and workers of the AITUC were attacked, arrested and intimidated. On the whole, the strike was "a huge success". As a followup of the mighty bundh, the AITUC came round to join the CITU in condemning, at a meeting of the State Labour Advisory Board in September, the attacks on trade unions in West Bengal. "It must be noted" recalled Com. Ramamurti, "that recently on a few occasions the initiative for united action has also come from the AITUC leadership," on a few occasions, they sought the CITU's co-operation and on other extended co-operation to the CITU. Joint actions like the bundhs in Andhra, Rajasthan and Tamil-

nadu and a series of joint strikes in Bombay and Maharashtra apart from the most important of all, the West Bengal bundh of 27th July—constitute, according to Com. Ramamurti, “a series of achievements in the struggle for unity in the trade union movement.”

The struggle for unity has followed two main courses—joint action with the AITUC and strengthening of the UCTU. The UCTU has already done something worth while; its biggest achievement was the Convention of Central and State Government employees against the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission that it organised in New Delhi on July 25 and 26. Comrade Ramamurti said that the Convention “became an expression of the desire of lakhs of Central and State employees to forge unity to fight for their demands.”

The main driving force behind unity, observed Comrade Ramamurti, “is the need felt by the mass of workers for united action against the effects of crisis—high prices, electricity shortage, rising unemployment, food shortage and falling real wages”. The West Bengal bundh of July 27, which the CITU fully supported, was a courageous action in the face of repression and terror. In Kerala, there were big strikes, in Cashew, Coffee and rubber plantations and on a number of occasions the CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS and UTUC joined hands in conducting one or the other of the struggles.

The success so far achieved, warned Comrade Ramamurti,

## Greetings To Soviet Working Class and People

ON the occasion of the anniversary of the Great November Revolution, the CITU sends its warm fraternal greetings to the trade unions, the working class and the people of Soviet Union.

The CITU hails the great advance of the Soviet Union in the development of its economy, culture, science, in all spheres affecting the prosperity and security of the people of the USSR.

This advance in the midst of the economic crisis that has engulfed the capitalist world, once more asserts the superiority of the Socialist system established by the triumphant November Revolution, of the system of planned economy guided by the proletarian State.

Along with its developing economic strength, the Soviet Union has developed its military capabilities and striking power which serve to curb the aggressive

designs of American imperialism against the Socialist camp and its threat of a nuclear war.

It is this strength that enabled the Soviet Union to help the freedom struggle of the Bangla Desh and frustrate the reactionary designs of American imperialism on the Indian Sub-Continent.

The economic help given by the USSR to India, the developing trade between the two countries and the Indo-Soviet Treaty have been helpful in our fight against growing dependence of our country on American ‘aid’.

The CITU raises high the banner of proletarian internationalism and greets the great triumphs of the November Revolution. It is confident that the present rift in the Socialist Camp and the World working class will soon be healed and the entire proletarian army will march in unity for the triumph of Socialism and peace all over the world.

did by no means indicate that there was no need to fight the policies of reformist and revisionist leaders. “They mean, said Comrade Ramamurti, “that the first hardles to mass action are being overcome.” He reminded the Working Committee that the INTUC and AITUC leaders still refused the CITU seats on tripartite bodies; the AITUC, in particular, was as vacillating as ever, proof of which came during the struggles at the Bharat Heavy Electricals.

In any case, said Comrade Ramamurti, “the growing disillusionment and discontent among the masses, their wretched condition all dictate greater and bigger united struggles and we must pursue our policy of united front more vigorously than ever before, objective conditions will more and more vindicate our line of unity and united struggles, and defeat the line of disruption and suppression.”

## UCTU Unit Formed In Gorakhpur (U.P.)

A meeting of the trade unions in Gorakhpur district was held on 20th October at Gorakhpur which was attended by over 50 trade union representatives. The meeting decided to form a unit of UCTU in Gorakhpur with Madhukar Dodhe as the Convener.

The meeting decided to organise a rally in the town hall Maidan on 13th November to popularise the UCTU among the workers. It was also decided to hold a Convention at the end of November or beginning of December to chalk out a programme of action of the trade unions on common issues facing all sections of the workers.

## Gujarat State Co-Ordination Committee Of CITU Formed

At a meeting of the representatives of Trade Unions in Gujarat affiliated to the CITU held at Ahmedabad on September 30, a Gujarat State Co-ordination Committee of CITU was formed with two representatives from each Union.

Comrade Vasant Mahendi from Baroda presided and Comrade Chandubhai Patel, Secretary, State CPI(M) and TU leader explained the importance of forming the Co-ordination Committee. Trade Union leaders from Baroda, Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar and other Centres reported on the TU movement in their areas. Special mention was made of the successful struggle of 3000 textile workers of Reliance Mills, Ahmedabad

## Consumer Price Index Numbers

( INDUSTRIAL WORKERS/BASE 1960—100 )

State/Centre	1973			State/Centre	1973		
	June	July	Aug.		June	July	Aug.
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>				<b>Tamilnadu</b>			
Hyderabad	245	255	253	Coimbatore	204	210	211
<b>Assam</b>				Madras			
Digboi	217	222	232	Madurai	221	228	231
<b>Bihar</b>				<b>U. P.</b>			
Jamshedpur	229	238	249	Kanpur	227	239	254
Jharia	231	245	258	<b>West Bengal</b>			
<b>Gujarat</b>				Calcutta			
Ahmedabad	230	236	233	Howrah	219	225	229
Bhavnagar	256	266	260	<b>Delhi</b>	250	256	259
<b>Haryana</b>				<hr/>			
Yamunanagar	238	246	251	<b>Other Centres</b>			
<b>J &amp; K</b>				(On different bases)			
Srinagar	197	201	204	1973			
<b>Kerala</b>				June July Aug.			
Alwaye	260	275	287	Cuttack (1949)	283	297	297
Mundakayam	252	267	279	Berhampur			
<b>M.P.</b>				(1949)			
Bhopal	224	243	249	Jabalpur (1949)	288	307	304
Gwalior	249	263	265	Beawar			
Indore	258	271	276	(1951-52)			
<b>Maharashtra</b>				Himachal			
Bombay	230	235	227	Pradesh (1965)	175	179	183
Nagpur	220	259	260	Goa (1966)	160	158	159
Sholapur	266	281	275	Tripura (1961)	235	222	207
<b>Mysore</b>				<hr/>			
Bangalore	247	250	258	<b>All India Consumer Price Index</b>			
<b>Orissa</b>				(Working Class/General Index)			
Sambalpur	230	235	240	Base			
<b>Punjab</b>				1973      1949      1960			
Amritsar	233	239	243	February	259	213	
<b>Rajasthan</b>				March			
Ajmer	240	246	253	April	269	221	
Jaipur	242	250	256	May	277	228	
<hr/>				June			
for wages, etc., the strike by				July			
Arvind Mill workers for Bonus				August			
and the strike by workers of SLM				295      243			
Maneklal against victimisation.				295      247			

The meeting also decided to hold the first Conference of the State Co-ordination Committee of CITU in November.

Source : Index Sheet, Labour Bureau, Simla

# Judicial Logic Vs. Facts of Life

Judicial logic often gets bogged in the facts of life. In one of our earlier legal notes, we commented how the Supreme Court has, by its decisions, created an army of non-workers. By its interpretation of the word "industry", the Supreme Court has placed whole groups of establishments outside the benefit of the Industrial Disputes Act. The employees of those establishments have, to that extent, been deprived.

One of such decisions is the case of Vizagapatnam Dock Labour Board vs. Stevedores' Association, Vishakhapatnam (1). In that case the Central Government referred to a Tribunal for adjudication the dispute whether the demand for bonus by the Dock Labour Board Workers for the accounting years 1964-65, 1965-66 and 1966-67 was justified. The parties to the reference were the Dock Labour Board, the Stevedores' Association, some individual stevedores and the two workers' unions.

The Stevedore Association contested in its written statement that the workmen were the employees of the Dock Labour Board, whereas the Board claimed that there was no relationship of master and servant between the Board and the workmen.

The Dock Labour Board is the creature of the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act

of 1948 under which again the Vishakhapatnam Dock Workers Regulation of Employment Scheme was framed. Under the Act, the employers of dock labour as well as the Dock workers are required to be registered with the Dock Labour Board. Under the Act and the Scheme, the registered workers are released for employment by the registered employers on such requirement being notified to the Board. The Board maintains a Reserve Pool of Dock workers available for work but not for

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## Arun Prokas Chatterjee

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the time being in the employment of any of the registered stevedores. Obviously the Act as well as the scheme framed under the Act was enacted and framed to ensure regularity of employment of the dock workers and further to secure that an adequate number of dock workers is available for the efficient performance of dock work.

In the case referred to, the Supreme Court comes to the following conclusions :

"...it is evident that the Board is a statutory body charged with the duty of administering the scheme, the object of which is to ensure greater regularity of employment for dock

workers and to secure that an adequate number of dock workers are available for the efficient performance of dock work. The Board is an autonomous body, competent to determine and prescribe the wages allowances and other, conditions of service of the Dock workers. The purport of the Scheme is that the entire body of workers should be under the control and supervision of the Board. The registered employers are allocated monthly workers by the Administrative Body and the Administrative Body supplies, whenever necessary, the labour force to Stevedores from the Reserve Pool. The workmen who are allotted to the registered employers are to do the work under the control and supervision of the registered employers and to act under their directions. The registered employers pay the wages due to the workers to the Administrative Body and the latter, in their turn, as agent of the registered employers, pay them over to the concerned workmen. All these circumstances in our opinion prima facie establish that the Board cannot be considered to be the employer of Dock Labour workmen..."

In that case, the Industrial Tribunal held that the Board was the employer of the dock

workers and that the Board was liable for meeting the claim for bonus.

On the aforesaid reasoning, the Supreme Court set aside the award of the Tribunal and remanded the case to the Tribunal.

But, as we began by saying, logic does often get bogged in the facts of life.

A very recent case, namely, between Workmen of Calcutta Dock Labour Board and another versus Employers in relation to Calcutta Dock Labour Board and others came before the Supreme Court in appeal (2). Several disputes had been referred to the Industrial Tribunal including dispute arising from the demand for mooring allowance for Winchmen. One of the disputes was that several workmen who had been detained under the Defence of India Rules were not taken back by the Board after their release. It will be recalled that, under the Act, no dock worker could get employment unless he was allotted to the registered employer by the Board and every dock worker, in order to get employment, must get himself registered with the Dock Labour Board.

So there is very much of an industrial dispute arising from non-employment of the dock workers but, according to the previous decision of the Supreme Court, the Dock Labour Board was not carrying on an industry and, therefore, the dispute between it and the workmen was not an industrial dispute.

The Tribunal noticed the argument that the Dock Labour Board was not engaged in any industry with the object of earning profit but still could not but hold, that, if the Dock Labour had any grievance, there was no reason why the workers should not be able to raise a dispute under the Act and the Industrial Tribunal must be deemed to have jurisdiction when the appropriate Government had referred the dispute for adjudication.

In the appeal brought before the Supreme Court, the Court shied from looking its previous decision in the face. Now it looked so absurd! And, therefore, the Court goes further and holds, "We see no reason why the Tribunal should not have allowed back wages to them from the period when they reported themselves for resumption of duty to the date of reinstatement..." The stevedores' association was directed to put in the necessary amount.

#### Not In Order

But the Dock Labour Board, logically enough, raised the plea that the reference was not in order. Mr. Justice Grover who gave the judgement answers the question thus, "...the question about that Board not carrying on an industry has been already settled by this Court...In view of our decision any observations of the Tribunal which are in conflict with our decision will have no force."

Can anything be made out of these last observations? ■

- 1) AIR 1970 *Supreme Court* 1926.
- 2) AIR 1973 *Supreme Court* 2251.

## TUIAFPW SECRETARY VISITS INDIA

Com. Kuzmin, Secretary of the Trade Union International for Agriculture, Forestry and Plantation Workers (TUIAFPW), Prague, who was in India recently, called at the Calcutta office of the All India Plantation Workers' Federation on September 25 and held informal discussions.

Com. Kuzmin who had come to India at the invitation of the All India Kisan Sabha expressed happiness for having been able to convey personally his greetings to the AIPWF which had been affiliated to his organisation only a few weeks ago. On behalf of the AIPWF, Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary, and Vimala Ranadive, Secretary, welcomed him.

In course of the discussions, during which Harekrishna Konar, General Secretary of the AIKS, was also present, Com. Kuzmin dwelt mainly on the importance of forging a broad-based unity on definite trade union issues. He also affirmed his support for working class struggles against the negation of democratic rights. In this connection, he specially referred to Chile and said that India's working class should raise its voice against the atrocities perpetrated in the latin American country.

In reply, Monoranjan Roy told the TUI representative that all sections of the masses in India, including the working class, have condemned the atrocities in Chile and have declared their solidarity with its people. He also explained to Com. Kuzmin how united struggles were building up in India's plantations and cited numerous instances in which workers had fought against managements under the joint auspices of the NTUC, AITUC and CITU. ■

# CITU Demands Better Deal For Plantation Workers

**T**WENTY-Six years after independence and 22 years after the passing of the Plantation Labour Act (1951), the average plantation worker in India still lives in poverty and squalor. The question why his lot did not improve even after a series of welfare measures, mainly in the form of legislation, is bound to raise a few other pertinent questions. Now that a Plantation Labour (Amendment) Bill (1973) has been prepared and introduced in Parliament, the All India Plantation Workers' Federation (CITU) has addressed a letter to the Joint Select Committee suggesting a number of far-reaching changes in the Act in order to give the plantation workers a better deal.

There is no doubt that the Plantation Labour Act (1951) had become absolutely out of date. In the first place, its provisions were woefully inadequate; then, whatever little it recommended was, by and large, not implemented by the plantation owners. This is borne out by the findings of different committees and study-groups appointed at different times by the Government.

Housing is a case in hand. A special Committee was appointed by the Union Government in 1964 to go into the problem of housing in tea plantations. After the publication of its report, housing loans and subsidies upto

a total of 87½ per cent of the actual cost of production were offered, and a good deal of noise was made about the scheme. But what did it achieve? According to the Tea Board, while there was a total of 100,444 *non-resident* workers in tea gardens in 1961, the number went up to 119,059 in 1968—an increase of about 20 per cent in 7 years.

The amendment suggested in the new Bill seeks to give protection to those workers who live outside the plantations. In a new section which substitutes for section 15B, it is suggested that the employer should “provide and maintain necessary housing accommodation for every worker residing outside the plantation, who has put in six months of continuous service in such plantations and who has expressed a desire in writing to reside in the plantation”. A pious wish which overlooks the utter inability of the Government machinery to enforce such provisions or to deal effectively with defaulting plantation owners.

## Trifles

The Plantation Labour Act of 1951 did by no means lack in good intentions. It had taken care to provide even for trifles like baby creches in plantations “wherein more than 50 women workers are employed”. But the Study Group appointed in 1969 by the National Commission on Labour for tea plantations and

the one for Coffee and Rubber plantations both found serious irregularities in the running of creches which defeated their very purpose. The Study Group on Tea observes, “Inconvenient location, lack of suitable feeding arrangements and experienced creche attendants have proved to be obstacles to the success of this experiment.” The Government, meanwhile, looked on benignly.

The Plantation Workers' Federation welcomes the amendment of Section 19 in the new Bill which seeks to revise working hours in plantations from 54 and 40 hours a week to 48 and 27 hours a week for every worker. There are however, seasons to doubt whether the reduced working hours would be enforced at all.

Another serious lacunae in the new Bill relates to its applicability. The proposed amendment to section 1 lays down that the Plantation Labour Act would now apply to all plantations measuring 6.5 hectares or above and employing 20 or more workers. Uptill now, only plantations measuring 10.117 hectares and employing a minimum of 30 people came under the purview of the Act. Nevertheless, the new Bill would still exclude from its province a large number of plantations, especially in the southern parts of the country. According to available statistics, the majority of tea, coffee, rubber and cardamom plantations are small undertakings and have areas of between 3 and 5 hectares. The AIPWF, thus, feels that the limit of plantations covered by the Act should be lowered to at least 2.5 hectares.

( On Page 11 )

# Resist The Capitalist Offensive

## B. T. Ranadive's Call To The CITU Working Committee

**S**PEAKING to the Working Committee of the CITU which met in New Delhi from October 3 to 5, B. T. Ranadive, the CITU's president, pointed out that the toiling masses in India were now faced with a two-fold offensive. On the one hand, they were driven to desperation by the spiralling prices; on the other, there was repression whenever they moved to defend themselves. Both would have to be resisted, he said.

In the six months since the last meeting of the Working Committee, the country's economy has moved deeper into the morasses. The spectre of famine was stalking the countryside; shortages—by and large man-made—had hit the supply of all essential commodities, foodgrains, electricity and even industrial raw materials like steel, cement and yarn. The worst sufferers were the unorganised and defenceless rural masses who were being slowly starved to death.

The wholesale price index for all commodities rose by as much as 21.1 per cent during the period between August 1972 and August 1973. Prices soared beyond the reach of the people, but all that the Government did was to regularise the arbitrary prices rises imposed by the wholesalers. This, according to Comrade Ranadive, "has made a mockery of the consumers' price indices as a guide to the changes in the cost of living of the working class," and, at the same time, "has already led to a rapid erosion of the D.A." He added that the present

situation has reduced the indices to "a complete farce", as the so-called regulated prices, "at which nothing is available", formed the basis of compilation.

"This makes it all the more necessary", declared Comrade Ranadive, "to secure by legislative sanction need-based wages for workers—guaranteed need based standard, free from the effects of official price manipulation and index fraud". To expect the Government to control prices, according to him, was "pure moonshine". So, the trade union movement must press for the nationalisation of the entire foodgrains trade.

### Reign Of Terror

B. T. Ranadive opened his speech with a tribute to the heroic comrades who had fallen victims either to police bullets or the assassin's dagger during the last few months. He reminded his listeners that the reign of terror was continuing in West Bengal, Tamilnadu, Kerala and other states where class vengeance was being wreaked on democratic workers. In Madras, V. P. Chintan was waylaid and severely assaulted; in West Bengal, hundreds of comrades were languishing in jails; in the police stations of Kerala, now ruled by the Congress-CPI combine, women were raped.

Comrade Ranadive referred

to the events in Chile and expressed the CITU's solidarity with the people of Chile in their struggle against the CIA-propped military junta. He paid tributes to the memory of Dr. Allende "who refused to surrender to the enemies of the working class".

Welcoming the repatriation of prisoners now in progress simultaneously in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, Comrade Ranadive stated, "We stand for the establishment of peaceful and friendly relations among the three countries of the sub-continent in the common interest of the democratic and socialist movements of the three peoples". He warned, however, that forces against friendship and settlement were very much active. While the American imperialists were "busy laying the basis for future tension and discord to regain the lost initiative", reactionary parties like the Jana Sangh in India were "on the lookout to discredit any move for peaceful settlement as national surrender".

Com. Ranadive dwelt at length on the issue of the country's economy. He quoted statistics and said that at the present rate of growth it was no wonder that there were 7.5 million registered unemployed in India. In some important industries like textile and tobacco, the absolute number of employed has, in fact, gone down over the last

five years. "The stagnating economy is strangulating employment," he said, "and there are no prospects that the situation will improve unless a fight is put up against all its distortions. This is no longer a question of factory or industry, but of the entire society and of the class policies of the Government". He demanded that the government either find jobs for the unemployed or pay them an allowance.

The capitalists, according to available data, were doing as well as ever. The dividend rate for the year 1972-73 was as high as 12.2 per cent and more than a hundred companies retained profits of over Rs. 1 crore. The foreign monopolists also continued their loot; one US-owned oil company declared dividends to the tune of 81.25 per cent!

At the same time, foreign collaboration in the public sector was proving more a hindrance than a help. Imported machinery broke down repeatedly, as at Durgapur and Cochin; targets were never reached. The bureaucrats conveniently made scapegoats of the workers, but their argument held no water. At Durgapur, for instance, the CITU-led union was the first to point out that the construction of the plant was defective and that production capacity was exaggerated.

Com. Ranadive warned that

while workers' real wages were being eroded by the rising prices, the Government was contemplating measures like a freeze on wages. He extended the CITU's full support to the struggle of the central Government employees for need-based minimum wages. He referred, in this connection, to the important role played by the CITU during the state employees' strike in Rajasthan. Speaking of the strikes by locomen, Bombay's doctors, power engineers, Calcutta's stevedore workers, Com. Ranadive condemned the attitude of the Central Government to these strikes.

### Urge For Unity

While there was a strong urge for unity among workers, trade unions like the INTUC tended to come to terms with the authorities behind the back of the workers. The scandalous agreement for a 7-day week in Bombay's textile mills which was signed by the Congress-led RMMS was an example. It was only when the general body of workers led by the CITU, AITUC, and Lal Nishan resisted the move jointly that the plan was withdrawn.

Comrade Ranadive observed that the recent months have thrown up new challenges to the trade union movement in India. The CITU must wage a relentless fight against the open communal exploitation of the muslim minorities by the Muslim League and must, at the

same time, "devote special attention to enlist minority workers in our common struggle". The harijans also were being singled out for savage repression; their homes were burnt, their women raped and their land taken away. This, according to Comrade Ranadive, was "nothing but the perfecting of the apparatus of state repression and the first step towards establishment of one-party dictatorship." All trade unions should voice a united protest against the tyrannies.

Comrade Ranadive expressed his happiness at the fact that the CITU's efforts for united struggles had been rewarded with considerable success. "We must vigorously pursue the line of united action", he declared, "we must strengthen the unity already embodied in the UCTU and see that it develops into broader unity."

### Plantation Workers

(From Page 9)

Another section of workers who never came within the jurisdiction of the Plantation Labour Act are the ones belonging to cinchona, cocoa, olive, banana and cashew plantations which were not covered by the Act at all. This, indeed, is a gross injustice. Section 1 of the principal Act (Subsection 4a and 4b) should be amended appropriately, so that these workers actually receive benefits to which they are entitled in all other countries.

The Plantation Labour (Amendment) Bill, 1973, is a step in the right direction, although it has its own limitations. The CITU hopes that the Joint Select Committee is aware of them, would take note of them and would make all possible effort to make the Bill more comprehensive than it is now.

# CITU Working Committee Meets Line of Unity And United Action To Continue

**T**HE Working Committee of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions met at the Constitution Club in New Delhi from 3rd to 5th October 1973. Thirty Six members and five invitees attended. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, presided.

The meeting began with the members of the Working Committee paying warm homage to the martyrs who had laid down their lives fighting police repression and gangster attacks. The meeting also expressed its heartfelt condolences at the untimely death of Com. Chandrasekhar, member of the Delhi Committee of the CITU.

The Working Committee also paid warm tributes to the memory of Dr. Allende, President of Chile, who was murdered by the counter-revolutionary military junta and mourned the death of Pablo Neruda, the revolutionary poet of Chile and a great anti-fascist.

B. T. Ranadive, then made his opening speech (see Centre pages for extracts of his speech).

## **Coup and Massacre in Chile Condemned**

Moved by Jyoti Basu, Vice-President and supported by Samar Mukherjee, Treasurer, a resolution was adopted by the Committee denouncing the counter-revolutionary coup in Chile, the massacre of thousands

of fighting people and demanding the release of Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile. It also called upon all progressive forces to raise their voice for his release.

## **General Secretary's Report**

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, then submitted his report. The report reviewed the developments and the activities of the CITU since the Second Conference held at Ernakulam in April last, the big united mass actions sweeping the country and the important role played by the CITU affiliates in building up united actions of the working class. (For extracts of the Report see elsewhere in this issue).

Monoranjan Roy, Secretary, then gave a brief report of his talks with Com. Kuzmin, representative of the TUI of Agriculture, Forestry and Plantation Workers who visited Calcutta recently. The All India Plantation Workers Federation has been affiliated to TUI body recently.

Samar Mukherjee, Treasurer read out the accounts for January-September, 1973, which was adopted by the meeting.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, then reported on the industry-wise activities of the CITU since the Second Conference and on the basis of which the meeting took some organisational deci-

sions to improve industrywise co-ordination and guidance of activities.

The meeting then took up discussion of the General Secretary's report after which it was adopted. R. Umanath, Monoranjan Roy, E. Balanandan, Balachandran, P. K. Kurane, N. Prasada Rao, Mohan Punamia, Chandi Prasad, Satyanarayan Tewari and Ghanashyam Saran Sinha took part in the discussions.

P. Ramamurti then initiated a discussion on the question of productivity in which R. Umanath, M. K. Pandhe, K. Ramani, N. Prasada Rao, Sudhin Kumar and Ravindranath participated.

The Working Committee then adopted a report of the Credentials Committees granting affiliations to 30 unions with a membership of 3480.

The Working Committee also adopted several resolutions on important national and international issues after discussions by members.

## **On China and Soviet Union**

The Committee sent its warm felicitations to the working class and people of China on the occasion of the anniversary of the foundation of the People's Republic of China and wished them further successes in socialist construction of their country.

The meeting also warmly welcomed the Soviet help of 2 million tons of wheat when our country was in dire need of it, which was an expression of deep solidarity and friendship of the Soviet working class and people for the people of India.

## **Relaxation of tension in the Sub-continent**

The Working Committee welcomed the relaxation of tension in the sub-continent, following the start of repatriation of Pakistani POWs and civilians in Pakistan and Bangladesh, which was essential for advancing the cause of democracy and Socialism in the sub-continent. It also sent warm greetings to the workers and peasants of Pakistan for their fight for elementary democratic rights and for peace and friendship in the sub-continent.

## **Mounting Repression**

Reviewing the internal developments, the Working Committee denounced the barbarous repression and Police atrocities let loose by the Government on the people. Democratic rights and civil liberties were being trampled underfoot every day through indiscriminate shootings of starving people agitating for food or trying to dehoard stocks, through gangster attacks against trade unions and T. U. officials, through torture and rape in jails and police lock-ups. All these, the Committee held, spell increasing danger for democracy in India.

The Committee condemned the framing of the Indian Penal Code Amendment Bill by the Government to strengthen the machinery of repression. It gave draconian powers to the bureaucracy to suppress the people, sought to protect the unlawful activities of public

servants, armed the police with power to kill any one and attack T. U. rights with impunity and even provided lighter punishment for public servants for sexual offences and seducing of women than was proposed for other citizens. The Committee demanded withdrawal of this obnoxious Bill, condemned the use of DIR, MISA, etc. against strikes and democratic movements and demanded immediate release of all political prisoners.

## **Congress Surrender to Landlords and Hoarders**

While reviewing the prevailing economic situation, the Committee expressed sympathy for the sufferings of the working class and people due to the skyrocketing prices of necessities brought about by the Congress surrender to landlords and hoarders. It condemned the Government's decision not to take over wholesale trade in rice and to raise the issue prices of rice and wheat.

## **Need-based Wages**

The Committee noted how the rising prices have made a mockery of the Cost of Living Indices and have wiped out all the gains in D. A., bonus and wage increases achieved by the workers in the last two years. It warned the workers that they must fight not only for D. A. but also for a need-based minimum wage. At the same time, the working class must strive to protect the rural masses against exploitation and fight against hoarding, for nationalisation of

foodgrains trade, compulsory procurement from landlords, for fair price to small peasants, without which they cannot protect their gains.

The Committee strongly condemned the policy of the Jute Corporation which, instead of protecting the jute cultivators, has joined the IJMA in defrauding them. It welcomed the initiative taken by the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union for joint Conference of jute workers and peasants in defence of the jute cultivators.

## **Atrocities on Harijans**

The Working Committee denounced the growing atrocities on Harijans in the form of forcible evictions, murders, rapes on women, etc. It regarded these as signs of accentuation of the class struggles in the villages and called upon the working class to protest and fight in defence of the harijans. It also decided to approach all central T. U. organisations for observance of a common day to voice the protest of the working class.

## **Support to Struggles**

The Working Committee lent its full support to the struggle of the Central Government employees against the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission and also to their demands for need-based minimum wage, bonus and full neutralisation. It condemned the delaying tactics of the Government and expressed the confidence that the employees will be able to develop united resistance to achieve their demands.

( See Page 15 )

# Agreement With Loco Running Staff Being Sabotaged

**T**HE leaders of the Loco Running Staff Association in a statement issued on October 18 have indicted the Government for not implementing the agreement arrived at on August 13 last. They have also circulated a memorandum, addressed to the Labour Minister, in which it was pointed out that in many of the DIR or penal measures cases have not been withdrawn. Similarly the question of reduction of duty hours is being resisted by the officers of the Railway Board. The Association also urged upon all democratic and trade union organisations, particularly those of railwaymen, to raise their voice against this.

It is understood that a meeting of the CEC of the Association has been convened in the middle of November to review the situation and take further decision.

Samar Mukherjee, M.P., in letters addressed to the Prime Minister, Railway Minister and Labour Minister, has called upon the Government to ensure implementation of the agreement.

## **AIRF's Strike threat**

In the annual Convention held in October, the All India Railwaymen's Federation decided to prepare for an indefinite strike from February 27, 1974, to realise need-based minimum wages as per 15th I.L.C. norms and other demands.

It has also been decided that the AIRF would organise a convention of all trade union organisations in the railways (excluding NFIR) and other Central Government employees and also all central trade union bodies by November 1973.

George Fernandez has been elected President of the AIRF defeating Peter Alvarez by 67 votes.

## **AIRF leaders break-up Unity**

While the AIRF has given a call for the all-India strike and for all-out unity, the local AIRF leaders in the Integral Coach Factory are trying to disrupt unity. In August 1972, three unions in the Factory merged into a single union under A.I.R.F. Since then, it had been conducting several successful struggles. Just before the annual convention of the AIRF, the local leaders issued leaflets repudiating the merger. An appeal made to Peter Alvares, the then President, for continuing the merger had gone in vain. Every railwayman is thus reminded of the fact how just before the struggles in 1960 and 1968, militant unions like Dakshina Railway Employees' Union and CLW Labour Union were disaffiliated by the AIRF.

## **Struggles of Railwaymen on the increase**

After the successful struggle of the Loco Running Staff, new sections of railwaymen are being drawn into the vortex of struggle.

The workers of the railway workshop at Kota (Western Railway) went on a tool-down strike, in protest against suspension of a worker, which continued for seven days. The Western Railway Labour Union has taken up the cause of the workers and is building up further movement. Samar Mukherjee, MP., addressed a largely attended meeting of railwaymen at Kota on October 16 and has also represented the issue to the Government.

The workers of New Bongaigaon workshop resorted to successive tool down strikes for 2 days in August and for 13 days in September last on their demands and have emerged victorious.

The electrical staff of Bhojudih (SER) went on a strike action in protest against police brutality. The local LRSA and others supported the struggle and the authorities were forced to settle the demands.

The shed mechanical staff of Eastern Railway, under the leadership of their Association have started a "work to rule" movement from October 16. The authorities have been forced to start negotiations with the leaders after all the category-wise associations and various other organisations went in a joint deputation to the General Manager.

The Staff of loco and carriage sheds at Bilaspur downed their tools for 2 days demanding early payment before the Durga Pujas.

The Loco Running Staff at Waltair (S.E.R.) resorted to mass sick leave movement under the leadership of the LRSA for eight hours on their local demands.

### **Conference of Electrical Staff**

About 240 delegates of Electrical Department of S.E. Railway met in a Conference at Santragachi on September 24 & 25. The meeting expressed concern over introduction of End-on-generation which is aimed at reducing the manpower requirement and the retrograde recommendations of Third Pay Commission. A. K. Ghosh and K. N. Ghosh have been re-elected President and Secretary-General of the Association.

### **United Committee of Railwaymen (N. F. R.) meets**

The United Committee of Railwaymen (Northeast Frontier Railway) met at Katihar on October 20 and decided on the following programme against the decision of the Government on the recommendations of Third Pay Commission :

1. Mass squatting on October 31 along with other Central Government employees.
2. A Convention of railwaymen and other Central Government employees on zonal basis in November 1973.

The Committee has welcomed the proposal for a National Convention mooted by the Confederation and urged upon all concerned to hold the same in November.

In a separate resolution, the Committee urged the Government to ensure implementation of the agreement with the Loco Running Staff and pledged its support to the just struggle of the loco running Staff.

### **DREU launches movement**

The Working Committee of the Dakhsin Railway Employees Union met at Goldenrock on September 27 and decided to launch a movement against the retrograde recommendations of the Third Pay Commission. It decided to support and participate in the joint convention of Central and State Government employees to be held at Madras on November 4. In a separate resolution it decided to conduct mass squatting at all railway centres on November 14. In another resolution it supported the Loco Running Staff in their struggle for implementation of the agreement.

### **Casual Labour of S. C. Railway Demonstrate**

The casual Labour of the South Central Railway observed 'Demands Day' on September 19 through largely attended demonstrations at Kazipet, Vijayawada, Bapatla, Dornakal and other centres for Rs. 6 as daily wage, permanency etc. The authorities vindictively transferred 86 workers out of Kazipet against which a hunger strike started from October 3. On October 12, a mammoth demonstration took place at Secunderabad before the General Manager's office under the leadership of South Central Railway Employees' Union. A public meeting was also held there which was addressed by leaders of the Employees' Union, CITU, Confederation of Central Government Employees and various other unions. Samar Mukherjee, M. P. has raised the issue with the Railway Minister.

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## **CITU Working Committee Meets**

( From Page 13 )

The Committee also congratulated the Rajasthan State Government employees and the doctors of Maharashtra for their heroic and successful struggles and supported their demands. The Committee also supported the demand of the doctors, engineers and scientists that the inferior conditions of service imposed on them in comparison with IAS officers should be ended forthwith.

### **Loco Workers Congratulated**

The Committee congratulated the loco workers on their valiant

and successful struggle against 14 hours' work which compelled the Government to reduce it to 10 hours. It warned the Railway workers and the public against the attempts of the Railway Board officials and other bureaucrats to sabotage the agreement and demanded that the Government should pull-up these anti-people bureaucrats.

The Working Committee decided to hold the next General Council Meeting in February, 1974.

# MEETINGS OF CITU STATE COMMITTEES

Andhra Pradesh

## Maharashtra

A meeting of the Maharashtra State Committee of CITU was held at Bombay on 20th October. S. Y. Kolhatkar President Maharashtra State Committee presided over the meeting.

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU explained the decisions of the Working Committee meeting held at New Delhi in the first week of October. He explained the CITU's standpoint on productivity in the light of discussions in the Working Committee meeting.

P. K. Kurane General Secretary Maharashtra State Committee submitted a report of activities since Second Conference of the CITU. He referred to several Bundh and strike struggles on the question of famine conditions, bonus and seven day week. He also noted the formation of Maharashtra unit of UCTU as an important achievement.

The meeting decided to launch campaign against fraudu-

lent indices, food scarcity and high prices.

The meeting by a resolution supported the struggle of Calico Chemical workers. B. T. Ranadive addressed a meeting of the workers and expressed solidarity of the CITU.

The meeting by another resolution supported the just struggle of Arab people against Israel.

It was decided to hold the Second Maharashtra Conference of CITU in December.

## Punjab & H. P.

THE Punjab and Himachal Pradesh State Committee met on September 29-30 at Batala in a two-day session which was attended by 75 delegates of 23 Unions representing over 8,000 members and 25 fraternal delegates from various organisations.

Com. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU, inaugurated the conference.

The General Secretary of the State Committee submitted his report covering politico-economic situation in the state. The conference adopted resolutions on rising prices, unemployment, bonus for all, anti-working class policy of the State and Central Governments.

The conference was followed by a big rally addressed by Com. Hari Singh Kang, General Secretary and others.

THE CITU Andhra Pradesh Committee met on 15th & 16th October under the presidency of Comrade Parasa Satyanarayana. Comrade Prasada Rao, General Secretary, submitted his report which specially mentioned the struggles of Coramandel Fertilisers, H.M.T., Gamon, Railway Casual labour, spinning mills etc. and the Bundh on 24th August. Resolutions were also adopted on recent developments in Middle East, counter-revolutionary coup in Chile, retrograde recommendations of Central Pay Commission, congratulating the Coramandel Fertiliser workers for their 34 days strike, condemning the H.M.T. management of Hyderabad for discharging 3 union leaders etc.

The meeting decided to contact other Trade Unions to form a State branch of the UCTU.

The meeting also decided to invite CITU to hold the General Council meeting in Visakhapatnam.

## CORRECTION

*On pages Seven to Fourteen of this issue, the month of issue should read as 'November 1973' in place of 'October, 1973'. The error in printing is deeply regretted. Ed.*

## CORRECTION

In September 1973 issue of The Working Class (Vol. 3 No. 1), in the Statistics on Educated Unemployed on page 14, in the last line the totals under the columns of Men, Women and Total Job-seekers should read as 26,10,601; 4,64,745 and 30,75,346 respectively in place of 22,23,753; 33,88,074 and 26,11,827.

# NEWSLETTER

## Kerala

### Prolonged Wage & Bonus Struggle

Defying ban on strikes, 4000 workers of Idikki Hydel Project observed token strike on September 27, demanding reinstatement of 300 retrenched workers, at the call of 8 unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC, INTUC, UTUC etc.

Workers of Cominco-Binani are on continuous strike since September 8 for 33 per cent Bonus. Workers of Tata Oil Mills, Ernakulam, resorted to token strike on September 25 on demand for Bonus.

After 3 days strike from September 24, about 1000 light-rage workers of Cochin Port won a settlement which will give them 40 per cent wage-rise, 10 per cent bonus, benefits as per Wage Board and Rs. 100 as recoverable interim relief.

State Transport workers staged one hour strike on September 28 to protest against suspension of one worker. The State Government has declared State Transport a public utility service and banned strike for six months.

Led by the Action Committee all workers of power-loom factories in Cannanore district resorted to strike on October 8 and picketed the District Collector protesting against yarn famine and resulting unemployment.

There was a General Strike

and hartal in Feroke-Cheruvannoor panchayat on October 10 in support of the strike of the Tile workers of the Zone.

16,000 Cardamom plantation workers of Udumvanchole Taluk are on strike from September 16 demanding Bonus. 10,000 Bidi workers of Palghat district also went on strike on October 9 demanding 10 per cent Bonus and higher D.A.

75,000 agricultural workers of Palghat District and agricultural labourers of Kottayam District are on indefinite strike from September 25 and 29 respectively on their demands for increased wages. One lakh agricultural workers of Alleppey District resorted to a token strike on October 1 demanding 25 per cent rise in wages etc.

Protesting against goonda and police attacks on the striking agricultural workers of Palghat, all other agricultural workers of the district struck work on October 12 which brought all farming operations to a stand still.

### Plantation Workers Plan Indefinite Strike

The Action Committee for United Action consisting of CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, LNO and other independent Trade unions warned the managements of Tea, Coffee, Rubber and Cardamom estates that 3 lakh estate workers all over Kerala will go on an indefinite strike from November 8 if the Plantation Labour Commi-

## Woman Plantation Worker Victimised

For giving evidence before the Joint Select Committee on Plantation Labour Amendment Bill, a woman worker of the Rubber factory of K.D.H.P. & Co.—Smt. Vadivoo has been charge-sheeted by the management. Her only fault was that she stated some facts regarding creche facilities obtaining in the factory.

Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, All India Plantation Workers' Federation (AIPWF) has already protested against this and has written to all concerned including the Trade Union International body to which the AIPWF is affiliated.

tee meeting to be held on November 5 does not bring about a settlement of their demands. The Committee, at its meeting held on October 19, called on the workers to prepare for the struggle.

## West Bengal

### Support for Struggle of Kesoram Rayon Workers

In a joint statement issued on October 27, the CITU, AITUC and INTUC supported the long struggle of the Kesoram Rayon workers against lock-out. They condemned the refusal of the Birla management to concede the legitimate demands of the unions and urged upon the Government to take over the mill and run it through co-operation of workers.

Earlier, on October 19, a

Convention held at Calcutta had extended full support to the struggling workers and called upon all Trade Unions to extend all help & support to them.

### **Trade Unions Condemn Israeli Aggression**

Eleven Central T. U. organisations, including the CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, two UTUC's, TUCC and HMP, in a joint statement condemned the Israeli aggression backed by USA and supported the Arab countries in their fight against this aggression. They called upon the working class to demonstrate their solidarity with the people of Arab countries.

### **Attack on Braithwaite Workers Condemned**

Nine Central T. U. organisations, including CITU, AITUC, INTUC and HMS, issued a statement on October 17 condemning the attacks on the workers of Braithwaite & Co. (India) Ltd. in Calcutta and on the leaders of AITUC and CITU unions. It urged upon the Government to stop these attacks and ensure freedom of T. U. functioning.

In a separate statement, Jyoti Basu, Vice-President of CITU and President, Braithwaite Mazdoor Karmachari Union also condemned these attacks by rowdies of the Congress Union helped by antisocials from outside.

### **News Briefs**

At the call of the Co-ordination Committee, 90 per cent of

the State Government employees observed "Pay Boycott" on October 31 and November 1.

Nine Central T. U. Organisations, including the CITU, AITUC and INTUC, have in a joint statement protested against the proposed rise in Electricity rates announced by the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation.

### **Tamilnadu**

**L**ED by the Plantation Workers' Sangh (CITU), the plantation workers of Kanyakumari District forced the management to come to a settlement on September 15 conceding higher wages, D.A. and house rent allowance to the workers. After this agreement, the 7-month old strike of the Kulasekaram New Ambadi Plantation was called off.

Sustained agitations and a token strike on August 24 by the loading and unloading workers of Thirupur led to an agreement with three major merchants' associations, under which 2000 workers will get increased income of 20 to 100 per cent.

Demanding stoppage of victimisation, etc. telephone workers of Kovai, Nilgiri, Salem, Trichy and Tanjore went on strike from September 18. They went back to work on October 2 after the authorities accepted their demand.

The long-standing bonus dispute of the Tanjore Tantex Nettur Banniyan Workers (led by the CITU Union) was settled on October 1. The workers will get 9.5 per cent bonus for 1972.

Led by the CITU Union

temporary workers of Madurai Corporation forced the authorities to pay Diwali advance of Rs. 75 to 150.

Led by the Kovai Dist. General Engineering and Mechanical Workers' Union (CITU) workers of Universal Radiator(P) Ltd. secured a Bonus of 30% and Rs. 50 ex-gratia for 1972-73.

Demanding Bonus at par with other transport workers of the State, transport workers of Kanyakumari Dist. went on indefinite strike from October 15. Comrade P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU has extended full support to their struggle.

### **Heroic Struggle of Madras IIT Employees**

2000 employees and workers of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras recently waged a heroic struggle for 15 days. Protesting against the suspension of 9 employees, including the Vice-President and General Secretary of the Employees' Association, they went on spontaneous strike on September 5. The authorities adopted various means to beat down the resistance of employees, including handing over the campus to the Police, arrests of Association leaders, threats of dismissal etc. A settlement was ultimately reached on September 21 and the authorities agreed to withdraw all victimisation measures. During the struggle, the employees and workers received massive support from IIT employees of Kharagpur, Kanpur and Delhi, from students and from the CITU, SFI, AIEEA and other organisations.

## West Bengal

# Token Strike By Jute Workers On November 5

**A**T the call of all the Central Trade Unions connected with Jute industry, Jute workers of West Bengal will observe one-day token strike on November 5 on the demand for immediate nationalisation of Jute industry including foreign trade in Jute products and entire Jute trade. A joint mass rally of the Jute workers will be held before the IJMA office at 2 P.M. on the same day.

The decision to give the call for strike was taken at a joint meeting of representatives of CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, two UTUC's, TUCC and NFITU held in Calcutta on October 21.

The Central Trade Unions have also called upon the jute workers of West Bengal to keep ready to launch industry-wide continuous strike in December 1973 if their longstanding demands, including implementation of the 1972 agreement, fixation of wages and grades for daily and monthly rated workers,

20 per cent Bonus, etc. are not settled satisfactorily.

### All India Convention of Jute Workers

Earlier, on October 18, at a meeting of the Organising Committee of the All India Jute Workers convention held in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Niren Ghosh, M.P., all Trade Unions connected with Jute industry was called upon to get ready for an all-India industry-wide strike of Jute workers on the demand for nationalisation of Jute industry without compensation including raw jute trade and foreign trade in Jute products and for uniform wage and other facilities for Jute workers all over India.

The meeting, which was attended by representatives of Jute workers from West Bengal, Andhra and Uttar Pradesh, also decided to hold an all-India Conference in December, 1973 to form an All India Federation of Jute Workers.

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## BHILAI WORKERS BOYCOTT BONUS

Despite attempts by the management to divide and confuse the workers, the overwhelming majority of the workers of Bhilai Steel Plant are boycotting 8.33 per cent bonus for 1972-73 declared by the management as against the workers' demand for 20 per cent.

The adamant attitude of the management has united the workers in a grim determination to proceed to direct action. But the initiative of the Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union (CITU) for joint action has failed so far due to the vacillations of the INTUC and AITUC unions. Though the AITUC and INTUC unions were later forced to agree to a one-hour strike on October

## GOA

# Dock Workers Plan Indefinite Strike

Led by the Marmagoa waterfront Workers' Union (CITU) all dock workers of Marmagoa port i.e. winchmen, gangmen, etc. plan to go on indefinite strike on the demand for Bonus for 1972-73. A strike notice has been served on the Dock Labour Board and Stevedors Association on October 8. After the 4-days General Strike in August last, the Stevedors/Employers had agreed to grant some ex-gratia in addition to 8.33 per cent Bonus before the Diwali. But so far no agreement has been signed.

The Crane Drivers working in the Marmagoa Port Trust have also given notice on October 1 for an indefinite strike on their Charter of Demands submitted in May, 1973.

### Struggles continue

Since the Second Conference held in April last, the CITU has continued to initiate and forge united actions of workers. Besides the 4 day united strike of Marmagoa Dock Workers for Bonus, the workers of Dabolim Workshop of Jain Engineering resorted to 13-day strike, the mining workers of Shatilal Co. conducted a 9 day strike from August 27 for Bonus and a number of other struggles in shipbuilding industries have taken place.

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15—as against the CITU unions demand for a one-day strike—the INTUC union ultimately backed out and unilaterally started hunger strike from October 17.

However, due to the pressure of workers they have later agreed to a strike ballot on October 20. Despite some confusion due to these betrayals, the workers are in a fighting mood and are determined to continue the resistance.

## Reports From Unions

### Coal Workers Resist Victimisation

**L**ED by the Koyla Sramik Sangh (CITU), the Coal mine workers of Banki and Surakachar collieries of the NCDC are agitating for their demands including reinstatement of 3 retrenched Union leaders. The KSS has submitted a memorandum threatening direct action if the demands are not settled forthwith.

Com. Abul Hassan, General Council member of CITU visited the area towards the end of September and addressed meetings of workers at Banki, Korba and Surakachar.

### Adityapur Workers on Struggle path

Organised under the banner of Adityapur Industrial Mazdoor Union (CITU), workers of factories in the area are more and more taking to the path of struggle. The workers of Pioneer Engineering Works, who are agitating for 20% Bonus, went on a token strike on September 29 and on indefinite strike from October 2 after the Management suspended 3 leading workmen. The workers of Pravin Engineering Co. and Bharat Refractories are also on continuous strike for wage rise, bonus and against retrenchment.

### B.T. Ranadive at Jamshedpur

On the invitation of Tisco

Karmachari Union, B. T. Ranadive, President CITU, recently visited Jamshedpur and addressed a meeting of Steel workers as well as a mass meeting there.

### News Briefs

\* A Convention of Textile Workers' Unions of Tiruchy, South Arcot and North Arcot districts of Tamilnadu and of Pondichery, affiliated to the CITU, was held at Tiruchy on September 20. It was presided over by Com. R. Umanath, General Secretary, Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU and attended by 87 delegates.

\* Led by the Zilla Bidi Mazdoor Sabha (CITU), the Bidi workers of Bhopal (M. P.) won an important victory in the form of a declaration of interim relief by the State Government after sustained struggle including a large demonstration on September 19 and continuous Dharna before the Chief Minister's residence from September 24.

\* At the call of the Confederation, Central employees and workers at Shillong observed "All India Protest Day" against the Pay Commission recommendations on October 19 through demonstration, procession and rally. On the same day, Central employees of Silchar also observed Protest Day through a large meeting.

\* Led by the Press Karmachari Sangh (CITU), workers of six big Presses in Patna (Bihar) gave strike notice demanding increased D. A. A settlement was reached which conceded a D. A. rise of Rs. 15 to the workers.

\* On October 12, the Assam Civil Accounts Association organised a mammoth demonstration of Audit and Accounts employees of Assam, Meghalay, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram at Shillong, against the retrograde recommendations of the Third Pay Commission.

\* State Government employees of Shillong observed "Demands Day" on September 27 through a large procession and mass rally.

\* The Annual Conference of the staff and workers of Godavari Barrage (Andhra) was held at Dowleswaram on October 12 under the presidentship of Com. G. S. Balji Das.

\* The Annual General Meeting of the Burn's Employees Union (CITU) was held at Howrah Town Hall on August 25. K. Bhattacharya was in the Chair.

\* The first Annual General Meeting of the Town Bank Employees Union, Kumbakonam was held on September 23. It was attended by more than 250 bankmen and adopted resolutions on Chile, on high prices, etc.