



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## On Other Pages

- *Locomen's Demands—Stalemate Continues*
- *Women Workers Fight Police and Goonda Attacks*
- *All India Jute Strike From January 14*
- *INTUC, AITUC And HMS Leaders Betray Sugar Workers*
- *UCTU Secretariat Meets*
- *All India Token Strike of LIC Employees On December 28*
- *The Law of Master & Servant/ Legal Notes*
- *Andhra Pradesh Unit of UCTU Formed*
- *Struggle of IAC Employees Continue*
- *CITU Invited To Vietnam T. U. Congress*
- *TUI Body Extends Solidarity For Bengal Paper Mill Workers*
- *Other Regular Features*

### Editorial Board

B. T. Ranadive (Chairman)  
 P. Ramamurti      Monoranjan Ray  
 Niren Ghosh      Sudhin Kumar  
 M. K. Pandhe (Editor)

## Government's Labour Policy In The Dock

**T**HE MONTH OF DECEMBER WITNESSED A NEW WAVE of strike struggles engulfing the whole of India. With the dawn of 1974 approaching nearer, many more strike struggles are likely to materialise in the month of January and later on.

Only recently the Union Labour Minister Shri K.V. Raghunatha Reddy mentioned the "Commendable Patience" shown by our Working Class in the matter of strikes. Even according to this reckoning the patience is now coming to an end, the workers are joining the arena of strike struggles braving all repressive measures of the Government.

It is none else other than the labour policy of the Government that is responsible for these large scale dislocation of production. The industrial relations mahinery that favours employers at every stage is no more in a position to function these days and the doggedness shown by the spokesmen of the Government to stick to the hated concept of master and servent is at the root of all the existing industrial unrest.

Take the example of recent loco running staff agitation and inconvenience caused to thousands of passengers. The CITU has time and again pointed out how the top-heavy administration of the Railway Board was doing its best to sabotage the implementation of the agreement signed with the All India Loco Running Staff Association. Fantastic arguments were advanced to refuse early introduction of 10 hours duty, withdrawal of victimisation measures against the leaders of the movement. The facade of negotiation was only a smokescreen to hide the dilatory tactics of the Railway Board aimed at dividing the workers and increasing penal measures on the strikers, and loco-running staff are now convinced that these bureaucrats are not serious about negotiations at all. They were left with no other alternative but to resort to direct action to force the railway brass hats to implement the agreement.

*New Year's Greetings*

The Government instead of punishing the bureaucrats have resorted to the use of territorial army and MISA against the fighting Locomen. The ban on strike under DIR also has been declared as usual. The Government is also using retired employees as black legs under threat of cut of pension. These measures only intensified the struggle of locomen who became more determined to fight for their just demands.

The standing committee of the congress party for the Railway Ministry demands more firm action against locomen. The NFIR leadership also advocated repressive measures. The Prime Minister has also condemned the agitation. However, the heroic locomen have convincingly proved that despite the heavy odds they have been able to carry forward their struggle by depending on the united strength of their rank. Their united and principled stand ultimately forced the Railway Minister to come to terms with the Locomen.

In case of Indian Airlines also the bureaucracy and the Transport Ministry unilaterally imposed additional workload on the employees. When this was resisted they declared lock-out and put forward humiliating terms for the Unions. The Labour Minister refused to intervene in the dispute and became a silent spectator to the vindictiveness and caprices of an ex-Air Marshal and his coteries.

The failure of the Jute talks in Delhi on the longstanding demands of the workers was a

direct result of the obdurate policies of the I J M A bosses and refusal of the Labour Minister to take a firm stand against them. After waiting for more than enough time for a negotiated settlement all the Central Trade Unions in jute industry were left with no other alternative but to declare an indefinite strike from January 14 next. After more than a year of correspondence from the CITU, the Labour Ministry was forced to convene the tripartite meeting in New Delhi on December 18-19 last but its refusal to raise a finger against the liberal donors of the ruling party resulted in the meeting becoming infructuous. If the Jute barons refuse to relent the premier foreign exchange earning industry all over India will come to a grinding halt in the middle of January.

The 60,000 Assam State Government employees' indefinite strike since December 18 is just another example of administrative callousness towards genuine grievances of workers. Days and months were allowed to pass despite repeated representations and deputations. Victimisation of Trade Union leaders for the mere crime of championing the cause of employees have further accentuated the matter. The other states are also planning agitations and all-India one-day actions are also being visualised by the State Government employees' movement.

The successful pay strike of 28 lakh Central Government

employees in protest against the decisions of the Government on the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission is just a forerunner of further united actions. The decision of the AIRF to go in for indefinite strike from February 27 is just indicative of the mood of the 14 lakh railway employees.

Workers in Textile, Engineering, Plantations, Road Transport, Port and Docks, Pharmaceuticals, and other industries are also preparing for struggles for their longstanding demands. The 25 lakh Bombay Textile Workers have already observed one day strike while an indefinite strike is being planned.

The mood of the working class is clearly to resist the wage freeze policy and other inroads in their standard of living. The rising prices and declining real wages, growing unemployment and further attacks on trade union and democratic right is bringing them together crossing all the barriers.

Though Government appears to be unconcerned about it, it is difficult to say how long it can carry on with its present smug complacency. The present stance of being firm will only recoil on the Government because the working class can also be firm and determined.

The proposed Industrial Relations Bill, though yet to see the light of the day, does not offer anything new to the working class. From available indications it is continuation of the same old anti-labour policy which is recei-

( See Page Three )

## Convention Of Employees And Workers At Dhanbad

Under the auspices of the Dhanbad District Co-ordination Committee of Employees and Workers Association, a convention was held at Dhanbad on December 2, Com. Yogeshwar Gope General Secretary of the Bihar Non-Gazetted Employees Federation was the Guest In Chief. A presidium comprising of 5 members conducted the proceedings of the convention which was attended by delegates from 17 organisations including the HMP, LIC, Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India, Railway Co-ordination Committee etc.

( From Page Two )

ving shattering blows from the united might of the working class.

Any imposition of apuppet union on the workers will no more be tolerated to-day whatever may be the repressive sanction behind it. Treacherous agreements are becoming increasingly difficult to have their sway as in the past.

The unprecedented strike actions that are sweeping the country have put the Governments labour policy in the Dock. If the Government does not want to see this harsh reality to-day it can do so at its own peril. The working class will continue its united struggle in defence of its standard of living, against growing attacks of the capitalists.

After the Welcome Address by K. C. Ray Chowdhury, Con- venger, Reception Committee, the inaugural speech was delivered by Chief Guest. The convention adopted resolutions on price rice, on need-based minimum wage, on wage-freeze policy of the Government, on T. U. rights, on bonus to all, on professional tax, condemning Police firing, on coal workers at Sijua etc.

The convention decided on a programme of action including observance of protest days, demonstration, 12 hour squatting at Dhanbad and 'Dhanbad Bundh' for 24 hours.

### T. U. Convention at Mazaffarpur

A trade Union Convention was held at Mazaffarpur on November 25, under the auspices of the Co-ordination Committee of Trade Unions and Service Associations.

In the main resolution, the convention condemned the anti-people policies of the Govern- ment resulting in high prices, unemployment and poverty and demanded lowering of prices of essential commodities, at least 500. gm of food ration per day for each person, need based minimum wage, minimum 8.33 per cent bonus, withdrawal of the hated professional tax, etc.

After the delegate session, an open meeting was held in the afternoon.

## CITU General Council Meeting

A meeting of the General Council of the CITU will be held at Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (Rly. Station Waltair) from 7th to 10th February, 1974. Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU will preside. The Working Committee of the CITU will meet at 9 AM on February 7.

A broadbased Reception Committee has been formed with Shri P. Sasibhushana Rao, President of the Shipyard Labour Union as President, Shri S. Gangadhara Reddi, President of the Cormandel Fertiliser Em- ployees Union as General Secre- tary and Com. N. Prasada Rao (CITU) as Treasurer. The Office of the Reception Commi- ttee has been set up at the following address :—

Reception Committee  
CITU General Council Meeting  
Khamus Baba Darga Road  
Alipuram, Vishakhapatnam  
530004.

A meeting of the Working Committee of All India Planta- tion Workers' Federation will be held at Vishakhapatnam on the morning of February 11. On the same day meetings of Comrades working among Port and Dock Workers, Seamen and Road Transport Workers will be held. The time and venue of such meetings will be intimated later on. Meetings of comrades working in Engineering and Paper Industries will also be held during the General Council Meeting.

## Trade Unions Call

# All India Jute Strike From Jan. 14

**T**HE two-day tripartite meeting on jute industry convened by the Union Labour Minister at New Delhi on December 18-19 failed to produce a settlement due to the adamant attitude of the Jute employers. As the negotiations broke down, all the Central Trade Unions working Jute industry—CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), TUCC and NFITU—gave a joint call for an All India continuous strike in jute industry from January 14 on the demands for nationalisation of jute industry, take over of raw jute trade and foreign trade in jute products, 20 percent Bonus, uniform wages and other benefits on an all-India basis, etc.

The Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union and the Organising Committee of the All India Jute Workers' Conference have already issued strike notices to the Jute millowners, managements, and the State and Central Governments.

The tripartite meeting was convened in the background of the historic united token strike by Jute workers of West Bengal on November 5 and the call given by Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU) from its 35th Annual Conference for an all-India continuous strike in December to realise these common demands.

### 35th Annual Conference of BCMU

Earlier, the thirtyfifth Annual

Conference of the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union was held from November 30 to December 2, 1973 at Naihati, 24-Parganas.

The Conference was attended by 741 delegates, a majority of them representing the workers of 62 Jute Mills of West Bengal. Fraternal delegates from a large number of mass organisations including the General Secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha—Hare Krishna Konar—greeted the Conference.

Niren Ghosh, M.P., President of the BCMU presided over the Conference and B. T. Ranadive, President CITU addressed the delegates. Kamal Sarkar, General Secretary of the BCMU presented the Report.

The report reviewed the united struggles waged by the Jute workers in West Bengal since 1969 and the gains achieved by them. They forced the jute barons to increase their minimum wage from Rs. 120 to Rs. 263 and successfully fought for gratuity and minimum bonus of 8.33 per cent. Through united struggle they successfully resisted the jute employers' proposal for a 7-day week.

The report noted the significance of the growing unity between the jute workers and jute peasants which reflects a higher consciousness among the workers. Through the Convention and massive demonstration of September 15 last, the jute workers raised their united and powerful voice in support of the

jute growers and demanded that Rs. 80 per maund be paid as price of raw jute to growers. This was also a major issue of the successful token strike of November 5.

The report also noted the heroic resistance built up and the courage displayed by jute workers in the face of semi-fascist terror.

But, the report pointed out, many of the major demands of the jute workers still remain unrealised and they are facing further attacks on their livelihood from the management-Government combine. Their housing conditions are still wretched, budli workers are still being retrenched (already 65000 workers have been thrown out in recent years) and wage rates of piece-rated hands and salaried employees have not yet been fixed. Workers are losing wages due to the power-cut and they have been deprived of the right to 8 hours duty and a common holiday on Sunday. Canteen facilities are almost non-existent, their children have little opportunity of education and the anarchy in the ESI arrangements still continue. New attacks in the form of refusal to pay lump compensation in the case of a fatal accident and to grant pay protection in the case of transfers have been launched by the employers. Above all, the employers have persistently refused to fully implement the tripartite agreement of May, 1972.

All these are taking place at a time when jute industry is enjoying a booming prosperity. The nine monopoly houses con-

trolling the entire jute industry have plundered nearly Rs. 4000 crores and the Government is also earning Rs. 250 crores annually through export of jute products.

All these outstanding demands, the report pointed out, are to be settled through the coming all-India united and continuous strike.

Fiftyseven delegates took part in the discussions on the report after which it was adopted.

In the main resolution adopted unanimously, the Conference congratulated the jute workers for the successful united token-strike of November 5, deplored the attitude of the Government for arbitrarily fixing the price of raw jute at Rs. 57 per maund as against Rs. 80 demanded by the Trade Unions and demanded immediate nationalisation of the entire raw jute trade. It expressed full support for the demands of the jute workers and called on them to get ready for a continuous industry-wide strike sometime in December, 1973. It appealed to the other Central Trade Unions to meet and finalise a date for the commencement of the strike on the basis of a 14-point charter of Demands including nationalisation without compensation of the entire jute industry including trade in raw jute, uniform pay and benefits all over India, implementation of the 1972 agreement, 20 per cent bonus, work or relief for budlis, etc.

The Conference elected an Executive Committee for 1973-74 including Niren Ghosh as President, Samar Mukherjee as Working President and Kamal Sarkar as General Secretary.

After the Conference, a huge public rally was held with Niren Ghosh in the Chair. It was addressed by, among others, B.T. Ranadive, Jyoti Basu, Kamal Sarkar, Md. Ismail and fraternal delegates from U.P.—Ravi Sinha and Subhashini Sehgal.

### All India Jute Conference

As per the decision of the Organising Committee of the All India Jute Workers' Convention held in New Delhi on October 18, an all-India Jute Conference will be held in Kanpur in the last week of March, 1974 to form an All India Federation of Jute Workers.

## CITU Invited to Vietnam T.U. Congress

The Third National Congress of Vietnamese Trade Unions will be held in Hanoi from February 11 to 14, 1974. In a telegram sent to CITU Central, the Trade Union Organisation of North Vietnam (TOCODO) has invited a one-man delegation from CITU to attend the Congress. The CITU delegate has been requested to reach Hanoi by February 9.

## Andhra Pradesh Unit of UCTU Formed

The Andhra Pradesh State Unit of the United Council of Trade Unions was formed on December 16 at a meeting at Hyderabad of representatives of various Trade Unions and Federations in the State. A presidium consisting of Parasa Satyanarayana (CITU), D.R.K.Reddy (Insurance) and S. P. Singh (Coromandel) conducted the meeting.

Delegates from CITU, Insurance, Railway, P & T, Port, Central Government employees and various industries attended the meeting.

Inaugurating the meeting, N. Prasada Rao (CITU) explained the background and the purpose of convening the meeting. He said that, when the NCTU formed under the patronage of the Government was acting as a vehicle of carrying out the anti-worker, anti-

people policies of the Government, there was a need to unite all the militant, democratic trade unions to fight against these policies. He appealed to all trade unions and employees' organisations to join the UCTU.

The meeting was addressed by G. Balaji Das, V. Rao, M.N. Reddy and others.

The meeting adopted a statement of policy and several resolutions on the issues facing the workers and employees in the State.

The meeting elected a State Committee of UCTU with N. Prasada Rao as Convener and representatives from CITU, HMT, Insurance, Railways and other industries and services. Representatives of NFPTE and Confederation of Central Government Employees joined as observers.

# Locomen Forced To Go On Strike Once Again

Continued refusal of the Railway Board and Ministry to implement the August agreement and increased penal measures forced the Loco Running Staff of Northern and Western Railways to start agitation once again. Following the

failure of the attempt of AILRSA leaders for a settlement, they went on strike from December 15. The authorities, instead of settling the matter, took recourse to suppression of the strike through large-scale arrests under DIR, MISA etc., deployment of Territorial Army and employing retired locomen, diesel drivers etc. This attitude was deplored by the AILRSA, CITU and other mass democratic organisations. The struggle ultimately spread to Central and other Railways and paralysed train services in these Railways.

## P.F. Employees To Go On Indefinite Strike From Jan. 2

At the call of the All India Employees' Provident Fund Staff Federation, Provident Fund employees all over India will go on an indefinite strike from January 2, 1974 on their 8-point charter of Demands.

The Progressive Provident Fund Employees' Federation of India, of which Com. Mathew Kurian, M.P. is the President, has also given call for an indefinite strike from the same date on its 9-point charter of Demands including need-based minimum wage, pay-scales, similar to STC and MMTC as an interim measure, bonus, full neutralisation of price-rise, reduction in work-load greater promotion rvenues, recognition of the Progressive Federation, etc.

The Provident Fund employees have been agitating for their legitimate demands for the past several years. They observed a 72-hour hunger strike from October 15 to 18 last. The total indifference and apathetic attitude of the Government has forced them to take recourse to direct action.

The strike was called off on December 24, after 10 days, when a settlement was reached after negotiations between the leaders of the AILRSA and the Railway Minister. The assurances given by the Railway Minister proves that his earlier statement that the August agreement had been implemented, was nothing but an attempt to mislead the people. The Locomen are determined to end the practice of sweated labour in the Railways once and for all.

## Convention of Railwaymen in N.F. Railway

Under the auspices of the United Committee of Railwaymen, a convention was held at Maligaon on December 16-17. About 1000 delegates from all sections of N. F. Railway participated. After the flag hoisting and placing of wreaths on the Martyrs column, the entire

## TUI BODY EXTENDS SOLIDARITY FOR BENGAL PAPER MILL WORKERS

In a message addressed to the CITU—West Bengal Committee from Budapest, Mr. Pal Forgacs, General Secretary of the Trade Union International of Chemical, Oil and Allied Workers has expressed solidarity and support for the struggle of the workers of Bengal Paper Mill, Ranigunge against police terror.

In his message Mr. Forgacs said, they have "learnt with indignation and anxiety of the police measures being taken against the Bengal Paper Mills Mazdoor Union", and requested the CITU to pass on their "assurance of full solidarity to the union concerned and inform them that we strongly condemn the flagrant violation of elementary trade union rights".

delegates marched to the GM's bungalow to protest against the refusal of the authorities to give permission for using the Railway Institute for the Convention. K. G. Bose, President NFPTE, addressed the delegates. After the Convention a procession and mass meeting was held in support of the striking State Government employees of Assam.

# The Law Of Master & Servant

IT WAS QUESTION OF the application of the Andhra Pradesh (Telengana Area) Shops and Establishments Act of 1951. The Chief Inspector of Shops and Establishments, Hyderabad, arrived at the conclusion that the employer-employee relationship existed between the Silver Jubilee Tailoring House and others and the workers represented by the second respondent in the case between the Silver Jubilee Tailoring House and others vs. The Chief Inspector of Shops and Establishments.

The workers applied before the Competent Authority under that Act read with section 15 of the Payment of Wages Act for certain claims, and the Competent Authority referred to the Government for decision the question whether the provisions of the Act were at all applicable to the establishments. The Chief Inspector, being delegated by the Government, decided that the Act was applicable inasmuch as employer and employee relationship existed between the establishments and the workers represented by the second respondent.

The employers moved the High Court without any result and thereafter came to the Supreme Court.

The undisputed facts are that the workers are paid on piece-rate basis. They generally attend the shops only when there is work.

The rate of wages is not uniform and depends on the skill of the worker and the nature of the work. Sometime, with the permission of the employers, the workers may take home the work. If the work is not done according to instructions, the employers are at liberty to reject the work and they may ask him to do it once again according to instructions.

The employers contended in their appeal before the Supreme Court that the test to determine the relationship of employer and

---

## Arun Prokash Chatterjee

---

employee is whether the employer has the right to control and supervise the manner of work of the employee.

In the case of Dharangadhara Chemical Works Ltd. v. State of Saurashtra (1), the Supreme Court held that the test to determine whether there was such relationship of employer and employee is the existence of the right of the employer to supervise and control the work done by the employee not only in the matter of directing what work the employee is to do but also the manner in which he had to do the work.

In the case of Birdichand Sharma v. The First Civil Judge (2), the biri rollers were held to be workmen within the meaning of the Factories Act. The Court pointed out that the nature and

extent of control could not be precisely defined and might vary with different industries. It was held that the control could be exercised at the end of the day by the method of rejection of the biris which did not come up to the standard.

In the case of D. C. Dewan Mohidean Sahib and Sons v. The Industrial Tribunal, Madras and others (3), the admitted facts were that the contractors took leaves and tobacco from the appellants, employed workmen for manufacturing biris who rolled the biris at what were called contractors' factories. The payment was at piece rates and there was no condition for the coming and going of the workers at fixed hours. The contractors did not also keep any attendance registers. After the biris were rolled by the workers, the contractors took them to the appellant. The question was whether the biri workers were the employees of the appellant. The Supreme Court held that the workers were the employees of the appellant and the contractors or the intermediaries were merely branch managers appointed by the management.

In Shankar Balaji Wage v. State of Maharashtra (4), however, the Supreme Court cast a shadow over its earlier decisions. Here also Pandurang was a biri worker but there was no contract of service between the appellant and him. He was not bound to attend the factory, was not even bound to roll the biris at the factory but could take them home for rolling. But at the end of the day, when the

birds were delivered to the appellants, he could reject the same if they did not come up to the standard. The Supreme Court distinguished the Birdhichand's case (2) and said that the appellants had no control or supervision over the work of Pandurang and, therefore, the latter could not be called his employee.

In the case under discussion, the Supreme Court apparently overrules the case of Shankar Balaji (4), and, extensively quoting from the judgements of United Kingdom, United States and the Commonwealth countries, holds that the control test as traditionally formulated, has broken down in modern conditions. In any event, it is not decisive and no more than a factor, albeit an important factor. In coming to this conclusion, the Court accepts the reasoning of Prof. Kahn Freund in his article in (1951) 14 Modern Law Review at page 505 where Prof. Kahn says that modern employers have travelled a long way from the employers in a mainly agricultural society and even in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution when the employer could be expected to be superior to the servant in knowledge, skill and experience in the choice and the handling of the tools. To control the workmen would be beyond the power of the modern employers, however.

Therefore, in order to decide the relationship of master and servant, not merely the control test but other factors have also

to be taken into consideration. The control test cannot be more than one such factor and should not be given the primacy of place in such considerations.

The Supreme Court indicates the various factors.

Thus, because the work is done in the employer's premises or in his organisation, the organisation test as suggested by Lord Denning in *Stevenson Jordan and Harrison v. Macdonald and Evans* (5) may be applied among others.

Similarly, the right of the master to cashier the employee may be one more indicia.

The ownership of the instrumentalities may not again be conclusive because often the employee supplies his own tools though such ownership may have some evidentiary value.

It appears, however, that one important test is whether "ultimate authority over the man in the performance of his work resided in the employer so that he was subject to the latter's order and directions". (Dixon, J., in *Humberstone v. Northern Timber Mills* (6) quoted by the Supreme Court in the case under consideration).

Applying all these tests and weighing the different factors, the Supreme Court held in this case that the workmen represented by the second respondent were the employees of the appellants. The Supreme Court dismissed the theory that an employee must be under one employer. A person need not be under the exclusive control of one master and there is nothing to prevent a person

from being a servant of more than one employer.

As I indicated in the beginning, this case of the Supreme Court decided on 25 September 1973 is important for those wide, scattered body of workers who are made to work at piece rates without any fixed conditions of service and without even a fixed master and to whom the industrial laws were so long being denied on the ground that they were not employees within the meaning of the industrial statutes.

1. 1957 Supreme Court Reports page 152
2. 1961 ( 3 ) Supreme Court Reports page 161
3. 1964 ( 7 ) Supreme Court Reports page 646
4. 1962 Supp. ( 1 ) Supreme Court Reports page 249
5. 1952 (1) T. L. R. page 101
6. 1949 (79) C. L. R. page 389

## THE WORKING CLASS

Volume 2 (Sept. 72 To Aug. 73)

Bound Volume Available

(With Detailed Classified Index)

Price : Rs. 7.00 (Postage Extra)

To be Had From :

**CENTRE OF INDIAN  
TRADE UNIONS,**

172, Lenin Sarani,  
Calcutta-700013

# Locomen's Demand— Stalemate Continues

**W**HILE THE STALEMATE in discussion on Locomen's problems still continues, the Railway Minister, announced in the Rajya Sabha on November, 29, that the reduction in duty hours would be implemented from December. But as there are operational difficulties, it would take about 3 or 4 years to complete the process. Monoranjan Roy M. P. and others had criticised the Government about its policy of recognition and delay in implementation of the agreement with Locomen. The Railway Minister, however, reiterated the policy of the Government about not recognising any category-wise Association. Meanwhile the leaders of the LRSA in a statement complained that the announcement of the Minister about reduction in duty hours is vague and none of the other items including cancellation of penal measures, withdrawal of D. I. R. cases and charge-sheets have so far been settled. Pending further decision by the Working Committee full scale preparation of the Convention etc. are going on.

### Various Categories Start agitations

Following the struggle of Loco Running Staff various categories have started agitation. The Signal and Tele-Communication

Staff started work-to-rule movement from November 19. The Railway Minister announced in the Rajya Sabha on November, 29 that the demand for 'Break-down Allowance' has been conceded and others are under consideration. The Shed Mechanical Staff Association has also started a work-to-rule movement, throughout the country. A special Convention has been called at Madras on January 10 & 11, for adopting further programme by confederation of category-wise associations.

Even the recognised unions have now started to organise struggle on sectional demands. The S. E. Railwaymen's Union, organised the Yard and Engineering staff of this railway for work-to-rule and mass sick leave movement respectively from December 15.

### AIRF Move to Disrupt Locomen's Unity

AIRF and its affiliated unions are making hectic efforts to disrupt the unity of Loco Running staff. They are now trying to organise Loco Running Staff separately on the slogan of of implementation of the demands. The AIRF held a Conference on November 24-25 at Delhi. The AITUC affiliated S. E. Rlymen's Union, have held successive Conferences. They

are trying to pit one section of Loco Running Staff against the other raising catchy slogans of seniority etc.

### Struggle of Switchmen and Cabinmen of Dhanbad Division

The cabinmen and Switchmen of Dhanbad Division went into mass sick leave movement from December 1. The authorities, as usual, pressed Teritorial Army into service to break the struggle. Led by the Loco Running Staff, the entire workers of Dhanbad went into solidarity action from December 6. The authorities were forced to open negotiations and settle some of the demands.

While preparation of this struggle was on, a joint procession at Pathardih ( E. Rly. ) was attacked by some armed goonda elements on November 29, at the instance of some supervisors. Six workers including the Secretary of the local branch of LRSA were wounded. There was total strike by all sections of employees of Dhanbad division. It spread to Asansol and the authorities were forced to negotiate settlement.

### Struggle in S. E. Rly.

Struggles in S. E. Railway are on increase. On November 7, there was a complete tool-down at various work spots at Khargpur on demand of food. On November 26, the workers of Khargpur workshop downed their tools for advance and forced the authorities to sanction Rs. 6 lakhs. At Shalimar, all sections of workers stopped work on December 3, on similar demand.

*On Page Fourteen*

# INTUC, AITUC And HMS Leaders Betray Sugar Workers

**C**OM. R. Umanath, General Secretary of the Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU, who represented the CITU at the meetings of the Sugar Industry Wage Negotiating Committee held at New Delhi on November 27 and December 6 last, has issued the following statement on December 7 :—

It is well-known that wages in the Sugar Industry is the lowest. But profits made by the sugar magnates in recent years has been phenomenal. Even published profits have been enormous not to mention the huge black-market profit.

After a good deal of agitation the Union Labour Minister convened a tripartite meeting of the representatives of the employers and workers in the sugar industry at New Delhi on 27th November 1973. A number of demands were raised at that meeting on behalf of labour, including interim relief. After some discussions it decided to have its next meeting on 6th December for taking certain decision on issues including interim relief.

It turns out now that there had been a conspiracy between the sugar barons of Uttar Pradesh, the Ruling Congress Party and AITUC, INTUC and HMS to forestall and scuttle these discussions at the All India Tripartite and betray the workers. On 29-11-73, just 2 days after the Delhi Tripartite meeting and a week before its

next meeting, these organisations and the employers rushed to the Uttar Pradesh State Labour Minister and prevailed on him to give a binding award on interim relief to sugar workers. The award clearly states :

“... representatives of industries and workmen unanimously decided to refer the question of Dearness Allowance and interim wage increase to the arbitration of the Labour Minister and also decided that all demands in regard to interim wage increase presented at the Tripartite Conference held under the Chairmanship of the Central Labour Minister on 27-11-72 shall not be agitated hereafter and shall be deemed to have been withdrawn”.

In pursuance of this, the U.P. Labour Minister awarded Rs. 28.22 to workmen upto the category of ‘skilled ‘B’ operatives and clerks drawing revised basic wages upto Rs. 150 p.m. and Rs. 32.30 to every other workman from 1-11-1973 as increase in the Dearness Allowance “which will be a djusted against the increase in dearness allowance payable from July 1st, 1974.”

And the most atrocious part of it was that the AITUC, INTUC and HMS agreed to the employers’ demand that the new wage scales shall come into force only one year hence from now, i.e. 1-11-74.

Since these organisations formed majority in the All India Tripartite convened by the Central Labour Minister, this

fait accompli was forced on the All India Tripartite which met on 6-12-1973.

It is significant to note that when these organisations referred these issues to the arbitration of the U.P. State Labour Minister, they were cautious enough not even to consult the CITU which is a constituent of the All India Tripartite meet.

There is every reason to suspect that the Ruling Congress Party, AITUC, INTUC, and HMS have done this with a view to secure finances for their respective parties for the forthcoming elections in U.P. from the sugar barons.

This is the grossest betrayal of the sugar workers and the CITU, while opposing this tooth and nail, reserves to itself freedom of action in this regard and is not bound by that decision.

## Bihar State CITU Meets

**A** meeting of the Bihar State Committee of CITU was held at Ranchi on December 6 and 7. Com. S. N. Mitra presided over the meeting. Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU also attended.

The meeting expressed concern at the alarming economic situation due to rising prices, unemployment, non-availability of essential goods in open market, high taxation, the imposition of the “Professional Tax”, etc

The Committee adopted several resolutions condemning repressive measures of the Government on workers including Locomen and F.C.I.

*On Page Fifteen*

# State Convention Of Bihar UCTU Held

**A** three-day State Convention 'Against the 3rd Pay Commission Recommendations and Bonus for All' was held at Patna from 8th to 10th December last under the auspices of the Bihar State Committee of the United Council of Trade Unions.

A six-member Presidium conducted the proceedings of the convention. More than 500 delegates representing Central, State and Local Government, Insurance, Banks, Railways, P & T, Defence Accounts, Electricity, Engineering and Steel workers unions and association besides the constituents of Bihar UCTU attended.

The Convention was inaugurated by Com. L. A. Prasad, General Secretary of All India (P & T) Administrative Offices' Employees' Association and addressed, among others, by Comrades K. G. Bose (NFPTE) Asutosh Bhattacharya (Civil Audit and Accounts Association), Pritish Chanda (UCTU-Central Secretariat) and Durga Bagchi (State Electricity Supply Workers' Union).

The Convention called upon Central, State Local Bodies and other employees and workers all over the State to wage a united and determined struggle to achieve their basic demands for need-based minimum wage, full neutralisation of rise in Cost of Living index, Bonus for All, stoppage of victimisation, full T. U. and Democratic rights, etc. It appealed to all left and

democratic forces, including unions and Associations, to build up united movement on these demands.

The Convention also decided to stage a mass demonstration before the Bihar Assembly on December 17 on the above demands and to extend full support to the proposed "Patna Bundh" on January 2, 1974 against price rise and the hated professional tax.

## UCTU Secretariat Meets

**A** MEETING OF THE Secretariat of the United Council of Trade Unions was held in New Delhi on December 8. Com. P. Ramamurti presided over the meeting. Com. George Fernandes, Convener UCTU reviewed the activities of the UCTU since July last.

Expressing its pleasure at the developing united actions of Central and State Government employees set in motion by the UCTU Convention of July last, the UCTU welcomed the decision of the All India Railwaymen's Federation to hold a Convention of the Central Government employees' unions to plan an all-India struggle against the Government's decision on the Third Pay Commission Report. The UCTU Secretariat pledged its full support for any movement that may be launched by the Central and State Govt. employees on this issue.

The UCTU condemned the arbitrary imposition of a new shift pattern and declaration of lock-out by the IAC authorities

The Convention also adopted several other resolutions on price rise, unemployment, repression and repressive laws, supporting struggle of municipal workers, house staff of medical colleges, etc.

After the delegates session, the delegates went in a procession to the venue of the open session which was addressed by K. G. Bose, Chandi Prasad, L. A. Prasad, Hari Krishna (Convener, Bihar UCTU) and others.

and demanded immediate settlement of the issues involved through direct negotiations with the unions. It congratulated the IAC employees for their determined struggle.

The UCTU also condemned the use of territorial army during the recent struggle of Loco workers of Dhanbad division and the attitude of the Government towards the agreement signed with the AILRSA relating to reduction of the duty hours of Locomen. The Secretariat warned the Government against such dilatory tactics and disruptive methods.

The UCTU Secretariat also deplored the recent agreement signed by the U. P. leadership of INTUC, AITUC and HMS in which they accepted arbitration of the U. P. Labour Minister while bi-partite negotiations were going on for the settlement of demands of Sugar workers. This they said, was a rank betrayal of the developing all-India movement of Sugar workers.

# Women Workers Fight Police and Goonda Attacks

**T**HE heroic women workers of the Ranigunj Coal Belt and the Bengal Paper Mill area have, in recent months, set up glorious instances of mass resistance against Police and goonda attacks.

## Ranigunj Coal Belt

During the Bengal Bundhs of 27th July and 17th November last, women wagon loaders and agricultural labourers of the area took a leading role in organising resistance to goonda and Police attacks and in ensuring success of the Bundhs.

On 27th July, when a leading worker of Central Satgram Colliery was arrested by Police at the instance of the Congress (R), women wagon loaders and men workers en masse surrounded the Police van and forced them to release the worker. This enthused the entire workers and a complete strike was observed in the colliery. Similarly, before the Bundh of 17th November, when the local CMA officials of Topsia Colliery and the Police tried to disrupt the bundh with the help of some black-legs, the women workers and agricultural labourers picketed the pithead and exhorted the workers to participate in the strike. As a result the strike proved a grand success. When the enraged management called the Police the women volunteers resisted for several hours. The Police

arrested 81 women workers including children but later had to release them fearing adverse reaction.

To-day, in Khas Kenda, North Chora and specially No. 10 pit of Chora colliery, women workers are taking a leading role in the T. U. movement which has also inspired the men workers. The Congress gangsters forcibly captured the CITU union in 1971, but a few months back casual women wagon loaders took the initiative in joining the CITU union which later inspired other workers to join in large numbers. A number of strikes and demonstrations were also conducted by them despite terror and disruption by Congress hoodlums.

In the Kalipahari Colliery, where all the women wagon loaders are members of the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India (CITU), women workers courageously fought the Police, CRP and goonda attacks. Last year, when the Congress gangsters supported by the CRP tried to import blacklegs and disrupt the strike in wagon loading department, the women workers gheraoed the blacklegs and resisted the CRP ultimately forcing them to withdraw.

## Bengal Paper Mills Area

The workers of Bengal Paper Mill in general and activists of Bengal Paper Mill Mazdoor Union (CITU) in particular were made the targets of fero-

cious attacks by Police and gangsters of Congress and INTUC, since the rigged election of 1972. Even the people of nearby villages, supporters of CPI (M) and CITU, were not spared. The CITU union office was forcibly occupied and a stooge INTUC union composed of gangster elements was foisted on the workers.

Following the murder of Comrade Kaleswar Hazam—a leading worker of the CITU union—the Congress gangsters aided by the Police mounted a ferocious attack on the entire people of the nearby villages. The reign of terror forced hundreds of villagers including women and children to flee their homes and take shelter in the paddy fields for three days. Their homes were burnt and ransacked by the gangsters. Moreover, in order to force the workers to join the INTUC union, the gangsters started terrorising, assaulting and insulting the workers and their womenfolk.

Ultimately these attacks forced the workers, both men and women, to organise mass resistance to counter the goonda-Police attacks. The women workers and wives of men workers played a leading role in the mass resistance. Led by Rani Chatterjee, wife of a CITU militant then detained under MISA, the women workers and wives of other workers started mass resistance in different places whenever goondas and the Police attempted attacks. They organised and mobilised the womenfolk in greater numbers

for this, which later enthused even the men workers.

On numerous occasions the mass resistance by womenfolk of the area successfully repulsed attacks by gangsters and forced the Police to release arrested workers. In August last hundreds of women surrounded the INTUC office and rescued Shamapada Majumdar, an employee of Bengal Paper Mill, who had been kidnapped by the INTUC goondas. A few days later they successfully resisted an attack by Congress goondas on Palpara village and forced the Police to release a CITU worker who had been arrested earlier. In October last, womenfolk of Baruipara and Roypara massively resisted and repulsed an attack by the goondas. A few days later 500 women surrounded a top Police officer demanding arrest of Congress miscreants, restoration of peace and stoppage of indiscriminate arrests of CITU workers, and extracted an assurance from him in this regard.

The success of the resistance movement changed the situation to such an extent that the workers decided to re-open the office of the CITU union on September 9 last after a long closure. The occasion turned out to be a festive one with hundreds of jubilant women and men workers attending.

With the consciousness and experience gained in course of the mass resistance movement, the women workers and other sections of women in Ranigunj are determined to keep the banner of CITU high and no amount of repression can cow them down.

## Consumer Price Index Numbers

(INDUSTRIAL WORKERS/BASE 1960—100)

State/Centre	1973		
	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>			
Hyderabad	253	247	249
<b>Assam</b>			
Digboi	232	230	230
<b>Bihar</b>			
Jamshedpur	249	244	254
Jharia	258	247	262
<b>Gujarat</b>			
Ahmedabad	233	242	247
Bhavnagar	260	266	277
<b>Haryana</b>			
Yamunanagar	251	252	261
<b>J &amp; K</b>			
Srinagar	204	211	216
<b>Kerala</b>			
Alwaye	287	273	273
Mundakayam	279	269	266
<b>M.P.</b>			
Bhopal	249	253	257
Gwalior	265	258	272
Indore	276	278	282
<b>Maharashtra</b>			
Bombay	227	228	228
Nagpur	260	261	260
Sholapur	275	281	279
<b>Mysore</b>			
Bangalore	258	275	275
<b>Orissa</b>			
Sambalpur	240	238	236
<b>Punjab</b>			
Amritsar	243	246	254
<b>Rajasthan</b>			
Ajmer	253	254	260
Jaipur	256	267	269
<b>Tamilnadu</b>			
Coimbatore	211	212	214
Madras	226	224	226
Madurai	231	231	237
<b>U. P.</b>			
Kanpur	254	255	259

### West Bengal

Calcutta	220	222	240
Howrah	229	234	249
<b>Delhi</b>	259	264	272

### Other Centres

(On different bases)			
	1973		
	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
Cuttack (1949)	297	292	299
Berhampur (1949)	332	340	348
Jabalpur (1949)	304	295	302
Beawar (1951-52)	284	291	294
Himachal Pradesh (1965)	183	185	188
Goa (1966)	159	155	163
Tripura (1961)	207	204	202

### All India Consumer Price Index

(Working Class/General Index)

	Base	
	1949	1960
1973	269	221
April	277	228
May	283	233
June	295	243
July	300	247
August	301	248
September	309	254

Source : Index Sheet, Labour Bureau, Simla

*N.B. It is significant that the index for Calcutta—which increased by 18 points in 6 months (April to September)—has now jumped up by another 18 points in only one month (September to October).*

# All India Token Strike of LIC Employees On December 28

**R**ESENTMENT IS running high among more than 40,000 LIC employees all over the country at the indifferent attitude and delaying tactics of the LIC management towards their just and overdue demands. Between July and November 1973, leaders of LIC employees thrice met the management across the negotiating table without any result whatsoever. After the last round of abortive talks held on November 7 to 9, the management instead of opening formal dialogue on the Charter of Demands offered a meagre dole of Rs. 4 crores "with some marginal increase", which fell far short of the minimum demands of the employees. This was outright rejected by the employees.

The rise in wages claimed by them represent a just share in the huge profits earned by the LIC during the past two decades at the cost of the employees' labour. During this period their productivity has gone up by 78 per cent, whereas their real wages have gone down by 31 per cent. To compensate for this steep erosion in their real income, the minimum wage of an LIC employees should have gone up from Rs. 130 in 1960 to Rs. 520 in 1970. The actual minimum wage today is only Rs. 358.10.

Led by the All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA), LIC employees are successfully carrying out a pro-

gramme of agitation in support of their demands. On August 24, they observed a two-hour walk-out strike in different centres. On November 1, LIC employees all over the country observed "Demands" Day at the joint call of the AIIEA and All India Life Insurance Employees Association. A section of employees following the National Organisation of Insurance Workers (NOIW) also participated in this programme in some centres.

THE AIIEA and NOIW have jointly chalked out a programme of actions. At their joint call, LIC employees successfully observed a two-hour walk-out strike on December 7 last. They have also planned to intensify the struggle in different phases—starting with a "work-to-rule" from December 17 followed by boycott of overtime and a series of strike actions.

Meanwhile, 7000 LIC employees in Bombay observed a one-hour strike on December 12 to protest against the vindictive suspension orders issued by the management on ten leading employees—seven in Bangalore, two in Bombay and one in Madras—for taking part in union activities. LIC employees throughout the country also observed a one-hour strike on December 14 on the same issue.

The LIC employees are determined to carry forward their struggle unitedly with other sections of insurance workers.

They observed two-hour protest strike on December 21 and are preparing for the All India token strike on December 28.

---

## RAILWAYMEN

*From Page Fifteen*

At Bondamunda, the Loco Running staff stopped work for 6 hours and forced the authorities to stop favouritism. At Anara the Locomen stopped work for 2 hours to secure protection for the family of Driver Tirky, whose son, Anil Tirky was victimised during Locomen's struggle and have not been reinstated yet despite orders from the Deputy Railway Minister. At Raipur and Khurda Road, they stopped work against vandalism.

### **N. E. Railway General Manager face demonstration**

On November 14, several thousands railwaymen from all over the zone assembled at Gorakhpur to demonstrate against the General Manager.

### **Urge for united struggle growing amongst railwaymen**

The United Committee of Railwaymen (NFR) and the ICF Workers' Union, Madras, have addressed letters expressing desire for united struggle. In the Working Committee meeting of S. E. Rlymen's Union, an amendment was moved for holding a Convention of all T.U. organisations in S. E. Railway on basic demands which was accepted by the leadership.

# Tamil Nadu Newsletter

## Strike in Mettur Chemicals and Kanyakumari State Transport

The strike by workers of Kanyakumari District State Transport from October 15 on bonus and other issues (reported in November 1973 issue) still continues. The CITU State Committee is collecting funds for the struggling workers.

The indefinite strike by 2500 workers of Mettur Chemicals from November 26 last, is still continuing. It is being led by a Joint Action Committee composed of CITU and other unions.

---

### From Page Fourteen

workers, for need-based minimum wage of Rs. 450 for Engineering workers and Rs. 430 for coal mine workers, condemning the firing on coal workers at Angarpathra (Dhanbad), and demanding the release of A. K. Roy and S. K. Bakshi, members of Bihar State Committee of CITU.

The Committee also adopted resolutions demanding rise in wages of agricultural, beedi, and Press workers and extending all support to the agitations of State, Local Bodies, Electricity workers, teachers and non-teaching Staff of the State. It also extended full support to the demands of Central and Insurance Employees.

The Committee decided to hold its Annual Conference at Adityapur (Jamshedpur) in the third week of April 1974.

## Lock-out in ISR Mills

Workers of I.S.R. Mills, Nagapatam are on struggle for their demands for wage rise, bonus etc. The management has declared a lock-out from November 4, Workers are on hunger strike before the Sub-collectorate office demanding lifting of lock-out. So far 114 workers have been arrested.

## Struggles of Handloom Workers

7000 handloom workers of Nagercoil are carrying on struggle demanding 5 per cent rise in wages etc. and lifting of the lock-out declared from November 30. To Support the workers' struggle a Joint Action Committee has been formed by the CITU Unions.

## Stay-in Strike in Madurai Sugar Mill

Following an anti worker agreement signed by the INTUC and HMS Unions, the management of Madurai Sugar Mills (Chettair Group) increased the work-load of workers. When the workers protested, the management issue show-cause notice on 13 workers. In protest, the workers led by the CITU Union, are on stay-in strike from December 6. The management have declared a lock-out from December 11. The workers are determined to continue the struggle till victory.

## Mill Workers on Strike

Workers of Vikramsingapuram Mill are on strike from October

22 demanding withdrawal of termination of 12 workers and restoration of a wage-cut. Later the management declared a lock-out. A tri-partite meeting called by the Labour Department agreed to forward the issue to a Labour Tribunal, but the workers are continuing the strike demanding settlement of all other demands.

## Other Struggles

Condemning the termination of two LIC employees in Bombay and 7 in Bangalore, LIC employees all over Tamil Nadu demonstrated before their offices on December 14.

About 1000 Leather tannery workers of Thindukal demonstrated before the Government offices of the town from November 26 to 28 demanding nationalisation of Tannery Industry, security of employment, etc.

By a resolution unanimously adopted at its fifth Annual Conference held on November 25, the Auto Cycle Rickshaw Workers Union, Thirupur decided to affiliate with the CITU.

---

## Bardai Workers Win Victory

After a historic strike struggle lasting 503 days, under the banner of the CITU, 200 workers of Bardai (Pvt) Ltd. in Bombay won a significant victory when the management was forced to come to a settlement. The agreement provides for continuity of service of all the workers, reinstatement of 99 retrenched workers and 25 per cent wage for the strike period.

# Struggle of IAC Employees Continue

**T**HE struggle of the employees of Indian Airlines Corporation (reported briefly in December 1973 issue) against increased work-load and vindictive lock-out imposed by the management, still continues.

Through the new Shift Pattern, the management sought to increase work-load and hours of work, increase number of "Nights" and reduce number of "offs." When all the doors of negotiations were closed, the employees' unions served a strike notice on November 10 and requested the Labour Minister to intervene. The management, however, went on deliberately escalating the dispute by disrupting and dislocating air services, putting the entire blame on the employees.

Employees, who reported for duty as usual according to the old shift pattern, were purposely marked absent. Thus, an undeclared 'lock-out' had been imposed by the management even before November 24.

Conciliation proceedings started on November 19 but it proved infructuous due to the adamant attitude of the IAC Chairman and the Communications Ministry and the ineffective role of the Labour Department. Without giving further opportunity for talks, a lock-out was declared from the morning of November 24.

Since then a barrage of slanders against the employees has been unleashed by the IAC management and the Communica-

tion Ministry. Later on, the management came out with a 22 point charter of conditions to eliminate the so-called "wasteful practices" and they want the employees to accept these conditions before lifting the lock out. These conditions will virtually take-away all the rights achieved by the employees through 20 years of struggle.

The slanders being repeated against the employees will be disproved by the fact that their productivity has increased considerably during the last 20 years (from 36 passengers per employee in 1953-54 to 186 in 1973). As against this, their minimum wage is to-day Rs. 225/=, much below

that of other comparable sectors. As regards 'overtime', it was the IA management which had encouraged this as a matter of policy whereas the Union was all along against too much incidence of over time.

It is significant, that the issues of "new shift pattern" and "wasteful practices", have been brought up at a time when the employees had started agitation for their Charter of Demands lying pending for the last 6 months,

The employees are determined to resist this motivated and vindictive move of the IA management through united struggle.

---

## Brutal Police Repression on Workers in Himachal Pradesh

**B**rutal Police repression has been let loose by Police and management goondas on the workers and T. U. leaders of Patel Engineering Works, contractors for Jamuna Hydrel Project in Himachal Pradesh.

Following defeat of its nominees in the Union election, the management victimised the union leaders and its paid goondas attacked the workers. The workers went on strike in June 1973 protesting against this attack and returned to work on July 19 after the management gave assurances of non-interference in union affairs. After a few days, the General Secretary of the Union was stabbed and a number of workers were assaulted by the goondas. The State Police in collusion with the management arrested 40 workers, and severely beat

up the Union President before releasing him. After this, the management declared a lock-out.

Brutal police repression has also been let loose against the lawyers defending the worker against false charges and other democratic people supporting their cause. Two lawyers were arrested and a lady advocae was threatened with criminal tassault and her house raided by the police several times. Tulsi Ram, CPI (M) MLA of the State Assembly was also arrested and severely beaten on November 25 while leading a procession of workers.

Twenty MP's belonging to five opposition parties— CPI (M) CPI, SP, DMK and Congress (O) and an independent— have addressed a letter to the Prime Minister condemning these atrocities and seeking her intervention.

# NEWSLETTERS

## Maharashtra

### **Geat Tyre Workers on Indefinite Strike**

1200 workers of the Geat Tyres of India factory at Bhandup, Bombay have started indefinite strike since November 12 against the suspension order on J. H. Bharucha, Union Committee member and charge-sheets served on 20 truck-tyre builders. The management followed a calculated move to attack the workers. When the workers pointed out their difficulties which they faced in actual work, the management issued warnings to about 50 workers and charge-sheeted 20 of them on the ground of go-slow. The workers observed a protest strike on October 29 and served a 14-day strike notice.

Having failed in its effort to break the strike, the management has now appealed to the State Government to intervene in the matter. Due to the obstinate attitude of the management an early settlement of the issue is not in the horizon.

### **Blow Plast Workers Lathi-charged**

360 workers of the Blow Plast Limited, Bhandup, Bombay, who are on stay-in-strike since November 23 to press their legitimate demands, were brutally lathi-charged by the Bhandup police. The police did not spare even women. Despite this brutal attack, the workers

are determined to continue their strike.

### **Successful Token Strike by Bombay Textile Workers**

At the joint call of CITU, AITUC and Lal Nishan Unions, over 1.8 lakh textile workers in Bombay's 58 textile mills went on a day's token strike on December 16 last in support of their 19-point Charter of Demands and in protest against the disruptive tactics of the managements and the Government. Despite attempts by agents of millowners and the INTUC-led Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh, the strike was a thundering success. A few mills, where the RMMS had been able to muster some workers for the first shift, observed complete strike from the second shift.

In the afternoon, a big public meeting was held on the Kamgar Maidan where the workers were addressed by P. K. Kurane (CITU), Chitnis (AITUC), S. Kulkarni (Lal Nishan) and others.

The token strike will prepare the way for the indefinite strike of textile workers from December 30, called by these unions.

## Kerala

### **Successful General Strike Observed on Dec. 21**

At the call of five opposition parties of Kerala, a successful State-wide General Strike and Hartal was observed on December 21. The working class of

the State responded magnificently. Before and during the general strike, hundreds of trade union workers were arrested and lathi-charge resorted to by Police in many places.

The incomplete reports received so far shows that the strike was wide-spread in Kozhikode, Cannanore, Malappuram, Palghat and other districts.

In the Kozhikode District, 3000 Port workers, 5000 transport workers and 3000 coir workers, besides a large number of workers in loading and unloading, hotel, cotton mill, toddy-tapping, automobile and other industries and municipal workers participated. Overwhelming majority of workers in Feroke-Cheruvannoor industrial area joined the strike despite opposition of AITUC and INTUC. Transport services in the district was completely paralysed.

In Cannanore Dist., one lakh workers participated including 30,000 beedi workers, 8000 private bus workers, 8000 co-operative employees, 3000 plantation workers, 3000 toddy tappers and workers in municipalities, timber and match industry, coir and handloom industry etc. Workers of the Pappinisseri Co-operative Powerloom Industry, under Right C. P. leadership, also joined the strike.

In Malappuram Dist., 10,000 workers responded to the strike call.

In Palghat District, tens of thousands of agricultural labourers participated along with 5000 toddy tappers, plantation workers of Nelliampatti, Vadakkancherry, Manarkkad and Ottapalam zone,

municipal workers of Chittoor and Palghat town, thousands of beedi workers, transport and farm workers etc. Transport buses did not ply.

### **Other Struggles**

workers of Bacon Factory at Koothattukulam struck work on November 19 in support of their demands for job security, improved service conditions etc.

The managerial staff of FACT, Cochin Division resorted to a one-hour token strike on November 28 in support of their demands.

Led jointly by CITU and INTUC Unions, workers of Mannam Sugar Mills in Panthalam observed a token strike on December 9 in support of their demands.

Private bus transport in Trichur District was paralysed as their entire workers went on indefinite strike from December 9 protesting against attacks on them in some places. The call was given by the Trichur District Road Transport Employees' Union.

Led jointly by the CITU and AITUC, all Tile workers of Palghat District started indefinite strike from December 6 demanding higher wages etc.

Workers in Alleppey and its suburbs, supported by Coir workers and agricultural labourers, struck work on December 8 protesting against attacks by Youth Congress gangsters and arrests of T.U. leaders.

The foundation for the formation of a State organisation of Lorry Transport workers was

laid at a Conference of Lorry Transport workers held in Mattancherry on October 26-27 last. The Conference also adopted a Charter of Demands. There are about 40,000 Lorry Transport workers in the State.

### **West Bengal**

#### **Engineering Workers to Start Indefinite Strike**

Five Engineering Federations affiliated to the CITU, two UTUC's, TUCG and HMS have given a joint call for an indefinite strike in the Engineering industry in the State from the middle of January 1974. The call was given from the platform of a joint convention held in Calcutta on December 15 last. The main demands of the workers of the Tripartite Agreement of June 1973, settlement of the demands of workers of small engineering factories employing less than 50 workers etc.

As per the decision of the convention, a mass deputation of Engineering workers to the Governor was held on December 26 led jointly by the five Trade Unions in Engineering industry.

Meanwhile leaders of the Five Engineering Federations are meeting to finalise further programmes of action and to fix the date of the indefinite strike. The INTUC and AITUC led Federation have also been invited to participate in the meeting.

#### **Sales Employees of Jay Engg. To get higher Wages & D. A.**

After a five month long struggle, from July 17 last, the Sales employees of Jay Engineer-

ing have won an important victory. According to a tripartite agreement signed on December 12, they will get (a) wage rise of Rs. 30 per month and a new pay-scale with effect from December 17; (b) Rs. 10/- as additional D. A. and rise of Rs. 1.20 per point of rise in price index; (c) all arrears of employees to be paid within 7 days and an advance of Rs. 130/- to each employee recoverable in ten monthly instalments after February, 1974. The agreement also provides that there will be no victimisation for participating in the strike.

#### **Attacks on Bengal Paper Mills Workers Continue**

Attacks by police and Congress (R) gangsters on the workers and T. U. activists of Bengal Paper Mill, Ranigunge continue unabated. On November 26, eight workers of the Bengal Paper Mill Mazoor Union (CITU) were stabbed by Congress goondas resulting in death of three of them. The police, instead of taking steps against the goondas, arrested and beat up the workers. Workers quarters in Ballavpur were raided by the police and goondas and several workers, including women, were assaulted and their houses looted. Taking advantage of these, the management declared a lock-out in the factory.

These attacks have been intensified after the successful Bengal Bundh of November 17. The CITU, two UTUC's and UTCC have jointly protested against the Police and goonda terror in Ranigunge and deman-

ded immediate stoppage of these atrocities and restoration of T.U. and democratic rights. They also demanded lifting of the lock-out in the Bengal Paper Mill and J. K. Aluminium in Ranigunge.

### **Goonda Attacks in Texmaco**

During and after the Bengal Bundh of November 17, Congress led goondas launched brutal attacks on workers of Birla's Texmaco factory in Belghoria (briefly reported in the December 1973 issue). Infuriated at the success of the Bundh, they intensified the attacks after November 17. On December 10, the pay-day, the workers refused to pay forced collection by the Congress union and protested against this. In reprisal, the Congress goondas attacked the workers and brutally stabbed a worker of the CITU Union. They again attacked two workers on December 16 with firearms and stabbed another worker on December 17. The workers unitedly protested against this and demanded security.

### **Lathi Charge on J. K. Steel Workers**

When the workers of J. K. Steel Works, Rishra led jointly by CITU and AITUC Unions, were staging a mass demonstration at the factory gate on December 12 in support of their long-standing demands, Police resorted to a brutal lathi-charge seriously injuring several workers. In protest, the workers went on an indefinite strike. A successful Bundh was also observed in the Hooghly district on December 15 at the call of CITU and AITUC,

supported by INTUC and NFITU.

### **Token Strike in Tea Gardens on January 14**

At the call of the West Bengal Tea Garden Workers Co ordination Committee, tea garden workers will observe a day's token strike on January 14 on the demands of nationalisation of Tea industry and trade, reopening of closed gardens, etc.

Nearly 2 lakh workers are employed in the gardens of North Bengal. At present 12 gardens are lying closed throwing out of job several thousands of workers. It is apprehended that more gardens will be closed unless the Government is forced to nationalise this vital industry.

### **Assam**

#### **NGO's on Strike From DECEMBER 18**

Led jointly by all the unions, 85000 State Government employees of Assam started an indefinite strike from December 18 for their 20-point demands including need-based minimum wage, full neutralisation of price rise, 20 per cent house rent, etc.

When the minimum wage in other sectors is Rs. 250, the State employees get a minimum wage of only Rs. 142.00 to Rs. 160.00 which is even lower than the minimum wage recommended by the Third Pay Commission. Even this meagre wage is getting fast eroded due to the abnormal rise in prices.

Even on the eve of starting the indefinite strike, the State employees leaders made sincere

attempts to negotiate a just settlement. When this also failed due to the unsympathetic attitude of the Government, they were forced to resort to indefinite strike.

The All India State Government Employees' Federation have in a statement extended full support for the NGO's struggle.

Earlier, State Government employees in all the District Headquarters observed mass squatting on their 20 point Demands, and to express their determination to make the indefinite strike from December 18 a success. In Gauhati alone 500 employees participated in the squatting and they were addressed by several T. U. leaders including the State CITU Secretary.

#### **Central Govt. Employees Demonstrate**

At the call of the Confederation of Central Govt. Employees Unions and Associations, about 1000 Central employees observed mass squatting throughout the State on October 31.

#### **Conference of Plywood & Saw Mill Workers' Union**

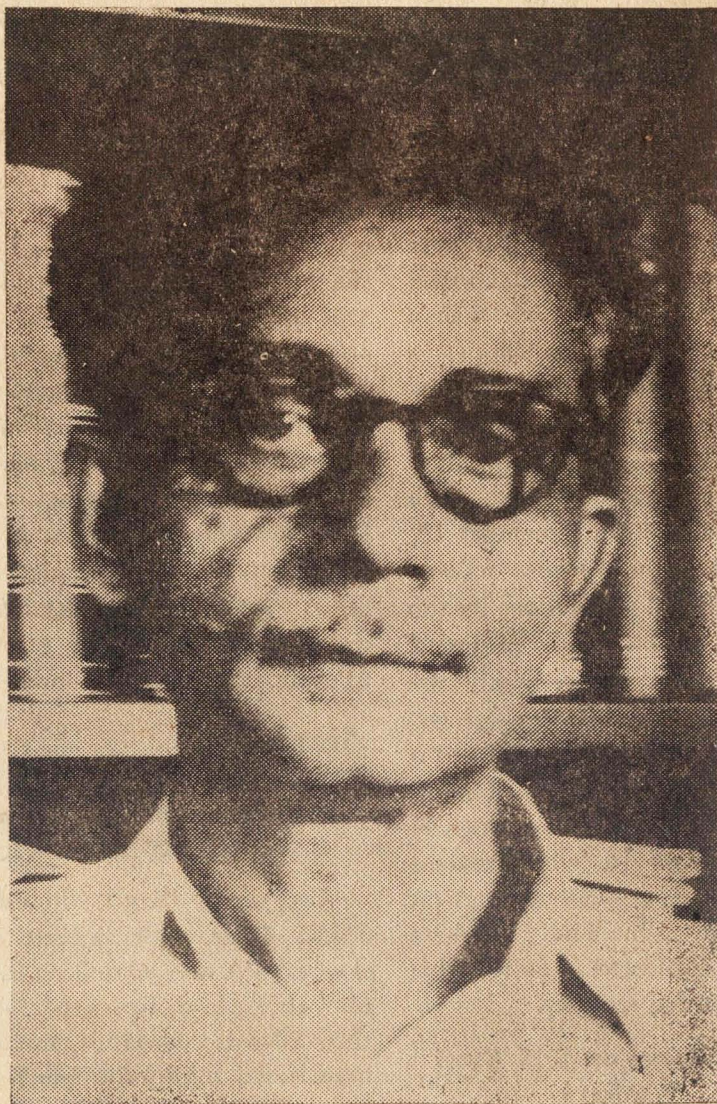
The 8th Annual Conference of All Assam Veneer Plywood and Saw Mill Mazdoor Union (CITU) was held at Mariani on November 24-25 last. The Conference adopted resolutions on minimum wage, housing, contract labour, implementation of Gratuity Act. etc. A 21-member Secretariat with Suren Hazarika as President and Kalyan Bhattacharya as General Secretary was elected.

# Comrade Muzaffar Ahmed

Kaka Babu !

An ardent revolutionary, one of the founders of the Communist Party of India, courageous freedom fighter, champion of the toiling millions in the struggle against Capitalist-landlord regime and for Socialism breathed his last on December 18, 1973.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmed's life was a symbol of selfless work for the cause of the working class and the people of India. Since twenties he was associated with the T.U. movement of Port and Dock Workers, Seamen, Jute and Cotton textile workers. He was guiding spirit of several trade unions and other mass organisations. He was also once Vice-President of the AITUC.



Kaka Babu's contributions to journalism and literature was unique. Undaunted by imprisonment under British and Congress rules he carried forward his revolutionary activities till the last. His association with Kanpur and Meerut trials and convictions in them has inspired generations in our political movement.

When the funeral procession passed through Lenin Sarani wreaths were placed on behalf of the CITU, UCTU, The Working Class journal and The All India Plantation Workers' Federation. The CITU and The Working Class joins hundreds of organisations and millions of people who have taken pledge to carry forward his life mission till its achievement.

The CITU and The Working Class while paying homage to his revered memory offer heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family.