

# THE WORKING CLASS



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## LET THE INDIAN WORKING CLASS Unitedly Defeat Rising Fascism In West Bengal

—B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU

The Working Class of India, the trade union movement in our country, must rouse itself to meet the grim menace facing our class and our people in the wake of the rigged West Bengal Assembly elections.

The creeping shadow of fascism now definitely lengthens over the country, unless the danger is checked and eliminated only by the united working class.

West Bengal has become a slaughter house of every democratic liberty during the last two years. The State saw gangsterism, open murders of leaders of the working class and democratic movement. Assaults and raids on the working class localities, by goondas in the pay of the police. Section 144, curfew, murders, mass arrests, PVA Act, MISA these were the weapons used by the Congress Government to protect the fundamental rights of the people.

During the period preceding the elections, all these weapons were being used to oust tens of thousands of voters from their constituencies and terrorise lakhs of people.

The elections saw the culmination of the process. Now even the formal right of vote was denied to the people. The goonda gangs invaded the polling booths at gun point and in the presence of the police captured the ballot papers and stamped them in favour of the Congress and the Right CP. The Police and military surrounded some areas preventing the voters from exercising their right. Goonda gangs armed with weapons roamed the localities threatening everybody if they went for voting the next day they would be done to death.

In this game of intimidation the Congress goondas trusted nobody, not even the Congress voters. They also were asked to go back in some localities, and were cynically informed that their votes were already cast.

In other constituencies, where open gangsterism could not be organised, falsification, substitution of bogus votes for genuine votes, change of ballot boxes, substitution of the name of defeated candidates in place of the victorious ones by the presiding officers—all these heinous methods were used to secure a fake majority for the Congress. The rigging of the results was thus complete.

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The Constitution was slaughtered; the right to vote was trampled under foot, parliamentary procedures and democratic norms were thrown on the scrap heap.

### **Why this open abandonment of even the pretence of Democracy ?**

Why this gangsterism in West Bengal? Why this open abrogation of every pretence for democracy? None denies that the Congress Party in West Bengal has still sizable following. In the last elections, it is known that it had captured more than a hundred seats. Why then this outburst of gangsterism ?

The plain reason is that the Congress with all its claims of Indira wave, dared not think of winning a majority in the legislature by fair means. Last year, when in the rest of India, it was having a "triumphant march." in West Bengal it had to be content with 13 seats in comparison with 20 secured by the CPI (M).

Since then it has been slandering its opponents while launching a campaign of terror and murder against the people. During the last two years, more than 600 fighters have been killed by the goondas and the police, thousands have been forced to leave the localities, hundreds have been maimed; many women have been raped; thousands are arrested and detained and many thousands are under warrants of arrest.

But neither slander nor terror could break the unbending spirit of the people and working class of West Bengal. The defiant spirit continued to develop in face of the combined attack of the CRP, the goonda gangs and the local police. The slander began to boomerang on the ruling party, honest people

realising who the aggressors were.

To revive its prestige, to assuage the rising anger of the people, the Congress attempted to exploit the Bangladesh developments claiming all credit for itself. It invited Mujib Rahaman for a grand meeting in Calcutta to bolster Congress prestige. While the Bangladesh developments did help the Congress in some sections, the mass of people could not be deflected from their course of opposition to the Congress rule. Their discontent and anger did not abate. On the contrary, it became clear the mounting discontent might find an avalanche like explosion through the ballot box.

The Congress realised it a little too late. Otherwise, it would have postponed elections. Having lost all hope of getting a majority, the ruling party went in for a gangster type of election, a rigged-up election by the use of every unscrupulous means.

The people have not voted for the Congress. They have given no mandate to the Congress. It is clear that the Congress was afraid of the popular vote considering the means adopted by the Congress.

### **For the Congress Party nothing is sacred except its own power**

The West Bengal events once more underline the fact that for the Congress party nothing is sacred except its own power. People's rights, Constitution, rule of law all convenient weapons to be discarded when they go against the interest of the Congress and the capitalist landlord classes. It shows how bourgeois-landlord dictatorship asserts itself when the functioning of parliamentary democracy endangers its interests. It once more reveals the truth that bourgeois-parliamentary democracy conceals

in reality dictatorship of the exploiting classes.

### **Ruling party is afraid of the rising wave of mass struggles**

The West Bengal elections further reveal the acuteness of the class struggle, the great rise in the struggle of the democratic forces of which the ruling party is now mightily afraid. It is because of this that the Congress is not prepared to tolerate even a sizeable opposition, but must rig up the election to have its yes-men all around. It knows that a sizeable opposition in conditions of West Bengal will not be just a decoration setting off Congress democracy, but a big weapon of turning the assembly into a forum of class struggle. So the Congress is intolerant of all opposition and is determined to crush it.

The Congress has been driven to the position by the strong advance of the democratic movement in West Bengal. The innumerable strike battles of the working class, the employees, the struggles of the peasants, students, of women, the great bundhs, the heroic struggles against gangsterism all these had paved the way for a mighty surge forward. The crowning stroke was the alliance of the left parties from which only the revisionist traitors had fled.

The working class and the people of West Bengal had no reason to turn to the Congress. The Congress had heaped unemployment, closures, high prices, victimisation and continuous attacks on the trade union rights; it had defrauded the peasantry and the middle classes by high prices, it had systematically robbed all sections and showed its utter incapacity to relieve unemployment by allowing closures to continue over months, in some cases over more than a year. It was

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# The Railway Budget, The People And The Railway Employees

The Railway Budget presented to Parliament by K. Hanumanthiya Minister of Railways on March 14, betrays the efforts of the railway administration to cover up the dismal failure to run the railway system in the interest of the people and the railway employees.

The Government is systematically extracting more and more money out of the railways for the General Revenue of the Government. The dividend to the General Revenue from the railways went up from Rs. 103.78 crores to Rs. 164.57 crores during 1965-66 and 1970-71.

Besides, concessions in passenger fares and freight rates to the extent of about Rs. 70 crores annually are granted to the big business houses both Indian and Foreign. This fraudulent concessions are covered up in the garb of the so called public utility measures such as loss on unremunerative lines etc.

In many advanced capitalist countries the return on railways taken in General Budget is nominal. However in India the Government has gradually increased the rate of return and imposed additional burden on the people.

Thus the railways constitute one of the major sources of taxation on the people. During the last 5 years the railway Budgets were deficit and additional dose of rise in fare was seen almost every year.

Despite claim of the Railway Minister that this time he has spared third class travellers, the common people will have to face the burden of the Railway Budget since the freight rise is likely to be recovered from them by the employers. Moreover the commuters will pay

higher charges for the monthly or seasonal passes.

The additional surplus for the Government was paid by the railways by imposing additional workload on the workers. The Review of the performance of the Indian Railways published by the Railway Ministry has admitted a substantial rise in the productivity of railway workers during the last two decades. The productivity of staff has been gauged by the number of the traffic units (net tonne Kms plus passenger Kms) moved per employee in the open line.

## Labour Productivity

Year	Traffic units (000) moved per employee on the open line.
1950-51	122
1955-56	121
1960-61	147
1965-66	164
1968-69	178
1969-70	185
1970-71	186

Another study conducted by the Railway Board has also admitted the decline in number of persons required by carrying out certain amount of work.

	No. of Staff permillion	
	Train Kms.	Gross tonne Kms
1950-51	3,144	5,65
1955-56	3,024	5,02
1960-61	2,908	4,11
1965-66	2,882	3,72
1970-71	2,833	3,47

This was obtained partly by introduction of mechanisation and automation in the railways which

has brought down the employment potential of the railway workers.

The rise in productivity of the workshop employees is even more glaring.

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## Seven Milion Italian Workers On Strike

About seven million Italian workers in industry and agriculture stopped work on March 21 in the country's biggest trade union action so far this year.

Industrial workers downed tools for periods of between two and four hours in solidarity with country's 17 lakh farm workers who observed a 24-hour strike. The agricultural workers demanded among other things a 15 per cent rise in daily wage rates.

## Underdeveloped Countries' Debt Increasing

The indebtedness of underdeveloped countries has been growing, causing further stagnation in their economies.

According to a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) of the \$12,200 million (Rs. 10, 650 crores) transferred in 1970 from underdeveloped countries to advanced countries no less than \$5,900 million (Rs. 4425 crores) were absorbed by debt service payments on account of interest and amortisation.

The study further shows that the indebtedness of 80 underdeveloped countries at the end of 1969 was about \$59,000 million (Rs. 44,250 crores), nearly three times as much as in 1961.

**Manpower Ratio**  
( Staff per Unit of repair )

Year	Locomotive	Carriage	Wagon	Rise in productivity over 1957-58
1957-58	14.9	1.49	0.34	—
1965-66	9.9	0.99	0.23	53.0
1970-71	9.5	0.94	0.22	60.7

During 1960-61 and 1970-71 the real wages of the railway employees have almost remained static or declined due to steep rise in prices.

Despite this rise in productivity Railway finances are in the red. The net-revenue receipts to capital at charge has come down from 5.77 per cent in 1960-61 to 4.35 per cent in 1970-71. Instead of pointing out the gross inefficiency of the top-brass in the Railway Board, the Railway Board preferred to blame political parties in the matter. He said,

“The political agitations and bundhs, I am sorry to state, also victimised the railways, causing loss of revenue and inconvenience to the public. Political parties responsible for such agitations and bundhs, I hope will realise that in jeopardising the efficiency and profitability of the biggest public undertakings.”

The Railway Minister while presenting the Budget to Parliament paid tributes to the Railway employees during their role in Bangladesh war but he did not mention why so many cases of victimisation for participating in 1968 strike are not settled. He also did not say why casual workers are allowed to remain temporary by the Railway Board, though thousands have been working for 15 or more years in Railways.

The Railway Minister also failed to explain why the railway workers are denied bonus while all other sections of transport in India like road transport, port and dock, seamen, air transport are being paid bonus by the authorities.

The Railway Minister appreciated the role of the Negotiating Machinery where the AIRF and NFIR leadership is acting as yes-men of the Railway Board and refuse to take up genuine cases of

## REIGN OF TERROR IN DURGAPUR

A reign of terror has been let loose on the people of Durgapur witness to many heroic struggles waged by workers. Incidents in which people are stabbed, assaulted and kidnapped by armed bands of Youth Congress hoodlums are taking place every day. Even schoolboys are no longer spared.

Debnarayan Ghosh of the Refractories Department was stabbed on the night of March 16 and has since been lying in hospital in a critical condition. Rebat Das, of the DSP Foundry Department, and Tarapada Acharya were threatened with dire consequences by Youth Congress men on the same day. Three days earlier, the same people had broken open Sakti Majhi's house on Joydev Avenue and set fire to it.

On March 15, two boys of the Zone B Multipurpose School were severely beaten up by Chhatra Parishad workers. Kanai Goswami and Sanjib Aich, both schoolboys, were dragged out of their homes and assaulted.

Attacks on houses in different areas are being mounted daily. Complaints to the Police, as usual,

workers. It is but natural that he should criticise the formation of about 70 category-wise organisations and “unauthorised strikes”.

The anti-working class policy of the Railway Ministry will only result in further struggles of the railway workers. Though they are at present sectional or area-wise they will certainly assume the character of industry-wise struggles with mounting discontent of the railway workers.

go unheeded. The Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union Durgapur in a letter to the Governor of West Bengal, has demanded immediate action against the culprits.

### **Wani Municipal Workers Mercilessly Beaten in Police Custody**

Wani Taluka Safai Kamgar Union (Maharashtra) has strongly condemned the beating of 9 active workers of the Union in the police custody and demanded judicial enquiry into the conduct of police.

On February 29, a police constable was beaten up on the street during a clash between two groups of people in Wani. Using this occasion the police next day arrested seven municipal workers without any ground. These workers were handcuffed and beaten with sticks, canes, chappals, shoes and belts till they became unconscious. Two police officers danced with their shoes on over one worker when he was lying unconscious.

These workers were refused bail and medical treatment. The relatives of the victims sent telegrams

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# P & T Employees Continue Their Struggle For Organisational Unity

The failure of the attempt to capture the National Federation of P & T Employees by undemocratic means in the recent Federal Council meeting has made the dissident minority more desperate in making repeated efforts to stop the NFPTE from its normal functioning.

The Working Class in its January 1972 issue published a report about the Federal Council meeting held in Calcutta in the middle of December 1971 in which Gupta and Company did its best to sabotage the unity of the NFPTE.

Shri Gupta was confident of official patronage and this he openly acknowledged and floated a fake list of office-bearers designating them as "care-taker", a synonym unknown in the long history of trade unionism. Shri Gupta fabricated the so-called "dispute" in a very crude way and that made Shri Bahuguna, Minister for Communications, to salvage it by imposing upon Shri Rajan who has been re-elected as the Secretary General to agree for "arbitration" by a third party as to which of the two lists of Office-bearers was genuine. Shri Rajan could not agree to such preposterous proposal and said that he was prepared to go to the ranks any number of times to prove his majority that being the only forum of "arbitration" for a trade union organisation. The Minister continued with his cajoling for over 2 months in the garb of "using his good offices" and thereafter he retreated when he found that he could not but burn his fingers by recognising the fake lists of office bearers of Shri Gupta.

The overwhelming majority of P & T workers stood by Rajan and

other office-bearers of his list who have been duly and constitutionally elected, by urging upon the Government to accept the said list telegraphically, by adopting resolutions in meetings and by organising signature campaign. Shri Gupta and his hirelings found their isolation in their game of disruption and therefore, he, true to his revisionist character wanted to stall the functioning of the NFPTE through all mean methods. He stopped operation in banks by raising a dispute there. But still the Branches rushed financial assistance to the NFPTE headed by Shri Rajan. He was able to secure disconnection of telephone through official patronage. But these were again restored to the dismay of Shri Gupta. The administration, at the instance of Shri Gupta, has stopped exchanging correspondence with the NFPTE and has also withdrawn the facilities that are extended to recognised unions. More the revisionists stoop low more they have become isolated from the P & T workers.

Taking a clue from the Minister's observation, Shri Gupta rushed to Registrar of Trade Unions, Delhi as late on the 21st February 1972 and lodged a fictitious dispute. The records in the Registrars' Office are, however, straight. The amendments to the Constitution adopted in the Calcutta Session of the Federal Council were forwarded within the stipulated time and were registered. The list of duly elected office-bearers headed by Shri Rajan was also forwarded in time.

Despite all that, the Registrar of Trade Unions, it appears, has taken cognisance of the fake dispute raked up by Shri Gupta. The

Registrar, we gather, has called upon Shri Rajan to offer his comments on the "complaint" of Shri Gupta "to examine the two lists to ascertain as to which of the list is genuine". This is purely outside the jurisdiction of the Registrar of Trade Unions and his exuberance reveals the official patronage that is being extended to Shri Gupta to disrupt the NFPTE, the militant organisation of the P & T employees.

The P & T workers realise the danger that is ahead of them. They know it from their own experience that the Government which is now armed with enormous and extraordinary powers will impose untold hardships and sufferings upon them in days to come especially when their mighty organisation is disrupted. We are confident that the P & T workers will face squarely the despotic attack upon them by the Government and shall defeat the game of the revisionists of disrupting their organisation.

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★ From Page Four  
to authorities demanding medical examinations of the workers but it was not conceded.

It is however strange that the persons who actually beat the police have not been arrested. This occasion is only being used to terrorise the workers.

On March 2 the President of Wani Taluka Safai Kamgar Union, Daulatrao Shinde met the Sub-Inspector and demanded end to these atrocities. Despite the assurances given by the Police official, two more workers were arrested on March 3, handcuffed and mercilessly beaten inside police station compound and police lock-up. Hundreds of people were witnessing this inhuman behaviour. However no action has been taken against the police.

Wani Taluka Safai Kamgar Union (CITU) has decided to go on indefinite strike if the Government does not take action against the police for this brutal repression.

# Historic Struggle By Coimbatore Textile Workers, Unity Brings Success

The 27-day strike by 56,000 textile workers of Coimbatore, reinforced in the closing stages by the participation of thousands of others from all over the state, has been crowned with success. The strike was withdrawn on March 9 following acceptance by mill owners of most of the workers' 19 demands.

The historic strike which began on February 12 was conducted by the Textile Unions' Action Council comprising the CITU, HMS, INTUC, AITUC and others. A broad-based unity is being forged in Tamil Nadu steadily ever since the resounding success of the Simpson strike earlier this year.

The agreement reached between mill-owners and labour representatives envisages an ad hoc grant of 10 days' wages to workers and the appointment of a Conciliation Board to go into the question of revision of pay scales.

On the question of the reopening of closed mills and payment of relief to workers hit by closure—one of the issues on which the strike was launched—the workers made significant gains. After weeks of dilly-dallying, the State Government eventually agreed to take over six mills in Coimbatore.

The Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi, whose own DMK unions were thoroughly discredited in course of the struggle, finally added another Rs. 1 Lakh to the 4 lakhs he had originally offered to disburse to the jobless workers from his Relief Fund. This amount will now be distributed through the District Collector as advised by the Action Council.

The workers would have been happier if the mill-owners had made up their minds earlier. In

the event, hundreds of men who had started picketing factories from February 22 were arrested and one of them, a student, died in Coimbatore jail.

Among those arrested were A. Subramaniam, MLA, and President HMS, P. L. Subbian, organising Secretary of INTUC (Tamil Nadu), and M. Nanjappan, General Secretary, Mill Labour Union (CITU). The Chief Minister has, however, assured that all people arrested in connection with the agitation would be released and cases against them would be withdrawn.

## General strike.

A General strike sponsored by the Action Council completely paralysed life in Coimbatore district on March 1. Then, with workers organisations from the LIC and the banks rising in solidarity, a call was given for a statewide textile strike from March 3.

The response was spontaneous. In Madurai on March 2, groups of men posing as "Thamizhar Padai" and "Seerani Padai" hung around the bigger mills with the intention of forcibly breaking the strike even as lorryloads of policemen began taking up positions. But this time it was their turn to be surprised, for the workers had already begun the strike, hours ahead of schedule.

As the strike spread like wild fire, the State Government and the mill-owners were forced to have second thoughts. The former convened a tripartite meeting in which the workers' legitimate demands were eventually conceded. Unity and the common determination to fight have, once again, brought workers in Tamil Nadu a great victory and the CITU is proud to have played its part in it.

## THE CITU WORKING COMMITTEE TO MEET IN NEW DELHI

The Working Committee meeting of the CITU will be held in New Delhi on April 24-26.

The meeting will consider the developments in the country since the last Working Committee meeting and review the activities of the CITU. It will also hear the report on the situation in West Bengal and the attacks on trade union and democratic movement in the state.

The meeting will further consider the applications for new affiliations to the CITU. Unions which seek affiliations to CITU should send their affiliation forms through the State Committees so as to reach the Centre on or before April 12.

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU will preside over the meeting.

The decision to hold the meeting of the Working Committee was taken in the meeting of the Office-bearers of the CITU held in Calcutta on March 24.

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# WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE IN TURKEY

The Turkish worker today earns, for a very long day's work, 20-25 lira, while the minimum needed for an average family to live on is over 3,000 lira a month. In many undertakings workers are subjected to an inhuman level of exploitation. Medical services are virtually non-existent in undertakings and elementary conditions of industrial health are not respected. The number of industrial accidents and occupational diseases increases year by year.

The country is today short of some two million homes. For a population of 35 million Turkey has only 25,000 doctors, and in 25 provinces there are none. Over 7 lakh Turkish workers are expecting to join their 5 lakh compatriots working abroad.

The majority of trade unions are grouped in 16 federations and two confederations, while 29 of them remain independent. The largest of the latter is the Sendikassy Textile Workers' Union, with 26,000 members. Most of the unions are concentrated in the country's largest industrial towns—195 at Istanbul, 122 at Ankara, 45 at Ismit, and so on.

The workers' struggles are constantly widening. In 1963-66 there were 175 strikes in the country, involving 26,000 workers; in 1967-69 the number of strikes rose to 254, involving 122,000 workers. Of these, 185 were completely or partially successful.

Successes in strikes have helped to strengthen the trade unions. Before 1967 trade unions were growing only slowly, but in 1969 alone the number of trade unionists in Turkey more than doubled

(364,000 in 1966 by comparison with 835,000 in 1969). In 1970 the trade unions had some 1,200,000 members.

A difficult economic situation for the working class, and the intensification of social contradictions are leading to an increase in struggles by the working class, which consists of some three million people, or about a quarter of the population. In 1970 there was an unprecedented increase in struggles. A confrontation between capital and labour, with substantial struggles in undertakings, the coincidence between these struggles and the democratic movement which involved broad sections of the population, and the holding of mass anti-imperialist demonstrations—these are some important features of the very strained atmosphere in the country.

In January, there was a strike of 3,000 workers on the ferries and transport ships between the Asian and European parts of Istanbul. The strike had been preceded by a long struggle between the maritime transport workers' union and the employer—the Maritime Bank of Turkey. To meet the workers' demands would have cost 3 lakh lira a year—less than the Bank's daily profit. The workers won an initial victory.

In 1970, unlike previous years, the working class put forward social and political demands. The working class understood the need to fight the ruling regime. On May 17 several thousand Istanbul workers organised a protest rally in Baiyasit square against rising prices and unemployment. Their slogans read: 'Break the chains of oppression and tyranny'; 'The time will come when

the oppressed will crush their oppressors', and 'We wish to work'.

Those taking part in this rally also shouted political slogans, such as 'Turkey independent' and 'Shame on America'.

An important feature of the Turkish working class movement is the fact that the workers are protesting more and more strongly against foreign domination. With the support of Turkey's ruling circles, foreign (and especially American) capital is deeply penetrating the country's economy. American companies have got hold of the country's most valuable mineral deposits. Alkim, for example, controls the entire sulphate production, and Koperes owns 49 per cent of the shares in the big Eregli metal combine.

Foreign firms invited to prospect for oil in Turkey are rapidly widening their network of petrol stations, making enormous profits from the Turkish market.

In June 1970 some 100,000 workers in 113 undertakings, including those in big undertakings like the Istanbul Steel Works, Vinilex, Grundig, Otosan, Pecheur, Sungurlar and Philips, launched strike action. On June 16 they took to the streets of Istanbul and Ismit, an industrial town not far from Istanbul. Students, women and children joined the demonstrators. Soldiers and police were let loose on this peaceful demonstration. Four people were killed and more than 200 injured. There were widespread arrests of workers and trade union leaders.

The demonstration on June 16 took place immediately after Parliament had examined amendments to the law covering the trade unions, collective agreements, strikes and

lock-outs. The Bill aimed particularly at depriving any trade union of its rights if it did not represent a third of the workers in a given branch of industry or an undertaking, and at banning activity by any confederation which did not represent a third of the workers in the country.

To make it easier and quicker for Parliament to adopt the Bill and to weaken the working class and trade union movement in Istanbul and Ismit, the authorities declared a state of emergency. Those taking part in the demonstrations on June 16 were brought to court.

At the end of November 1970 a two-day strike was started by 530,000 drivers employed by private firms and garage workers in Istanbul and other towns. They were demanding lower taxes and improved working conditions. Public health workers organised a two-day strike in Ankara and Istanbul. According to the press during 1970 some two million workers took part in strikes.

At the beginning of 1971 action by workers and students developed still further. The strike movement covered a large number of undertakings. On January 13 a strike was called by 6,000 workers in automobile assembly plants in Istanbul, members of the Otomobil-Is union. Strikers held a rally in Kaiket Square in protest against the dismissal of 800 of their fellow workers. 10,000 textile workers in 22 mills, 3,000 oil workers, State hospital staffs and 450 workers at the Istanbul works also launched strike action.

The Erim Government, on the pretext of maintaining peace has announced that mass struggle for fundamental democratic rights would be treated as 'undermining activities' aimed at 'destroying the social order

and 'dividing the country and the nation'. The authorities have already begun brutally to apply repressive measures against the workers, and primarily against progressives and leaders of the working class movement. Many workers, young people, journalists and trade unionists have been rounded up.

The working class is not getting intimidated, however. Despite brutal repression, and despite the state of emergency declared over almost the whole country, its militancy has not slackened. The struggle of 40,000 railwaymen who threatened to strike on July 24, 1971, if their claim for a 60 per cent wage increase was not met, is proof of the fact. The democratic sections of Turkish society are also, naturally, understanding more and more clearly the nature of social reality, and supporting the stand of the working class.

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### **Punjab Union Quits Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh**

The Avery India Ltd. Mazdoor Sangh, Ludhiana has decided to disaffiliate the Union from Jana Sangh controlled Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh "due to its anti-working class policies" and affiliate to the All India Federation of Avery Employees Calcutta (CITU).

### **Karnataka CITU Leaders Assaulted**

CITU leaders in Davangeri (Karnataka) S. Hanumanta Reddy, Jogdish and others were assaulted on 27th February by goondas of the AITUC during the election campaign.

The AITUC leadership was openly canvassing votes for the

Congress candidate who happened to be daughter of the Managing Director of Davangeri Cotton Mills.

The workers of this mill are ruthlessly exploited by the management with the help of AITUC leadership and subscription are forcibly collected within the mill premises. The workers therefore decided to work under the CITU union. Angered with this the AITUC leaders resorted to gangster methods to help the management.

This attack on the CITU leaders has only further alienated the workers from the AITUC.

### **News In Brief**

**Bhopal :** Conductors and drivers of the Madhya Pradesh State Road Transport went on strike in Bhopal on March 6 demanding reinstatement of six of the colleagues dismissed by the Corporation.

**Akola :** Two thousand textile workers of S. R. Mill went on strike from March 4 to press for their demand for the immediate payment of wage arrears and restoration of the cut in D. A. The workers of Mohta Mills, Akola observed one day's sympathetic strike on March 6.

**Nagpur :** The 35-day old strike of non-teaching staff of colleges in Vidarbha region was called off on March 6 following the acceptance of their demand of wage rise by the authorities. The strike was organised by Vidarbha Mahavidyalaya Karmachari Kriti Samiti.

### **ILO Staff In Geneva Demonstrate Against Retrenchment**

Hundreds of members of the staff of the International Labour Organisation staged a demonstration outside the Headquarters at Geneva (Switzerland) in first week of March in protest against proposed retrenchment of ILO staff.

# Consumers Price Index Numbers

(Base : 1960 = 100)

States/Centres	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	States/Centres	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>				<b>Maharashtra</b>			
Gudur	197	200	205	Bombay	192	193	194
Guntur	214	208	201	Nagpur	194	194	196
Hyderabad	199	200	200	Sholapur	206	204	201
<b>Assam</b>				<b>Mysore</b>			
Digboi	192	191	191	Ammathi	204	207	206
Doom Dooma	175	179	176	Bangalore	197	197	199
Labac		184	180	Chikmagalur	202	203	203
Mariani		179	176	Kolar Gold Field	188	188	189
Rangapara	186	192	190	<b>Orissa</b>			
<b>Bihar</b>				Barbil	184	183	184
Jamshedpur	191	191	192	Sambalpur	202	200	199
Jharia	197	196	193	<b>Punjab</b>			
Kodarma	229	222	214	Amritsar	203	201	204
Monghyr	211	213	209	<b>Rajasthan</b>			
Noamundi	202	204	195	Ajmer	193	192	193
<b>Gujarat</b>				Jaipur	195	194	195
Ahmedabad	183	182	186	<b>Tamilnadu</b>			
Bhavnagar	195	196	195	Coimbatore	178	177	180
<b>Haryana</b>				Coonoor	196	197	193
Yamunanagar	203	200	204	Madras	183	185	187
<b>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</b>				Madurai	200	194	197
Srinagar		179	180	<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>			
<b>Kerala</b>				Kanpur	201	201	202
Alleppey	221	200	199	Saharanpur	195	194	198
Alwaye	204	204	206	Varanasi	214	214	216
Mundakayam	204	200	204	<b>West Bengal</b>			
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>				Asansol	198	199	199
Balaghat		200	200	Calcutta	194	198	200
Bhopal	200	198	203	Darjeeling	181	184	182
Gwalior	201	201	200	Howrah	194	200	201
Indore	207	207	209	Jalpaiguri	192	190	185
				Raniganj	194	195	195
				<b>Delhi</b>	215	213	218

## Closures of Cotton Textile Mills

Year/Month	No. of Mills remained closed
1951	19
1956	21
1961	28
1965	29
1970	45
1971—Jan	48
Feb	45
Mar	52
Apr	55
May	54
June	67
July	68
Aug	64

## Productivity in Coal Mines.

Year/Month	Output per Man-shift in tonnes for a 11 persons employed above and below ground
1951	0.35
1956	0.40
1961	0.48
1965	0.55
1970	0.67
1971—Jan	0.68
Feb	0.69
Mar	0.70

## Employment Exchange Statistics

(All India)

Year	No. of Applicants on live Register
1967	2,740,435
1968	3,011,642
1969	3,423,885
1970	4,069,000
1971 November	5,026,755

## Registered Unemployed during November, 1971.

State	No. of applicants on the live register at the end of the month
Andhra Pradesh	334,181
Assam	76,726
Bihar	406,590
Gujarat	171,300
Haryana	104,867
Himachal Pradesh	45,346
Jammu and Kashmir	24,269
Kerala	347,012
Madhya Pradesh	319,513
Maharashtra	429,042
Mysore	272,351
Orissa	176,243
Punjab	119,747
Rajasthan	142,968
Tamil Nadu	459,329
Uttar Pradesh	521,484
West Bengal	832,233
Chandigarh	19,534
Delhi	135,809
Goa	10,393
Laccadive Island	1,311
Manipur	37,176
Pondicherry	9,443
Tripura	29,888
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,026,755</b>

# Indian Women in Search of Employment

By : Vimal Ranadive

The question of unemployment of women in India is assuming serious proportions with each passing day. Whenever any proposal of retrenchment is being brought forward women normally become the first target of attack.

Though the Indian Constitution provides right to work and to live, as one of its directive principles, equal wages for equal work for man and woman and considers "motherhood as something sacred", in practice these have been trampled upon by the Indian rulers who are supposed to be the custodians of the Constitution.

In the name of protecting the health of women workers, employment of women workers underground and in the nightshift was prohibited, restrictions were imposed on carrying of heavy loads by women workers and Maternity Benefit Act provided some allowance and leave facilities prior to and after the childbirth. However, ironically enough these measures have become a cause of reduction in their employment in various industries.

According to provisional population estimates published by the Census Commissioner the proportion of working force among women to the total female population came down to 13.18 per cent in 1971 from 27.95 per cent in 1961. So far as the factory employment is concerned the official Statistics show that the proportion of women in the total factory workers came down from 10.6 per cent to 9.6 per cent during 1961-69 period. The trend can be clearly seen from the following table :

## Women Employment in Factories

Year	Total factory employment	Women Employment
1961	3,497,000	372334
1966	4,069,000	364654
1967	4,129,000	324633
1968	4,067,000	346196
1969	4,189,000	400087

The Union Labour Ministry recently conducted a survey of employment of workers in the country which estimated that the total number of women workers during 1970 stood at 18.85 lakhs. The proportion of women workers vary from industry to industry. It is as high as 37.6 per cent in agriculture and forestry sector while as low as 1.9 per cent in transport, storage and communication. The Proportion of all women workers to the total employment of workers comes to 11.1 per cent. The details of the sector-wise classification is given in the following table :

Industry	No. of women employees in 000's	Proportion to total employment
1. Agriculture, forestry etc.	404.9	37.6
2. Mining & Quarrying	54.0	9.0
3. Manufacturing	421.6	9.0
4. Construction	56.2	5.9
5. Electricity, Gas & Sanitary Services	15.6	3.5
6. Trade & Commerce	28.0	4.8
7. Transport, Storage & Communications	44.1	1.9
8. Services	861.0	13.4
Total	1885.4	11.1

In most of the industries we find a reduction of women employees during the last two decades.

In cotton textile industry which used to provide employment to large number of women we find a reduction since independence. In winding and reeling department alone the number of women workers came down from 35000 in 1947 to 5000 in 1968. The Textile Survey Report says,

"In cotton textile industry, the introduction of high speed and super high speed winding machines and elimination of the process of rewinding and introduction of automatic dyeing plants which did away with the reeling process completely rendered a large proportion of women workers who were hitherto the main employees in the winding and reeling sections, superfluous."

In jute industry use of modern machines have led to reduction in women from 32,890 in 1952 to 9,334 in 1962 and further to 7203 in 1970.

In a similar manner, in silk industry the proportion of women workers to the total workers came down from 11.8 per cent in 1952 to 6.8 per cent in 1962.

In coal mines the proportion of women workers declined from 16 per cent in 1961 to 12 per cent in 1969. Study Group on Coal constituted by the National Commission on Labour made the following observations on this reduction, ".....their decline has taken place due to a number of reasons (1) payment of equal wages for men and women (2) restrictions on their employment during night (3) Maternity leave and provisions of crèche."

In tea plantations where women constitute a majority of the workforce there has been a considerable

decline in the number of workers. In West Bengal alone the employment dropped from 2,68,000 to 1,88,000 during 1956-1966 period. This was possible only by increasing the workload from 284 to 462 kilos per worker.

In pharmaceutical companies women constituted 10 per cent of the employment in the industry in 1965. In Bombay the proportion was as high as 24 per cent. However, the foreign controlled drug monopolies like Sandoz, Roche, Glaxo, Pfizer etc. took an undertaking in writing that the girl employee would lose the job as soon as she got married. Some of the girls went to the High Court which gave the verdict against them resulting in retrenchment of hundreds of employees.

Later on, in an appeal in the Supreme Court, the majority gave a judgement against the employers but did not ask the management to reinstate the sacked girls. This is how equality is granted to women employees in India.

The lack of opportunity for jobs led to the swelling of the ranks of unemployed women. The statistics regarding registered unemployment throws some light on this fact.

It is a fact that ordinarily, a large number of women who are unemployed do not register names through employment exchanges. The total number of women registered at the exchanges in 1959 was 166,399 which went up to 279,813 in 1962. At the end of 1962, about 45 percent of the women registered on the employment exchanges were educated, having passed matriculation or higher examinations. The following figures will show the seriousness of the situation. Between 1960 and 1964 the number of educated women on the live register of employment

exchanges increased from 54,437 to 103,305—an increase of 90 percent. Between 1964 and 1968, it rose to 194,813, a further rise of nearly 90 percent, of these 131,496 are matriculates, 35,720 are intermediates; 23,885 are graduates; 3,711 are post-graduates. In 1968, West Bengal had 38,000 educated women on the live register, i. e. nearly 20 percent of the All India total. By 1970, the figure increased to 45,000.

The callous attitude of the Congress Government to this important question can be seen from the note circulated by the Union Labour Ministry to the recent meeting of the Central Committee on Employment in reply to suggestions made by Monoranjan Roy M.P., Secretary CITU to check the growing unemployment among women. The note says, "with regard to various suggestions made for stopping the trend of unemployment of women, it may be mentioned that there is no law, under which either retrenchment of women workers can be prohibited or under which certain employment can be reserved for this".

It is not only in India but in every capitalist country unemployment of women is increasing by leaps and bounds. In U.S.A., U.K., Canada France and West Germany the unemployment of women has reached record levels. In contrast to this in Socialist countries women are not only provided jobs but they are given important positions wherever they proved their abilities.

Therefore it is only by establishing socialism in India that a permanent solution to women's unemployment can be found. Smt. Indira Gandhi's loud talk of Socialism will not create new jobs but will further aggravate the situation.

It is therefore the duty of the

trade unions to pay special attention to the problem of women's unemployment and bring them in the general struggle for more jobs.

## Some more Reports on Anti-Repression Day

The Working Class published, in its March 1972 issue, a detailed report on the observance of Anti-Repression Day by the CITU in different parts of the country. More reports have since come in.

At Alwaye, the Kerala Road Transport Employees' Association met at the Regional Workshop on February 4 and condemned the brutal repression on trade union activists in West Bengal. The Ernakulam Unit of the KSRTC Ministerial Staff Federation, at its meeting on February 3, deplored the arrest without trial of workers. The Calicut Taluk Textile Workers' Union, in a resolution taken at its meeting on January 24, warned that the acts of terrorism let loose by the ruling class spelled danger for democracy. Anti-repression Day was also observed by the Perunba-voor Range Chethu Thozhilali Union and the Coconut and Rice Research Station Workers' Union, Cochin.

The Karnataka Provincial Plantation Workers' Union expressed solidarity with the working class in West Bengal at its three meetings at Hosanala, Mavinakere and Gandhadakall.

# The Supreme Court's New Definition of Industrial Dispute

A. P. Chatterjee

Sometimes in cases of Industrial Dispute, the judgements of the Supreme Court look a little of a mystery even to a lawyer not to speak of the layman.

Thus, the Supreme Court has now formulated a theory that, in order that an Industrial Tribunal may have jurisdiction to decide a dispute, that dispute must have been raised by the employee concerned with their employer before reference is made to the Tribunal.

In *The Sindhu Resettlement Corporation Ltd. vs. The Industrial Tribunal of Gujrat* and others, the workman was appointed by the Company as an accounts clerk and his services were placed at the disposal of its subsidiary company which terminated his services. The workman thereupon approached the company for being given the post wherefrom he was transferred but the company declined saying that that post had been permanently filled up. The workman thereupon demanded retrenchment compensation from the company. The matter that was referred for adjudication was "whether the said respondent should be reinstated in the service of the company and be paid back wages....."

The Company who appealed contended that the question of reinstatement could not be gone into by the Tribunal because that question had not been raised by the workman with the employer.

The Supreme Court held:

"...the evidence produced clearly showed that no such dispute (i.e. relating to reinstatement) had ever been raised by the

respondents with the management of the appellant. If no dispute at all was raised by the respondents with the management, any request sent by them to the Government would only be a demand by them and not an industrial dispute between them and their employer."

In that case, all demands were made to the conciliation officer and dispute was referred to the Tribunal on the report of the Conciliation Officer.

## LEGAL NOTES

It is rather a surprising decision. Even under the common law of master and servant, a servant has a right to sue the master without having to raise any dispute apart from the suit and the plaint is the only document that is important. Under the Civil Procedure Code, only section 80 thereof requires that a notice has to be given to the Government sixty days prior to the institution of the suit setting forth the cause of action and the reliefs prayed for.

The Judgement of the Supreme Court has placed the case relating to industrial dispute on a level with the case against the Government. The head and front of the judgement is to the effect that, before any industrial dispute can be referred to and adjudicated by an Industrial Tribunal, there must be a demand made to the employer for the same reliefs which are claimed before the Tribunal.

In a recent case, the Supreme

Court has reaffirmed the judgement in *The Sindhu Resettlement Corporation. case*. In the *Jaipur Udyog Ltd. vs. The Cement Karmachari Sangh, Sahu Nagar*, decided in C.A. 116 (NC) of 1971 dated 28.1.72 the appellant is a public limited company, having a cement factory as well as a limestone quarry. But, whereas the superannuation age of workmen at the cement factory was raised from 55 to 58 by settlement the workmen with the age of superannuation at the quarry continued to be 55. One Bisham Varma, an incline driver at the quarry, was discharged from service on the ground that he had reached the age of superannuation on 3 April 1968. It is true that the contention of Shri Verma before the employer was to the effect that his proper age according to his horoscope was 50 on that date and the service records should be amended accordingly. When the matter was referred to the Tribunal, the terms of reference were as follows:

"Whether the action of the management of the Jaipur Udyog Limited, P.O. Phalodi quarry, Sawaimadhapur in terminating the services of Bisham Varma, incline driver with effect from 9th July 1968, on grounds of superannuation was legal and justified? If not, to what relief is he entitled?"

Before the Tribunal, the Union filed a statement of claim that the quarry and the cement factory were under one and the same management and there was complete financial integrality between the activities of the company at both the places. It was also said that workmen could be transferred from the cement factory to the quarry and vice versa. It was therefore contended that

there could not be two sets of retiring age in two sections of the same company and that the workman could not be retired in any event before he attained the age of 58.

It may be mentioned in this connection that the dispute had in substance been raised in the same form as in the tribunal before the employer also on behalf of the workman, inasmuch as the contention of the workman before the employer was that his service had been wrongfully terminated on the ground of superannuation. The only difference was that the grounds on which the termination was challenged included the additional clause that the company could not maintain two sets of retiring age for its two sections, and that the age of superannuation should be 58 and not 55.

The Tribunal held that the Company could not retire any workman below the age of 58 which was the age for retirement at the factory as settled with the workmen there.

The Supreme Court has approved in the case under consideration the judgement in the *Sindhu Resttlement Corporation Ltd. vs. The Industrial Tribunal of Gujrat & Others* (1968-1 S. C. R. 515) and held that the finding of the Tribunal that the Company could not fix a lower age limit of superannuation for workmen at the quarries went beyond the scope of reference which had to be gathered from the circumstances preceding the Government Order.

According to civil law, a relief claimed in a suit does not become invalid because a demand for that relief was not made before the defendant except in the case of a

suit against the Government. Nor can it be urged by the defendant that the plaintiff cannot urge in his plaint such grounds as he has not mentioned to the defendant before he instituted the suit. One should have thought that an industrial case

should be easier and less technical and strict than a civil case. But the Supreme Court Judgement has made industrial cases stricter and more tramelled by technique and form than what the Industrial Disputes Act contemplates.

## *CITU MP Seeks to Amend ID Act*

Dinen Bhattacharya, M. P. Member Working Committee of CITU introduced a private member's Bill namely, The Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill 1971, during the last session of Parliament which proposes to remove the anti-working class provisions of the present Act and substitute them by provisions favourable to the workers. The Bill will be discussed in Parliament only if it gets priority in the ballot.

While making a statement of objects and reasons of the Bill Dinen Bhattacharya said,

"The existing provisions regarding settlement of industrial disputes are heavily loaded in favour of employers and against the workers. It imposes several restrictions on strikes of the workers which make virtually impossible for the trade unions to organise a legal strike. The experience of the last twenty-two years of its implementation has clearly established this fact. The Bill seeks to remove these difficulties and provide for an unhindered right to strike for the workers with a view to make the concept of collective bargaining meaningful for the working class.

The prevailing definition of industry excludes large sections of the workers from the purview of any legal machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes. For instance, non-teaching occupations of the educational and research

institutions as well as auditors or solicitors firms are not covered by the Act. These employees are in practice denied even the right to organise since the trade unions in these sectors are not even obtaining registration today. It is proposed to remove this lacuna by moving amendment in this respect.

The quantum of retrenchment compensation is extremely inadequate and workers are today facing acute difficulties after retrenchment. It is, therefore, proposed to increase the compensation and remove the several restrictions imposed even on payment of this compensation. Similarly, it is also proposed to increase the rate of lay-off compensation and to remove the limits imposed.

At present, after closure of a factory when the employer or a new employer re-opens the same, it is not binding on him to take back the retrenched workers on duty. This provision has given rise to several malafide closures which adversely affect the interests of workers. The Bill seeks to give job-security for such retrenched workers who would get priority in the matter of re-employment.

The employers have been victimising several workers today even during the pendency of the disputes using the loopholes of the present Act. It is proposed to put

# Fight Back the Fascist Menace In West Bengal

## *Defend Democracy In Common Interest*

The following statement has been issued on March 18 by Md. Ismail, M.P., President and Monoranjan Roy, M.P., General Secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions, West Bengal Committee.

The Congress (R) in partnership with the Right Communists and the AITUC leadership are parading their fraudulent electoral victory with the help of the Press.

They make it appear as if the working class and the people of West Bengal have given them the electoral mandate rejecting the candidates of the Left Front in West Bengal.

A more fraudulent claim cannot be made. The reality is that afraid of a massive verdict against the Congress—the Party of Capitalists and Landlords, the Ruling Party resorted to wholesale falsification of the election results as will be clear from the following.

It is armed Gangsters who entered the Polling Booths, took the

ballot papers enblock, stamped them and put them into the ballot boxes while genuine voters were not allowed to enter into the Booths and driven away at the point of guns. In many Booths where voters had already entered into the Booths, ballot papers were forcibly taken away from their hands. It is significant to note that Congress (R) could not even trust their own voters and employed the gunners to grab votes. The Army was mere spectator.

It is a high level conspiracy and all sorts of nefarious methods were adopted to rig the election.

At-least one minute is necessary to cast a vote. Under the new system introduced during this election it requires more time. But in Baranagore Constituency, from where Comrade Jyoti Basu fought the election, in more than 100 Booths out of 135 Booths, voting was completed by 11.30 a.m. and

ment of disputes. The Bill, therefore, seeks to provide for time limit of three months for completing the conciliation proceedings.

This Bill does not claim to cover all the aspects of industrial relations. However, some existing irritants are sought to be removed. It will help the reduction in time taken for settlement of industrial disputes.

This Bill will no doubt give a new impetus to the growth of healthy trade union movement which is today bogged down in the litigation and is heavily dependent on official apparatus."

the hourly rate of voting was 200 to 300. So is the case in Beliaghata South, Maniktolla, Cossipore, Dum Dum, Tollygunge, Belgachia, Panihati, Titagarh, Memari, Barbani, Kalna, Burdwan, Nabadwip Nadan-ghat and in series of other Constituencies.

In Khardah, the Ballot Boxes were filled with ballot papers on 10th March night whereas the election was held on 11th March, 1972.

Police and CRP directly helped the armed Gangster of Congress (R) and openly participated in this conspiracy.

During the counting the same pattern followed. Gangsters moved in batches with open arms in presence of Police, defaced and mutilated the genuine ballot papers of Left Parties.

The Election Agents and Counting Agents were beaten and forced to sign blank papers at the point of guns. In hundreds of Booths Polling Agents were refused entry even under police escort.

Series of representation given to the Election Commissioner, Government of India and Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal, before the election, during duration of the election and after election proved useless.

The President of India was fully apprised of the situation by sending innumerable Telegrams, but failed to evoke justice.

The conspirators lost all balance in manipulating votes. In a number of Booths, number of ballot papers found in ballot boxes is more than the number of voters appearing in the Electoral List. Ballot paper of one Constituency was found in the box of another Constituency.

During counting, defeated Congress (R) candidates were declared as winner. All protests in this

★ From page 13 restrictions on employers so that, at least in certain cases, the employers are prevented from resorting to unfair practices.

The present legal machinery is extremely dilatory and an aggrieved worker has to wait for years till his case is finally settled. This gives encouragement to employers to delay the legal proceedings with a view to tire out a worker. This Bill seeks to ensure some subsistence allowance to a worker till his case is finally settled.

The present conciliation machinery is time consuming and creates several obstructions in speedy settle-

regard were ignored and written protest was not accepted.

Hundreds of houses of workers have been burnt and destroyed in various places in presence of Police and CRP.

Immediately following the election the armed gangsters of Congress (R) have started one after another attacks on the workers of the political parties of Left Front. During last six days 20,000 families have been uprooted by Congress (R) Gangsters in Baranagaore, Tollygunge, Beliaghata North, Haltu, Beliaghata South, Khardah, Panihati, Dum Dum, Jadavpore and various other places.

About 25,000 young boys have become worst than evacuees, constantly hunted by the armed gangsters of Congress (R).

Police and Administration refuse to hear even any complaint. Full scale offensive has started to physically eliminate the Left Political Forces.

Organised Unions and Union Offices of CITU are being forcibly occupied. Police, Administration and Congress (R) gangsters are proceeding in a planned way to destroy all organised Trade Unions.

In various localities people are forced to pay money under the threat of torture and murder.

The working class and people of West Bengal are confronted with the Fascist offensive which must be met unitedly by the entire working class of India. The rigging of election, the terror preceding it and following it are all unmistakeable sign of it.

The leading Newspapers of Calcutta are giving direct encouragement to Police, Administration and Congress (R) gangsters and are completely indifferent to the suffering of the people.

We appeal to the Indian working class and all Trade Union Orga-

# NCDC Management Suppresses Trade Union Rights

The public sector management of Surakachhar Collieries (Korba) has resorted to vindictive action against 7 leading workers of Koyala Sramik Sangh (CITU) for mere participation in T. U. activities. Three workers have been suspended while charge-sheets have been issued against 4 others. Among the suspended employees is Kameshwar Singh, President of the Union.

The manager of the colliery got organisations in India and abroad to raise their voice of protest against the barbaric repression and extend their solidarity help to the working class and the people of West Bengal.

We also appeal to the people of all the States in India to stand in support of people of West Bengal and to defend Democracy in their common interest.

The Ruling Party resorts to Fascist method to remain in power at all costs. This menace must be nipped in the bud.

## Gangsters Threaten to occupy Office of CITU, West Bengal Committee

Anti-social elements backed by the ruling Congress have threatened to occupy the offices of the West Bengal State Committee of CITU and other Central T.U. Organisations situated in 249 Bepin Behari Ganguly Street, Calcutta.

Kamal Sarkar, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of CITU in a Press Statement on March 17 has condemned this and called upon the workers of all affiliations to rise to the occasion and fight these attacks on trade union rights.

angry when the union leaders represented the case of a suspended worker and requested him to withdraw the action. The manager abused the leaders in filthy language and suspended 3 of them. In protest against that the workers organised a demonstration. False charge-sheet have been issued against 4 other workers.

The workers have genuine discontent about their working and living conditions. The Coal Wage Board Report has not been implemented satisfactorily. Out of 1600 workers employed in the mine, only 360 have been provided quarters while the others have to live in dingy huts. The local police in collusion with the management is bent on involving leading activists of the union in false cases. The Assistant Labour Commissioner's Office is not attending to the grievances of the workers.

The corruption and pilfering is rampant in the colliery. Some time back copper wire worth lakhs of rupees was stolen but only a show of enquiry was made. No culprits were detected and punished.

M.K. Pandhe Secretary CITU met the Deputy Superintendent of Collieries Surakachhar on March 2 along with a deputation of Koyala Sramik Sangh and demanded withdrawal of vindictive action against the union leaders and settlement of grievances of workers. Md. Ismail M.P. Vice President CITU in a letter to Mohan Kumar Mangalam, Union Minister for steel and Mines, has drawn his attention to the behaviour of the Manager of Collieries and asked him to intervene in the dispute.

# Some Samples Of "Free And Fair" Election In West Bengal

\* In Baranagar Constituency, where polling agents of Com. Jyoti Basu could not enter 100 out of 135 polling booths and polling agents in other booths were also withdrawn by noon, the figures of polling in the following booths reveal the extent of fraudulent practices :

Booth No.	Total Voters	Votes polled
91	963	933
92	1090	1080
93	880	858
94	800	728

\*In the Manicktolla ( Calcutta ) Constituency, in the Hot House booth 810 ballots were cast, while total number of voters for the booth is only 801. Similarly, 685 votes were cast in Booth No. 52 of Domkal ( Howrah ) Constituency, whereas total number of voters is 550.

\*Some ballot papers of Malda Constituency were found lying on the roadside after the election. ( Perhaps, too many ballot paper than can be accounted for were printed this time. )

\* Some ballot papers of Kulpi and Magrahat Constituencies ( 24 Parganas ) marked in favour of Left Front candidates were found lying by the Ganges in Diamond Harbour. A ballot paper of Entally Constituency ( Calcutta ) marked in favour of the CPI(M) candidate was found lying on the roadside after the election.

\* Many ballot papers of Sukhi booth in the Nabagram Constituency ( Murshidabad ) did not contain either the name or the symbol of the CPI(M) candidate, Biren Roy.

\* In Kamarhati (24-Parganas) Constituency, 16000 ballot Papers most of them marked in favour of CPI(M) candidate were cancelled during the counting. (A record for any election held anywhere).

\* S. U. C., a constituent of the Left Front, used a new kind of seal in this election—facsimile of the signature of one of their leaders, in place of their old seal with the words 'S. U. C.' Curiously enough, a ballot box of Patharpratima ( 24-Parganas ) Constituency was found sealed with the 'SUC' seal.

\* In Smt. Indira Gandhi's democracy, it seems that even ballot papers have grown wings. Otherwise, how can one explain that ballot papers of many constituencies were found in the ballot boxes of other constituencies situated scores and even hundreds of miles away. For instance, ballot papers of Mynaguri ( Jalpaiguri Dist. ) Constituency were found in the ballot box of Kharba Constituency ( Malda Dist. ); ballots of Englishbazar in the box of Gazol ( both of Malda Dist. ) ; ballots of Mynaguri in the box of Kalchini ( Jalpaiguri ) ; ballots of Kumarganj in the box of Tapan ( both in West Dinajpur ) ; ballots of Champdani and Balagarh ( Hooghly ) in the box of Chinsurah ( of the same district ) ; ballots of Tollygunge in the box of Dhakuria ( both of Calcutta ) and so on.

\*Evening of March 14—counting for Bishnupur ( West ) Constituency was in progress. No counting agent for CPI(M) candidate, Provas Roy,

was present. The CPI(M) candidate at that stage was leading by a comfortable margin. Suddenly, the lights went out and Congress ( R ) counting agents started snatching away bundles of ballots marked in favour of the CPI(M) candidate. When the lights were again on, the the counting officers complained about this and the S.D.O. recovered some ballot papers from the Congress ( R ) agents. In desperation a Congress ( R ) agent even attempted to run away with a tray full of marked ballots. Even then, the CPI(M) candidate won by a small margin.

\* In Khardah Constituency (24-Parganas), polling for Booth Nos. 92, 93, 94 and 97 was completed on the night of March 10-11. Ballot papers were taken away from the Presiding Officers by Congress ( R ) and CPI goondas at gun point, stamped enblock and cast in the ballot boxes. When genuine voters went to cast their votes the next morning, they found that their votes have already been cast.

\*In Khardah again, polling agents for the CPI(M) candidate were not allowed to enter in 90 pollings booths. What happened in those booths is anybody's guess.

\* In Bishnupur ( East ) Constituency (24-Parganas), polling agents of the CPI(M) candidate were not allowed to enter Booth Nos. 9 to 11, 40, 50 to 52 and some others, while agents were driven out of Booth Nos. 5 to 8 after they had been in the booth for one or two hours. No wonder, percentage of polling in these booths was 90 to 95%.

## STRUGGLE CONTINUE

About 80,000 Plantation workers in the Malabar region observed a day's token strike on March 21 in response to a call by the Joint Action Council of the five Central Trade Union bodies, the CITU, INTUC, AITUC HMS and UTUC. Their demands include a minimum wage of Rs. 5, three paise D.A. for every five points in the Cost of Living Index above 550 and 20 per cent bonus.

According to K. Padmanabhan, General Secretary of the Plantation Labour Federation (CITU), the workers would go on indefinite strike from April 3 if the demands are not conceded by then.

In Cochin, 2000 HMT workers have been on an indefinite strike since March 16 demanding interim relief and revision of promotion rules. They have also been picketing the main gate of the factory. Meanwhile as many as three meetings were convened by the State Labour Minister, but all three were deadlocked because the management would not listen to anything.

The Government itself is quietly backing out of the agreement it had reached with the Anchu Tenku Minimum Wages Co-ordination Struggle Committee. The Committee which comprises the CITU, AITUC, INTUC and UTUC has issued a statement from Trivandrum calling upon the workers to give a fitting reply to this act of betrayal.

In Kottayam, 6000 workers of the Plantation Corporation led jointly by the CITU and AITUC launched an indefinite strike on March 20. Their demands include revision of pay scales, parity in the rates for men and women and withdrawal of security staff.

Coir workers of Kerala who have been waging relentless struggles in recent years held a demonstration at Trivandrum in front of the Secretariat and the Assembly on March 9. Led by the Coir Workers Co-ordination Struggle Committee, they were demanding raw coir at lower prices.

Strange things have been happening at the Kerala Malyables, Kottayam. The workers led by the Kottayam Metal and Engineering Workers' Union (CITU) had struck work for 33 days and then, with the submission of a memorandum to the management, came the dismissal of 3 workers. The indignant workers started a satyagraha from March 12. Another satyagraha is being offered by workers of the Kothamangalam Rubber Company, which was closed down on March 5. The workers have very legitimately demanded the re-opening of the factory and payment of compensation to them.

There is heartening news from Alleppey. As a result of an agreement reached between the workers of the Boat Construction Yard and the Kerala Fisheries Corporation, the workers will get a minimum

rise of Rs. 47 a month in their pay. The Fishers Federation (CITU) played a key role in the negotiations convened by the Deputy Labour Commissioner, and if the AITUC and INTUC were of a more militant frame of mind, further concessions might have been wrested.

Central Government employees in Kerala are now being forced to choose the path of struggle. After the September 19 strike in 1968, two P & T employees were given the sack. Now the services of another three have suddenly been dispensed with. A. B. Nair, Convenor of the P & T Local Co-ordination Committee has protested against the dismissals and urged the workers to foil the Union Government's attempt to disrupt the P & T employees' organisation.

On March 3 there were statewide demonstrations on the demand for the reinstatement of all Union Government employees dismissed since September, 1968.

The Kerala State Council of the CITU is meeting at Ernakulam from April 7 at what one may call a critical period in the working class movement in the country. The Council's deliberations will be guided by B. T. Ranadive, President of the CITU.

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## Sen-Raleigh Employees Union Office Occupied By Congress (R) Goondas

Immediately after the rigged election was over the Congress (R) goondas forcibly occupied the office of the Sen Raleigh Employees Union (CITU) Kanyapur and converted into the office of the INTUC Union. The hoodlums took into possession the records and office-equipment. The Sen-Raleigh Employees Union is recognised by the management.

The office was constructed by the union out of the funds raised from the members of the union. The police not only failed to take any action in the matter, but they actively assisted the Congress goondas in this nefarious act.

Prior to this action the police took into custody a large number of

★ On Page Nineteen

# REPORTS FROM UNIONS

## **Bhilai Workers Build Unity For Struggle.**

All the six unions working in the Bhilai Steel Plant including that of the clerical staff have come together to launch a joint struggle to achieve immediate demands of the workers. The unions jointly prepared a charter of demands of all the construction and operation staff and decided to launch a movement culminating in a strike action of all the plant workers.

The demands of the workers include absorption of all the construction workers in the newly formed Corporation on same terms and service conditions, 8½ per cent bonus to all workers, housing, better promotion facilities etc.

Despite the assurance by the management that no construction worker would be retrenched it has not yet made clear that all the workers would be re-employed on the same terms and service conditions.

A deputation of all unions met the Union Steel Minister Mohan Kumarmangalam in New Delhi in the third week of March and demanded immediate action to settle the long standing issues.

Meanwhile preparations for joint struggles are going on in Bhilai if the authorities failed to concede the demands of the workers.

## **Workers Victimised For Demanding Health Protection Measures.**

The management of Iron Ore handling plant in the Vishakhapatnam Port Trust have been callously refusing to provide health protection measures resulting in environmental effects on the health

of large number of workers.

It has been admitted by the Scientists that iron dust can cause damages to issues in the eyes and lungs. As a result of the failure of the authorities to control this, twentyone workers who are below the age of 30 have been affected with T. B. while many others are suffering from chest pain, eye disease general debility and plurycy.

The Iron Ore Handling Plant Employees Association Visakhapatnam have been agitating for the last 2 years but the management refused to take protective measures and provide any cash allowance for the workers. When the Workers started agitation on these issues the management took highhanded steps to victimise the workers by way of terminations, reversions, suspensions.

The CITU has drawn attention of the Union Labour Minister R. K. Khadilkar and demanded immediate action in the matter.

## **Attempt To Sabotage Simpson Agreement Foiled**

The hopes that were roused at Tamilnadu's Simpson Group of Companies with the agreement of January 11 have been almost entirely belied. This was not only due to the Government or the Management, but because of the backsliding of some trade union leaders who were members of the erstwhile Joint Action Committee.

To start with, the non-CITU members of the six-man Committee set up to look after the interests of workers unceremoniously withdrew from it on March 3. Even the State Government was taken by surprise; the Chief Minister, in fact, alleged that the Committee had dissolved

itself without even informing the Government. R. Umanath, the CITU's representative on the Committee, opposed the move and deplored the attempt to disregard the workers' mandate.

Later, he and V.P. Chintan of the CITU called on the Union Labour Minister, R.K.Khadilkar, who was in Madras on March 8, and told him that so long as the DMK Government failed to discipline its men at the Simpson Plants, no peace was possible. They also demanded that elections to the union be held without delay.

The closure of the mills, in the meanwhile, continued. In a notice issued on March 5, the management stated that in view of "the liaison with the six-member Committee not being presently possible", it was "constrained" to keep the units closed indefinitely. Even Mr. Khadilkar's counsels did not seem to cut much ice.

The workers themselves could not be onlookers for long. On March 13, led by R. Kuchelar, V.P. Chintan and S.Krishnamurthi, they held a demonstration in Madras and demanded the immediate lifting of the closure. On the same day, the Chief Minister regretted in the Assembly that negotiations had been initiated without inviting a leader of Mr. Kuchelar's standing.

The negotiations which had started subsequently soon took a curious course. While pious wishes were expressed to get all trade unions around the table for a settlement, the DMK hatched a sinister plan to bypass Kuchelar and the CITU altogether.

The move was forestalled by militant workers and after their demonstration of March 13, the Government saw reason and reconstituted the Committee.

The workers have now realised from their experience that of all the Central Trade Unions, only the CITU would stand by them and be prepared to go the whole hog.

★ From Page Two because of similar reason, that in the rest of the States, though the situation was not as bad as in West Bengal, the Congress vote had started going down, despite the boost it got from the Bangladesh struggle. Is it not then preposterous to claim a big rise in Congress vote in West Bengal when it was falling elsewhere? Is it not conclusive evidence to prove the foul means adopted by the Congress leaders?

**After the fake election, goonda gangs let loose on a wild rampage against the people**

But the full meaning of this menace, of this unscrupulous gangsterism, is to be found in the aftermath of the elections. Flushed by their fake victory, the goonda gangs are in a wild rampage of murder, arson and terror in many parts near and around Ccutta and in some districts. They are raiding the working class localities forcing thousands of workers to leave their homes. From the Baranagar constituency of Jyoti Basu more than five thousand had to flee their homes. Similar is the tale from the mining areas, from the Barrackpore industrial belt and other areas.

Along with this large number of trade union offices are being occupied by the Congress hirelings at the point of pistol, trade union funds are being demanded for the unions of the INTUC; a demand is made at pistol point that the unions should hoist the Congress flags and join INTUC; that if the workers do not do so, they will lose their jobs and some of them their lives. The office of the Sen-Raleigh Employees Union affiliated to the CITU has been illegally occupied by the INTUC with the police staying on the sidelines. The leaders of the Sen-

Raleigh Employees Union are either under arrest or threatened by the goondas and unable to reach the office.

This is the Congress programme for extending the INTUC influence, the programme of meeting the demands of the people. In this nefarious game they are helped by the leaders of the AITUC whose political leaders, the Right Communist Party are in alliance with the Congress and support the ministry. The treachery of the AITUC leaders knows no bounds. They are acting as the willing tool of the Congress to inflict murder and terror on the people and smash the trade union movement.

**Entire Working Class must rise in mighty protest against this fascist menace**

The brave working class of West Bengal is going through a fiery ordeal in defence of its democratic and trade union rights. The fake electoral mandate of the Congress is being used as a weapon to attack the trade union movement and the CITU. It is the duty of the entire working class of India irrespective of their political affiliation to protest against this thuggery — the fake elections and the wanton attack on the trade unions. All CITU unions should make efforts to hold united meetings to protest against the policy of murder and gangsterism against the trade union and the democratic movement. They must educate the working class regarding the facts about the farce of West Bengal elections. They must send their protests against the forcible occupation of the trade union offices, of attacks on working class localities and the campaign of murder to the West Bengal Government.

Let the thousands and lakhs of workers following the CITU raise

their voice of solidarity with the West Bengal workers.

Fascism is trying to secure a foothold in West Bengal. Let the working class unitedly say it will not have a foothold, it will be defeated.

In this great task of defeating the rise of fascist tendencies, the unions must secure the co-operation of all democratic parties and elements for it is the common task of all to save democracy from the attacks of reaction.

● From Page Sevnteen Ececutive Committe members and office-bearers of the union on fabricated charges. When some of them were acquitted in the court they were rearrested under MISA etc.

The members of the union were forcibly driven out of their residences in Sen-Raleigh Housing Project with the help of notorious anti-social elements.

All the elementary norms of democracy have been thrown overboard by the authorities only to help the Sen-Raleigh management which has closed down the factory since March 29, 1971.

The management has blatantly gone back on its commitment in the agreement with Sen-Raleigh Employees Union (CITU) regarding the the daily target of production of 1650 cycles per day. If the agreement is implemented then there would be no question of surplus worker. The management however wants to reduce the production target and effect increase in the workload and reduce the number of workers.

The Sen-Raleigh Employees Union resolutely opposed any proposal of retrenchment, reduction in staff, increase in the workload and reduction in earnings of workers in any form.

The forcible occupation of the Sen-Raleigh Employees Union is a direct result of the conspiracy of the management, INTUC goondas, police and the administration to supress the trade union movement of the worker.

# THE CENTRAL BUDGET

## Robbery Through High Taxation And Deficit Financing

The Budget for 1972-73 passed by Parliament constitutes yet another attack on the standard of living of the people by Smt. Indira Gandhi's Government despite talk of Garibi Hatao and building socialism in the country.

There is no wonder that the Stock Exchanges and business centres are expressing their glee at the "realistic" approach of the Government. Out of about Rs. 183.25 crores of new taxation envisaged in the budget only Rs.16 crores fell on the rich strata. The rest of the burden actually fell on the people. In spite of the show of generosity of the Finance Minister Chavan the additional burden of taxation continues to be excessively high.

Since 1963-64 the taxes on income and property have increased from Rs. 554.52 crores to Rs. 1122.37 crores. That is a rise of about Rs. 567.85 crores, about 100 per cent. Other taxes on commodities increased from Rs.1091.30 crores to Rs. 3106.13 crores during the same time, a rise of 300 per cent!

As a result of successive increases in taxes on essential commodities over a period of year the total realisation during 1972-73 to the Government on account of taxes on sugar, kerosene, textile, tobacco, soap and matches alone would be about Rs.940 crores while the total collection from corporate tax would be only Rs.480 crores. This alone proves that the claim of Smt. Gandhi that her first concern in the country is the poor man is a deliberate lie.

The budget has further provided a deficit financing of the order of Rs 242 crores. There is no doubt that it will be exceeded during the year. As the experience of last year shows that despite provision of Rs. 220 crores during the budget the actual deficit financing during the first six months alone exceeded Rs. 500 crores. This will further push the prices upwards and add to the misery of the people. The robbery through high taxation and deficit financing have become the twin weapons in the hands of the Congress Government to loot the people.

The official claim that the Government is fighting for self-reliance is also another myth. The Explanatory Memorandum on the Budget has given the data of foreign aid which shows that during the next year the foreign loans will be more than last year while the debt payment burden continues to be more unbearable.

### India's External Debt.

(Non-PL480 loans)

( Rupees in Crores )

Year	Gross Borrowing	Repayment	Net
1968-69	410.55	176.39	234.16
1969-70	501.22	179.16	322.06
1970-71	432.23	194.46	237.77
1971-72	564.24	197.00	367.24
1972-73	614.73	251.97	362.76

(Budget)

Though there appears to be net less aid during 1972-73 it is not due

to Government policy of self-reliance but due to higher repayment liability of the Government. The gross borrowings have increased by about Rs.40 crores. The total foreign indebtedness of the Government during budget period would go up to Rs.7328 crores!

The Government sanctioned 221 foreign collaborations during 1970-71 which further shows the hollowness of the claim of fighting for self-reliance. Moreover during 1970 the total number of licence given to foreign private companies was 380, above 60 per cent higher than during 1969.

The Government is aware that there is going to be resistance to these anti-people policies pursued under the garb of radical slogans. The fantastic rise in the Central expenditure on police is clearly indicative of this. Though State Governments are already spending huge amounts on police the Central Government has assumed a new role of police intervention in State affairs. During 1963-64 the total amount spent on police by the Central Government was Rs. 25.07 crores which went up to Rs.72.60 crores in 1968-69 and further to Rs. 100.34 crores in 1972. The budget for 1972-73 provides a further rise to Rs.120.43 crores on police.

It is thus evident that Smt. Gandhi is bringing her socialism with the help of police and the leadership of AITUC and HMS by extending support to her policies are only becoming the accomplices in strengthening big business and looting the people.