



# THE WORKING CLASS

## MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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## ALL HELP TO THE VALIANT RAILWAY WORKERS

**B. T. Ranadive**

*President, CITU*

**T**HE railway workers of India have made history. For three weeks they have carried on a heroic struggle of resistance in face of mass arrests, mass dismissals and above all widespread terror against them their women and children.

Never before in India was there such terror spread over all parts of the Country, in all States, in all important towns and cities, never was there more determined resistance so uniformly courageous everywhere, in all States, in all towns and cities.

The brutalities of Indira police know no bounds. A confidential report of the Govt.'s labour department deprecated this inhuman terror. The police have raided the houses of the railway workers, assaulted and tortured their women and children. They have tortured the workers. There are cases of rapes on workers' wives and daughters. Filthy abuses and insults have been heaped upon thousands. And yet the heroic women faced the tormentors courageously and helped to sustain the fighting morale of their husbands.

The barbarities unleashed by the garibi hatao hypocrites who proclaim themselves as the knights of parliamentary democracy, will make a Latin American dictator envious. Not one liberty is allowed for the railway workers. Meetings are prohibited, organisation is illegalised. More than 50,000 are arrested; workers in territorial organisations have been penalised for refusing to break the strike. Thousands are summarily sentenced. Thousands are dismissed. In places, Congress MLAs and Congress goondas pretending to be members of youth organisation have been used for gangster attacks against the workers. The DIR, the MISA and a horde of other weapons and agencies including the army and the territorial personnel have been brought into operation for suppressing the strike.

The terror, this total gangsterism is the semi-fascist technique which the Indira Govt. has been using in every difficult situation. It is symptomatic of the growth of authoritarianism inside the Congress, which seeks to bury democracy while pretending to defend it.

The battle of the railway workers is the battle of the entire trade union movement, of the entire Indian people. The Govt. attempts to destroy both the trade unions and democratic rights of the people and turn them into docile slaves in the service of the landlords and the monopolists.

The working class, the entire trade union movement and the people have lent their full support to the cause of the railway workers. The Govt. did its best to incite the people against the strikers but the former realised the common bond of suffering, stood by the railway men and displayed a high degree of democratic consciousness. Women's and students' organisations, employees and peasants' organisations have endorsed the cause of the fighting strikers. In a large number of places the peasants of surrounding areas have sheltered the workers who had to leave the colonies to escape police terror.

From whence this determination, this valourous courage of the railwaymen? It derives from the tremendous sense of unity and oneness developed through the NCCRS which has brought together all the railway organisations and all the central trade union organisations together. This unity of more than a hundred railway organisations working under the banner of the NCCRS has inspired the railway workers with full confidence in their mighty strength and confidence of success.

Under the united banner the 17 lakhs of railway workers have

carried on a glorious struggle despite terror, despite the false proganda of the administration and despite the waverings and vacillations of certain leaders who did not believe that the workers were capable of such prolonged resistance. The leadership of the NCCRS has held the flag firmly and supplied a fighting and militant lead.

The six demands raised by the workers speak volume for the labour policy of Indira regime that the railway workers have to fight for being considered as industrial workers. The Govt. wants to treat them as departmental slaves subject to its arbitrary whims. It therefore shamefully violates the ILO convention regarding railwaymen.

The Govt. has refused to discuss the basic demands seriously. Instead the Railway Minister prejudices the people by saying that at least Rs. 500 crores will be required to meet the claims of the railway workers.

The Govt. cannot deny that there is discrimination against the railway workers; that they are getting an extremely low wage. The Govt. cannot deny that bonus is being unjustly denied to them. The Govt. cannot deny that the eight hours day convention is violated with regard to thousands of workers. It would have been honest on the part of the Govt. to discuss each demand separately and examine the financial impact of each demand. But the Govt. knows that it will lose its case if it were to do this.

For the railway workers by their hard labour are producing

enough to earn all their demands and still leave a surplus for the people only if the Govt. agrees to give up its preference and fondness for its rich patrons, the monopolists and traders.

It is known that the railway workers each year contribute by way of interest charges on capital invested, that last year, 1972-73, they contributed Rs. 163 crores to general revenue. It is besides known that every year they subsidise society to the tune of Rs. 250 crores by way of low freights, on several commodities, coal, cement, foodgrains, etc., the benefit of which does not go to the people but to the traders. It is also known that the rates on suburban traffic are kept low in order to spare the capitalist employers from paying additional dearness allowance to the workers. The loss to the railways is not less than Rs. 14 crores.

The Govt. avoids negotiations because it is known that it will stand completely exposed as the protector of monopolists and traders and an enemy of the workers.

None can suggest that the low freight etc. are really meant to protect the consumer. These freights have not saved the consumer from skyrocketing prices of foodgrains, oil, sugar, cloth and all necessaries of life. Besides can one believe the pleas of the Govt. to protect the consumer? The Govt. has recently given a forty per cent increase to the landlords for their produce, it has raised cloth prices by 30 to 40 per cent; it has gifted away Rs. 100 to

(On Last page)

# The Historic All-India Railway Strike—Day By Day

[The AIRF-s p o n s o r e d National Convention of Railwaymen held in New Delhi on February 27 and attended by over 3500 delegates from over 100 category-wise organisations took the decision to go on indefinite general strike if the demands of Railwaymen were not settled by April 10. A National Co-ordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggles (NCCRS) with representatives from all participating organisations and George Fernandes as Convener was set up. A smaller Action Committee with representatives from AIRF, LRSA, Confederation, CITU, AITUC and BRMS and with George Fernandes as Convener was also set up to conduct negotiations with the Government.

The Convention also formulated the basic demands, viz. railwaymen to be treated as industrial workers with full T. U. rights; 8 hours duty; job evaluation for fixation of higher grades; immediate wage rise at par with Public Sector undertakings pending job evaluation; D. A. linked with CLI and full neutralisation of rise in prices; Bonus at one month's wages for 1971-72 and 1972-73; etc. (see April 1974 issue of *The Working Class*).

As per the decisions of the National Convention, railwaymen all over India observed "Demands Week" from April

2 to 8. After remaining silent for more than a month, the Government started negotiations in April. But the Railway Minister could not find time to take part in the negotiations and deputed the Member Staff, Railway Board for the purpose. By April 15, it was obvious the Government had no intention of arriving at a negotiated settlement. The NCCRS met on the same day and unanimously decided to call on the railwaymen to go on an indefinite strike at 6 hours on May 8. It also directed all organisations of railwaymen to serve strike notice before April 23. (See May, 1974 issue of *The Working Class*).

The callous and haphazard manner in which the negotiations were conducted by the Govt. all along, the large-scale victimisation and wanton arrests of railwaymen started even before the negotiations began, the barrage of false propaganda regarding the railwaymen's demands and the hypocritical 'appeals' by the President and Prime Minister of India—all spoke of a diabolical plan of the Government and administration to force a confrontation with the railway workers, smash the strike by brute force and "ensure a strike-free period in the railways for the next ten years". A circular issued by the Home Ministry, Govt. of India on April 8 sent detailed instructions to State and Union Territory Administrations

regarding preparations for large-scale preventive arrests under MISA etc. before and during the strike. Later events and facts proved beyond doubt that all through April, the Government was finalising this plan behind the smoke-screen of sham negotiations.

The progress of events day by day, from the serving of the Strike Notice on April 23 up to the time of going to the Press, is depicted here. As we go to the Press, the heroic railwaymen are still continuing the strike with grim determination in the face of the most brutal repression, yet launched by a so-called 'democratic' and 'civilised' Government. Despite claims by Railway spokesmen through newspapers, radio and TV of daily improvement in railway operations, the strike is still completely successful.]

*April 22* : George Fernandes, President AIRF and Convener, NCCRS and Action Committee rejects appeal of Railway Minister to postpone Strike Notice. Strike notice served by nine organisations in S. E. Railway.

*April 23* : Strike notice served by nearly 100 organisations of railwaymen to the respective General Managers of all Zonal Railways and in industrial establishments of Indian Railways. Railwaymen demonstrate while serving strike notice. George Fernandes protests against arrests of railwaymen despite assurance by Railway Minister. Opposition MP's demand satisfactory settlement of railwaymen's demands in Parliament.

*April 24*: CITU supports proposed Railway strike from May 8. Railway administration decides to cancel many trains to disrupt negotiations. Arrests of railwaymen continue.

*April 25*: Railway administration cancels 98 trains in different Zones. A. I. State Government Employees' Federation expresses support and solidarity for railwaymen's strike.

*April 26*: 102 more trains cancelled by the Railway administration bringing the total to 200. Fernandes addresses huge rally of railwaymen at Kharagpur.

*April 27*: Railwaymen hold demonstrations and meetings in all Zonal Railways in preparation for the strike.

*April 28*: Preparations for the strike going on in full swing. Local units of NCCRS set up in 7000 Railway stations. Furore in Lok Sabha over P.M.'s letter to Chief Ministers rejecting railwaymen's demand for bonus. Negotiations with Government reach deadlock. Railway officers support railwaymen's demands.

*April 29*: Negotiations between Government and Action Committee members unproductive. Government still maintaining its adamant stand regarding major demands of railwaymen. Conventions, rallies and processions of railwaymen throughout the country in support of the strike.

*April 30*: Negotiations between Government and Action Committee fails. Government refuses to accept any of the major demands; Decision for strike stands—says

Fernandes. 12th July Committee supports strike of railwaymen.

*May 1*: George Fernandes and nine other Railway T.U. leaders including P. K. Barua, General Secretary AILRSA, H. S. Chowdhury and N. D. Bhaskar Rao (CITU) arrested. V. R. Malgi of National Railway Mazdoor Union dies in Police lock-up. Action Committee decides not to participate in negotiations till Rly. leaders released—calls upon railwaymen to organise united protest action. Indian Federation of Working Journalists asks Journalists to join Bundh in Delhi and Bombay on May 3 to express solidarity with railmen. Arrest of railmen and other provocations continue.

*May 2*: Over 700 railway trade union leaders arrested. Country-wide protests against arrests of leaders and death of Malgi. Spontaneous stoppage of work by railwaymen in Bhopal, Pathankot, Ferozepur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Baroda, Nagpur, Gauhati and many other places. Police lathicharge demonstrating railmen at Hubli. CITU protests against the arrests. Furore in both houses of Parliament. Opposition members walk-out from Rajya Sabha. Other Trade Unions protest against arrests.

*May 3*: Protest demonstrations continue. Railway operations in Madras, Bombay, Poona, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Patna and many other places paralysed. Loco-shed workers in Northern Rly. and Jaipur down tools. More arrests of railmen and their leaders.

*May 4*: Territorial Army deployed in Ahmedabad. Railway spokesman admits arrest of nearly 1000 till May 3. Long distance trains on Southern Railway run with armed escorts. All India Bank Employees' Association supports railwaymen's demands and pledges full support to their struggle.

*May 5*: Government threatens railmen with application of DIR MISA, and other penal measures for joining strike. About 3000 railway workers and leaders arrested under DIR and MISA so far. Police raids on railway quarters and colonies in West Bengal, Assam and many other States.

*May 6*: Protest actions by railmen continue. Employee dismissed in W. Rly.

*May 7*: Preparations for strike complete. 300 railway workers arrested in M.P. Hungerstrike by arrested leaders and workers in jail. Two CRP men murdered at Santragachi (S. E. Rly.) for refusing to attack railwaymen's colony.

*May 8*: All India Railway strike begins at 6 A.M. 95 per cent workers join strike. Strike a 'total' success. Movement of trains comes to a standstill throughout the country. More than 6000 arrested on the eve of the strike. TA, CRP, PAC and BSF deployed in many places to break strike. NCCRS demands unconditional release of leaders and resumption of talks. In all more than 300 railwaymen dismissed and over 10,000 arrested so far. CITU congratulates 17 lakh railwaymen on successful strike. 1000 railway-

men of Bareilly (N. E. Rly.) resign from INTUC union for opposing Rly. strike.

*May 9* : Second day of strike a total success. False propaganda by Government through AIR and newspapers. Hungerstrike by Fernandes and other leaders in jail. A.I. Guards Council decides to join strike. Total dislocation at Mughalsarai and Gorakhpur—rail communication between Eastern and Northern India cut off. Left parties congratulate railmen on successful strike. RPF open fire on railway workers at Chitpore (E. Rly). No confidence motion against Government moved in Parliament. Majority of NFIR (INTUC) workers of Cochin join strike. Five units of T.A. men arrested for refusal to run trains.

*May 10* : Third day of strike. Central Trade Unions call all-India General Strike on May 15 in support of railwaymen's strike. Huge rally in Calcutta in support of railway strike. RPF and T.A. men refuse to act as strike-breakers—hundreds arrested and disarmed. CRP and Congress goondas raid railway in many places—attacks on women and children of workers. Heroic resistance by women in Railway colonies. Prime Minister meets opposition leaders in Parliament. Police raid Izzatnagar (Gorakhpur) Railway Colony and attack property of workers—colony deserted since May 8—6000 workers here have joined the strike to the last man.

*May 11* : Fourth day of strike NCCRS rejects 3-point formula of Government. No long distance trains reach or leave Howrah.

More dismissals and arrests of railway employees. All Japan Council of Traffic Transport Workers Union (Zenkoun) submit memorandum to Indian Embassy supporting railway strike and demanding release of arrested leaders. Railway colonies at Parel, N. Bombay, Byculla, Wadala, Santa Cruz, Andheri and Trombay raided by Police.

*May 13* : Fifth day of strike. Government intensifies brutal and vindictive measures. Railway Board orders eviction of families of railmen from Railway colonies near Delhi. Attacks on railway colonies by CRP and goondas continue. Brutal attack by CRP and goondas on women and children at Kanchrapara Railway Colony. Serious Railway accident outside Sankrail Station (S. E. Rly.)—20 people injured. Evictions from railway colonies in massive scale. Sec. 144 imposed on all Railway colonies and townships.

*May 13* : Sixth day of strike. Opposition leaders meet President Giri and submit memorandum. More than 15000 railway workers and leaders arrested and over 1000 dismissed so far. Police raid staff quarters at Gauhati—hundreds of women picketers lathi-charged and teargassed.

*May 14* : Seventh day of strike. Repression on railway workers and their families intensified. Women's resistance led by Ganatantrik Mahila Samity in Jalpaiguri, Bandel, Shalimar and Santragachi. 12 hour bundh in Andal (Burdwan) against Police atrocities.

*May 15* : Eighth day of strike. Successful All India

General Strike in support of railway strike. More arrests of railwaymen and leaders of democratic movement. Demonstrations and resistance against arrests and harassment of striking railmen increasing.

*May 16* : Ninth day of strike. False propaganda by the Government exposed. Coal supply to Steel factories seriously curtailed. Movement of steel and other consumer goods almost stopped. Two more members of Action Committee arrested—majority of 13 members now in jail. Action Committee rules out withdrawal of strike as precondition for talks. Japanese workers demonstrate before Indian embassy in Tokyo.

*May 17* : Tenth day of strike. Officers and anti-socials deployed to run skeleton train service. 180 employees of Southern Rly. dismissed. Chaitanya, Convener of Zonal Committee of NCCRS arrested under MISA. Several serious accidents in Eastern, and other Railways. Police starts combing operations in Chittaranjan railway colonies—many workers arrested—resistance to police attacks. Police raid Naliapool Rly. colony in Dibrugarh.

*May 18* : Eleventh day of strike. CITU appeals to ILO for intervention to stop violation of T.U. rights of railwaymen. About 3000 dismissed and over 1000 arrested in S. E. Rly. alone. Tea and Engineering industries seriously affected by strike. Brutal atrocities by police in Rly. workshop and colony at Kharagpur—lathi and bayonet charge on women—a boy killed.

*May 19*: Twelfth day of strike. Duration of strike surpasses world record. More than 22000 railway workers and leaders arrested and over 4000 dismissed so far. Supply of rations, water and power stopped in over 100 railway colonies. Brutal torture on over 2000 women and children in different colonies. S. K. Dhar, Joint Secretary AILRSA and member NCCRS congratulates railwaymen for their determined strike and appeals to T.U. and democratic movement to continue their support to railway workers. Brutal attack by Police on family members of Railwaymen at Santragachi (S.E. Rly.).

*May 20*: Thirteenth day of strike. Over 1000 railwaymen arrested at Chittaranjan. Police carrying on combing operation in the railway colonies. Opposition leaders warn Government against "terror tactics" to break the strike. C M A spokesman reports huge stockpiling of coal at pitheads in Raneegeunge coalfield due to railway strike.

*May 21*: Fourteenth day of strike. At the call of NCCRS, "Anti-Repossession Day" observed throughout the country through demonstrations, rallies etc. Huge rally in Calcutta at the call of Central Trade Unions. Army takes over control of Mughalsarai Yard. Arrests, repression and dismissal of railmen continues. In one day, four serious train accidents near Jullundar and Allahabad (N. Rly.), Habra (E. Rly.) and Bangaigaon (N.E. F. Rly.) in which one died and many wounded.

*May 22*: Fifteenth day of

strike. NCCRS warns people of the danger of using trains run by novices. Some railwaymen who reported for work, rejoin strike after drawing salaries. 3000 T. A. men arrested in Dhanbad for refusing to arrest railwaymen.

*May 23*: Sixteenth day of strike. 50,000 railwaymen arrested and 20,000 dismissed so far (about 4500 in West Bengal). Leaders of six Central Trade Unions declare that strike will

go on till demands are realised. NCCRS says morale of railwaymen high and strike to continue "with full vigour"—Government fully responsible for national loss due to strike. Huge rally organised by 12th July Committee and Federation of Mercantile Employees in Calcutta in support of striking railwaymen. 'Solidarity Day' to be observed on May 24 all over West Bengal at the call of Central Trade Unions.

<b>Consumer Price Index</b>						
<b>Number</b>						
<b>(Industrial Workers/ Base 1960-100)</b>						
<b>State/Centre</b>	<b>1974</b>					
	<b>Jan.</b>	<b>Feb.</b>	<b>March</b>			
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>				<b>Orissa</b>		
Hyderabad	257	263	271	Barbil	244	248 252
<b>Assam</b>				Sambalpur	262	263 263
Digboi	249	255	256	<b>Punjab</b>		
<b>Bihar</b>				Amritsar	264	269 278
Jamshedpur	268	275	278	<b>Rajasthan</b>		
Jharia	284	286	294	Ajmer	275	280 286
<b>Gujarat</b>				Jaipur	278	284 286
Ahmedabad	264	260	264	<b>Tamilnadu</b>		
Bhavnagar	293	289	285	Coimbatore	232	236 246
<b>Haryana</b>				Madras	238	241 248
Yamunanagar	272	275	286	Madurai	254	251 257
<b>J &amp; K</b>				<b>U. P.</b>		
Srinagar	219	218	227	Kanpur	268	272 281
<b>Karnataka</b>				Saharanpur	276	280 390
Bangalore	280	284	286	Varanasi	302	307 316
Kolar G. F.	284	289	287	<b>West Bengal</b>		
<b>Kerala</b>				Calcutta	240	241 255
Alleppey	293	297	314	Howrah	256	255 270
Alwaye	265	273	288	Delhi	278	280 296
Mundakayam	271	272	286	<b>Other Centres</b>		
<b>M. P.</b>				Cuttack (1949)	312	307 308
Bhopal	270	277	278	Berhampur ('49)	352	353 362
Gwalior	290	299	312	Jabalpur (1949)	336	342 356
Indore	294	298	309	Beawar ('51-'52)	311	312 321
<b>Maharashtra</b>				Himachal Pradesh (1965)	197	199 202
Bombay	241	243	249	Goa (1966)	173	177 177
Nagpur	275	275	277	Tripura (1961)	229	232 243
Sholapur	293	282	279	<b>All India</b> ('60)	264	267 275
				do ('49)	321	325 334

\* Figures in bracket indicate base year.

(Labour Bureau, Simla)

# May Day Observed Amidst Country-wide Wave Of Strike Struggles

**T**HIS year the historic May Day was observed all over India in the background of a new wave of militant and united struggles which has been sweeping through the length and breadth of the country for the last eight months or more. During this period, the country witnessed a new upsurge of militant working class struggles involving lakhs of Textile and Jute workers, Loco Running Staff, LIC employees, Doctors, Engineers etc. Some of these struggles created a new chapter in trade union movement through their united and long-drawn character reflecting a high level of consciousness among workers. Furthermore, the impending All India Protest Day of 3rd May (the country-wide united protest action called by Left Parties and Trade Unions) and the historic All India Railway Strike due to begin from 8th May had also imparted a new significance to the observance of May Day this year.

On this day, the working class of India, enriched by their hard-won experience of these struggles, renewed the pledge of strengthening solidarity with the international working class and of building up the broadest possible unity for carrying on their relentless fight against the ruling classes and the ruling party to end all exploitation and for establishing socialism in the country.

## West Bengal

*Calcutta* : In the morning, the CITU flag was hoisted at the CITU Central office and the office of the West Bengal State Committee of CITU. Com. B.T. Ranadivc, President CITU while hoisting the flag at the Central office explained the significance of the day and stressed the need for strengthening international solidarity of the working class against exploitation by the imperialists and the capitalist landlord classes.

In the afternoon, large processions of workers and employees converged on the Shahid Minar Maidan where a mass rally and meeting was held under the joint auspices of four Central T. U. organisations CITU, UTUC UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC. The rally was presided over by Md. Ismail and addressed, among others, by Jyoti Basu, Vice-President CITU, Jatin Chakraborty (UTUC), Subodh Banerjee (UTUC-Lenin Sarani) and Chitta Basu (TUCC).

A resolution adopted at the rally called upon the working class and democratic people of West Bengal to build up broad-based unity of all sections of democratic masses and fight the anti-people policies of the ruling classes and the Congress Govt. The resolution also declared its solidarity with the international working class and renewed its pledge to carry forward its

relentless struggle against all exploitation and for establishing socialism in India.

May Day was also observed through meetings, rallies and processions in many places in the districts including Howrah, 24 Parganas, Nadia, Burdwan, Bankura, Darjeeling etc. In Burdwan, a big 'Jatha' of peasants and agricultural labourers went through many villages.

## Maharashtra

*Bombay* : May Day was observed through a massive rally organised jointly by the CITU, AITUC, HMP, HMS, Bharatiya Railway Mazdoor Sangh and other Trade Unions and held at Maharashtra High School ground. The rally was presided over by Jagdish Ajmera of Western Railway Employees Union and addressed, among others, by S. Y. Kolhatkar (CITU) Vasant Khanolkar (HMS), B. S. Dhume (AITUC), Y. Chavan (Lal Nishan), P. More (HMP) and Amkar Singh (BRMS).

May Day was also observed in different centres throughout Maharashtra.

## Assam

*Gauhati* : May Day was observed in Gauhati through a big mass rally organised jointly by all the Left Central T.U. organisations including the Assam Provincial Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and all the provincial Co-ordination committees like the JCTU. The rally was addressed by leaders of all

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## A Shameful Document

**T**HE joint Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, circulated on or about 7 April 1974 certain instructions to the Chief Secretaries of the State and of all Union Territories which are non-pareil in their wickedness are Macchiavellian cynicism. The circular was presumably issued under the instructions of the Minister of Home Affairs, that old gentleman under the tutelage of the Prime Minister.

The Government is seen in its true colour. They are no longer mumbling the gibberish of the pseudo-progressives encouraged in their pranks by the undialectical approach of some socialist countries. The mask is off and the fangs are bared.

The way in which the steps are suggested to be taken against the railway strikers surpass even the cold finish of Alfred Hitchcock's murderers.

"One of the important ingredients of effective preventive action", according to the circular, "will be the arrest and removal from the scene of their activities of persons who otherwise would either contribute to the success of the strike or create serious law and order problems". Are the State Governments to wait for any offence to be committed by the victims? Certainly not. That would certainly have been too democratic and is, therefore, against the grain of Shrimati Gandhi for whom of late, the

very word democracy stinks. Certainly she did not indulge in the capture of ballot-boxes in West Bengal in 1972 and practise the game of misleading the right Communist Party of India in order to make concessions to "stinking" democracy. So, the arrests have to be made not when offences (even according to her draconian laws) are committed, but when her headquarters order them. For, preventive arrests are to be "neither premature nor late" and, therefore, the State Governments may only "await specific clearance regarding the date from which the preventive arrests are to be carried out".

Again, "the provisions of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) could be profitably invoked while undertaking preventive action...". Moreover, one need not bother about service of grounds of detention on the detenu within five days of the date of detention. The minions of the State Government are advised to take advantage of the loop-holes of the statute and advised that they can wait till about fifteen days from the date of detention.

It may be recalled that at about the time when this Circular was issued the Government was holding negotiations with the leaders of the strikers and yet at that time lists of persons to be detained were advised to be prepared because developments "do not exclude the possibility of a strike taking

place on any day after the 15th April".

The circular ends with the assurance that they will "keep the State Governments informed of further developments and also communicate in due course our advice regarding the timing of arrests in connection with the threatened strike".

So, the bubble bursts that there is a genuine satisfaction on the part of the detaining authority before a citizen is taken into preventive detention. According to the MISA, either it is the Governor or it is the District Magistrate or the Commissioner of Police who has to form the opinion and arrive at the satisfaction that the citizen concerned has to be detained in order to prevent him from acting in a manner which is prejudicial to the maintenance of Public Order or to maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community or to the security of the country.

It is not the detaining authority which has to be satisfied about the necessity of preventive detention of a citizen. He has to rubber-stamp his signature on the order of detention which is prepared on the directive of the persons in Delhi who may not even know which way the wind blows, say, in the State of West Bengal. A priori, lists of possible victims are to be prepared and the timing of arrests is to await the advice from New Delhi.

No doubt, the circular is both illegal and immoral. It trifles with liberties of a citizen. Detention without trial is a serious

## May Day Pledge Of The Korean Workers

inroad into freedom and democracy and such detention should not be taken recourse to in any civilised country. In any event, the least that was expected was that the form and procedure laid down in the preventive detention law would be strictly adhered to. After all, procedure established by law is a safeguard against arbitrary encroachment on civil liberties. That is what Article 21 provides. No one will be deprived of his life or liberty except in accordance with procedure established by law.

The procedure established by law is that, before a citizen is placed under preventive detention, the detaining authority has to be satisfied that it is necessary so to do.

The circular, on the other hand, takes away from the detaining authority its powers and leaves with it only the duty to sign on the dotted line.

All such detentions, therefore, made in the context of the Railway Strike are obviously illegal and liable to be quashed. Courts are always unpredictable but, in similar circumstances, courts have pronounced for the citizen. In *Ram Narayan Singh v. State of Delhi & Others* (1), Patanjali Shastri observed: "This Court has often reiterated before that those who feel called upon to deprive other persons of their personal liberty in the discharge of what they conceive their duty must strictly and scrupulously observe the forms and rules of the law".

This observation was quoted by Mr. Justice S. R. Das Gupta

THE Pyongyang Times dated May 4, contains the editorial "Long Live May Day International Holiday Demonstrating United Might of Working People of the Whole World!" We give below some extracts from the journal to enable our readers to understand the position taken by the Korean Working Class on the present International situation.

"The International working class must strengthen unity and militant solidarity more than ever in order to carry its historic cause to success.

US imperialism is the most truculent, vicious aggressor in modern times, the chieftain of world imperialism and the ringleader of world reaction.

There is not a place on the globe where US imperialism has not stretched out its claws of aggression. There is not a country which is free from the menace of US imperialist aggression.

Apart from the struggle against US imperialism, world peace cannot be defended, nor can national liberation and

independence be achieved, nor can democracy, socialism and communism emerge victorious.

In an attempt to find a way out of its serious crisis US imperialism is stepping up, internally, the fascist suppression of the people and externally, is trying to get a breathing space by improving the relations with big countries under the cloak of "peace" and at the same time, is intensifying aggression and intervention in domestic affairs of small countries,

This is well proved by the fact that it cooked up a reactionary military coup in Chile, that it makes hostilities continue in Viet Nam, that it backs the Lon Nol puppet clique in Cambodia and that it incited Israel to ignite the Middle East War.

Invincible is the strength of the international working class and people who are firmly united in their struggle against imperialism and colonialism and for the cause of peace, democracy, national independence and socialism and communism."

sitting with Mr. Justice Lahiri in a Habeas Corpus case (*Dhanapati Periwal v. State of West Bengal* (2)) when the learned Judges set at liberty the detenu who was detained under an order passed by Shri S. Dutta Majumdar who signed as Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling. in the order of detention. Under the Preventive Detention Act as under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, it is the District Magistrate who has authority to cause a person to be detained if he is satisfied that it is necessary so to

detain him. Mr. Justice Das Gupta held that, though Mr. Dutta Majumdar held also the office of District Magistrate, as he had passed the order of detention in the capacity of Deputy Commissioner, that order must be quashed.

In the case of the present circular, the situation is most serious. Here detention is ordered from Delhi and the detaining authority authorised by the statute is merely comply with that order.

**Arun Prokas Chatterjee**

1) *1953 Supreme Court Appeal 399*

2) *58 Calcutta Weekly Notes 363*

# May 3 : National Protest Action Day Observed Throughout India

**I**n a joint meeting held on April 4 and 5, eight Left Parties supported by Central Trade Unions and mass organisations, gave a call for the observance of May 3 as National Protest Action Day to protest against the anti-people policies of the Government, particularly the spiralling prices, growing unemployment, the deteriorating conditions of workers, middle class employees, the agricultural labour and peasant masses etc.

Enthusiastic preparations were made in all the States to observe the Day unitedly and massively through Bundh and General Strikes, civil disobedience, dharnas, processions and demonstrations, meeting etc.

The response of the people to the call was magnificent. While total Bundh was observed in Kerala, Assam, Bombay, Delhi and Tripura, in the other States and Centres the Day was observed through massive demonstrations, rallies, dharnas etc.

## Kerala

A completely successful Bundh was observed at the call of four opposition parties CPI (M), SP, KTR, and Kerala Congress. The CPI which is one of the signatories to the All India joint action call, opposed the Bundh call in Kerala.

Despite tooth and nail opposition of the ruling Congress and CPI and mass arrests and police repression from before the Bundh day itself all sections of the people workers, agricultural labour, students, youth, women, shopkeepers responded massively to the Bundh call.

All over the State, road transport services were completely paralysed. Excepting some State Transport busses ran with police escort, on other buses and taxis ran on the day. In Trivandrum city, the main business centre remained closed as also shops and markets in other areas of the district.

In Cannanore district, transport services were completely paralysed. 30,000 Beedi and Handloom workers joined the strike and spinning mills and other factories reported skeleton attendance.

Normal life came to a standstill in Kozhikode, with shops and establishments closed and private transport off the road. In Trichur district industrial establishments had poor attendance.

Coir and agricultural workers in Alleppey district, workers of Cashew Development Corporation and private factories in Quilon district and workers of the industrial units like FACT, HMT, Premier Tyres etc. situated in the Kalamasseri-Udyogmandal—Always industrial belt in Ernakulam district massively participated in the General Strike and Bundh.

## Bombay

The call for Bombay Bundh was given jointly by all political parties except the Congress and Shiva Sena, supported by the Trade Unions—CITU, AITUC, HMP, HMS, Sarva Shramik Sangh and BMS. The Central Government Employees Confederation called upon its

members to wear black badges on the day.

The National Protest Day in Bombay coincided with the spontaneous angry protest over the arrests of George Fernandes and other leaders of Railwaymen and the death of V. R. Malgi of National Railway Mazdoor Union in police custody.

On the day, railway and other transport services including BEST buses and taxis came to a halt. For the first time, suburban train services were completely paralyzed and long distance trains of Central and Western Railways had to be cancelled as drivers and guards refused to work. About one lakh railway workers participated in the Bundh and there was no work in the workshops, yards, and offices of the Central and Western Railways. Incoming trains were stopped outside Bombay and Air services were delayed.

Workers and employees in textile, engineering, port and docks, hotels, banks, LIC and defence establishments joined the strike. Work in Central and State Government offices was totally paralysed with Central and State employees including Class III and IV staff joining en masse. The Sachivalaya wore a deserted look.

Post offices, newspaper offices and Courts could not function on the day and shops, restaurants, markets and cinemas remained

closed. Through this unprecedented Bundh the people of Bombay registered their protest against the anti-people policies of the Government and the repression let loose on the Railwaymen on the eve of the Railway Strike.

## West Bengal

At the call of ten Left parties, over one lakh volunteers, men women, from all sections of the people—workers, employees, students, youth, teachers and others—participated in the State-wide Civil Disobedience programme in observance of the National Protest Action Day.

In Calcutta, a huge mass of humanity marched in a disciplined procession from the Brigade Parade Ground to the Raj Bhavan to court arrest. They were led by the leaders of the Left parties including Jyoti Basu (CPIM), Biswanath Mukherjee (CPI), Bimal Mitra (SP), Jatin Chakravarty (RSP), Subodh Banerjee (SUC), Bhakti Bhushan Mondal (FB) and others. More than 2500 men and women including the Left leaders courted arrest in Calcutta.

The programme of Mass civil disobedience was also observed with great enthusiasm in all district and subdivisional towns, including Burdwan, Assansol, Durgapur, Suri, Rampurhat, Bankura, Midnapore, Contai, Jhargram, Bongaon, Basirhat, Diamond Harbour,

Berhampore, Krishnagar, Ranaghat, Darjeeling and Siliguri.

Large-scale arrests of leaders and workets of Left political parties and democratic movement had started even before 3rd May. On the day, the police lathi charged volunteers in Burdwan, Katwa, Asansol, Berhampore, Rampurhat, Contai, and many other places. A local hartal was observed in Contai on the following day to protest against the police action.

## Assam

In response to the call given by seven Left parties, a total Bundh was observed in Assam on May 3. The call for the Bundh was also supported by the Student organisations of the University and other educational institutions, Co-ordination Committee of State Government Employees' organisations, the JCTU and other mass organisations. The PCTA—leading organisation of one million Plains Tribals, also supported the call.

On the day, all educational institutions were closed and buses and other private transport were off the roads. As the volunteers picketed on the railway tracks, the railway services had to be suspended. Air services and telephone exchanges did not function. Central and State Government offices wore a deserted look.

## Delhi

The Delhi Administration deployed the Army and the armed Police, promulgated Sec. 144 in the whole of the capital

city and the ruling party engaged hoodlums in hundreds to break the General Strike and Hartal on May 3 called by four Left parties, supported by the T. U. organisations—CITU, AITUC, HMP, and UTUC.—Defying all these provocations, the people of Delhi massively responded to the Bundh call. Never before had the capital witnessed such massive action at the call of the Left forces.

Massive response to the Bundh call came from industrial workers, transport workers, employees of Banks, LIC, commercial establishments, newspaper offices, hotels, restaurants and cinemas. All the big and small shops were closed including even cigarette and tea shops. The streets and markets were deserted as private transport services were paralysed, with taxis and auto-rickshaws off the road. The Delhi Transport Corporation ran only a few buses.

The day ended with a huge rally at the Boat Club maidan under the banner of the May 3 Strike Committee. Several large processions paraded different areas and converged on the Boat Club maidan where they were addressed by the leaders of the Strike Committee. A resolution was adopted at the rally in support of the Railway workers' struggle.

## Tripura

A Bundh call was given on May 3 jointly by the CPI (M), CPI and mass organisations of workers, peasants, students and youth to observe the National Protest Action Day. Despite all attempts by the

## CITU's Stand On Family Planning Stressed In National Symposium

A joint meeting of Central Council of Health and Family Planning was held in New Delhi from 5th to 7th April. Com. Biren Roy, who attended on behalf of the CITU, criticised the health policy pursued by the Government of India. He pointed out that even after 27 years of Independence, India is one of the few countries of the world where Cholera, Small-pox, T. B. and other diseases break out in epidemic form, and where Government has failed to check wide-spread adulteration in food and drugs. Referring to the agitation by Doctors, Nurses and other health staff all over India, he stressed that their demands should be met. A meeting of the All India Workers' Committee on Family Planning was also held on 8th April at New Delhi. In both these meetings, Com. Biren Roy submitted notes expressing difference with the Government policy on these issues.

A national symposium on Labour and Population policies was held in New Delhi from 15th to 18th April, which was organised by the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with ILO. Com. Sudhin Kumar, Vice-President and Com. Biren Roy, member Working Committee of the CITU participated in the symposium. They pointed out that official propaganda must delink family planning with India's poverty or unemployment if it is to be successful and trade union participation is to be

secured. They stressed that the real causes of unemployment and poverty are to be seen in the social system; so utility of family planning has to be explained from the standpoint of needs of health, hygiene, organisation of one's family life and above all of women's freedom.

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## May 3 : National Protest Action Day

*From Centre Pages*

Government to break the Bundh, it proved to be a complete success. The Bundh paralysed all transport and communication systems and the attendance in State Government offices was negligible. Shops and markets remained closed.

### Bihar

Demonstrations and mass meetings of workers, peasants and employees were organised at block level and industrial centres throughout Bihar on May in observance of the National Protest Action Day.

### Andhra Pradesh

The day was observed with strikes, demonstrations and rallies. In Kothagudam, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam a total strike was observed on the day while mass rallies and demonstrations were held in other parts of the State.

### Karnataka

A big demonstration was organised at Bangalore on May 3 to observe National Protest Action Day, and hundreds of volunteers participated in mass dharnas. Demonstrations were

They further stressed that the problem of population control is deeply rooted in socio-economic system; the motivation for restricting the size of family follows certain developments of socio-economic nature. They spoke against incentives offered for promoting family planning and pointed out that the trade unions can hardly co-operate when elementary democratic rights are denied to them.

also organised in other district centres.

### Tamilnadu

There was mass fasting at various centres in the cities and towns throughout Tamilnadu on May 3 in observance of the Protest Day.

Hunger strike in observance of the Day was observed jointly by eight parties including CPI (M), CPI, ADMK, SP and FB. In Madurai district, over 1000 persons participated in the hungerstrike. In Coimbatore, the hunger strikers were led by K. Ramani, President, Tamilnadu State CITU. In Kuralakam near Madras, the hunger strikers were led by K. M. Haribhatt, P. G. Krishnan and Sundararajan of CITU. Hungerstrike was also observed before Collectorate offices in Coimbatore and Tanjore districts.

### Punjab

In Chandigarh and the other district towns, big mass rallies and demonstrations were held to observe National Protest Day on May 3. In Amritsar, thousands of men and women participated in four hour dharna.

## MAY DAY OBSERVED

*From Page Seven*

the sponsoring Trade Unions who also called upon the working class and the toiling masses to make the Bundh of 3rd May a success.

### **Punjab and Himachal Pradesh**

*Jullundur* : Under the banner of Punjab State Motor Mazdoor Union (CITU) May Day was observed at Lamba village through a public meeting. The Red Flag was hoisted by Bhagat Singh Rogi. In a resolution, the meeting supported the just struggles of Railwaymen and Electricity workers.

*Patiala* : On May Day a large procession was taken out which paraded all the main roads and culminated into a big mass meeting. The meeting was addressed by local and trade union leaders.

*Chandigarh* : Punjab & Haryana State Govt. Employees, LIC, Govt. Press Employees, Bank Employees and Electricity Board Workers jointly observed the May Day. The CPI (M) also participated.

*Ludhiana* : A big procession was taken out which raised slogans supporting the railwaymen and Electricity Board Employees struggles.

*Amritsar* : At Chheherta, Putlighar, Verka and some other places, the workers observed May Day through processions, flag hoisting and public meetings.

May Day was also observed at Bhatinda, Sangrur, Dhanaula and Moga—all in Punjab.

*Simla (H. P)* : The Simla Central Govt. employees orga-

nised a public meeting in which the speakers criticised the anti-working class policies of the Govt.

### **Orissa**

*Tensa* : United Mines Mazdoor Union (CITU) observed the May Day at Tensa H. Q. A large number of workers participated in the meeting. The Red Flag was hoisted by A. V. Savapathy and the main speaker was S. K. Dey.

### **Madhya Pradesh**

*Surakachar* : Coal mine workers belonging to CITU and AITUC jointly observed the May Day. A meeting was held in the evening which was addressed by the leaders of both unions and all speakers called upon the workers to intensify the united movement against the anti-labour policies of the Govt.

### **Tamilnadu**

May Day was observed all over the State by CITU and other trade unions. A May Day rally of thousands of workers at Salem was addressed by P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU and others. Another meeting organised by the NGO Union was addressed by A. Balasubramaniam, Vice-President Tamilnadu State CITU. Debates and symposia on the significance of May Day were also arranged by Dist. Committees of CITU. The CITU flag was hoisted in the morning by comrades in many blocks in the districts and mass rallies and meetings were held in the afternoon.

## Total Strike by Port & Dock Workers & Seamen of Calcutta

**D**EFYING threats, intimidation and provocations of the administration, Police and anti-socials, Port and Dock workers and the Seamen of Calcutta port observed a completely successful one day strike on May 10. The call was given by the Port-Dock-Seamen's Sangrami Morcha.

Led by the Morcha, the workers, and seamen built up such firm and solid unity that all work in the port and docks became totally paralysed. Even arrests of workers by the Police and threats and provocations by the goondas could not break down the morale of the workers.

The Port and Dock workers have been struggling for a long time to realise their demands for need-based wages, security of service, merger of D. A. with wages, etc. Negotiated settlement of these demands has not been possible due to adamant and anti-labour attitude of the Central Government and the Port and Dock authorities.

From the lessons of the past struggles, the Port and Dock workers and the Seamen realised that the piece-meal struggles carried on by different category-wise unions will not enable them to realise their demands. The urge of the workers for unity and united actions led to the formation of the Port-Dock-Seamen's Sangrami Morcha on March 6 last with eighteen unions and association of Port & Dock workers and Seamen, including the Dock Shramik Association, Forward Seamen's Union and Calcutta Port and Shore Mazdoor Union affiliated to the CITU. Morcha decided on a phased programme of united movement including the one-day strike of May 10.

# South Vietnam Workers In The Struggle Against U. S. Aggressors

**P.** Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU, has received a message from Tran Hoai Nam, Member Standing Committee, South Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions for Liberation. Though the letter was dated December 25, 1973, it reached the CITU Office on May 14, 1974, thanks to our Postal authorities. The following is the full text of the letter.

"On behalf of the South Viet Nam Trade Union Federation for Liberation Executive Committee we would like to send you new year's best wishes and sincere thanks for your kind greetings and activities on the 13th founding anniversary of the National front for Liberation.

The Paris Agreement on Viet Nam has been signed nearly round a year. Instead of enjoying proper peace and living happily in national concord, the South Vietnamese Workers and toiling people have to face gunshots going on and conflicts still fiercely happening in many places of the South Viet Nam as a result of US-Thieu's violations of the Paris Agreement.

Indeed, the USA persists in its military involvement and interference into the South Viet Nam internal affairs with a view to carry out its neo-colonialism, the "Nixon doctrine" and to perpetuate the division of Viet Nam.

Nguyen Van Thieu—this instrument of the US aggressive neo colonialist policy—launches tens of thousands of land grab-

ing operations, bombing, strafing and toxic chemicals—spraying air missions on the liberated zones, orders tens of thousands of police and "pacification" raids in his controlled areas for rice-looting and people-killing; he is stifling all people's democratic liberties, refusing to return 2,00,000 political detainees, capturing in addition hundreds of thousands of people advocating patriotism and peace.

Marking one year of implementation of the Paris Agreement we hope with conviction that you will initiate new and all-sided actions of support and assistance to the South Vietnamese people under the motto of "solidarity with Viet Nam at the present stage more than ever to side on with the South Viet Nam people until final victory".

First of all, on this occasion, may we suggest you to promote a week or a month of solidarity with the South Vietnamese people to mobilise the masses in urging the following :

—The USA has to stop its military involvement and interference into the South Vietnamese internal affairs, to withdraw all its military and civilian personnel from South Vietnam.

—The US-Thieu must at once carry out the cease-fire and refrain from any land-grabbing operation or bombing, strafing and flights over the liberated areas.

—It should discontinue police and "pacification" operations, oppression, terrorism, plundering the areas under its control.

—It must return all the still detained civilian personnel; first of all implement immediately the plan of return agreed upon by the Two-Party JMC on July 17, 1973, concretely it must release the batch of 5,081 people mentioned accordingly.

—It is liable to guarantee the people's democratic liberties in the Saigon-held areas, mainly the freedoms of movement and residence.

On material assistance to the rebuilding of the liberated zones, we suggest you to push ahead the already appointed movements of collect, such as "the cement bags for Viet Nam", "the one brick of rebuilding", "the one yarn of cloth for Viet Nam", "the one hour or one day salary or extra-work wages or a shipment for Viet Nam" etc.

To demand the recognition of PRG RSVN—the only authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people is also a very important action to support the latter in maintaining a lasting peace in the South Viet Nam.

Dear friends,

We believe, firmly that on this occasion your strong activities taken under multiple forms will bring about not only a great encouragement to the South Vietnamese people, but also a significant contribution to check the US-Thieu's callous hands.

With sincere gratitude, we convey to you cordial wishes of successes for your noble cause.

"Friendly salutations",

# Central Government Employees Solidarity With Railwaymen

**A**t a joint meeting of more than 100 Circle Secretaries of the 'National Federation of P & T Employees, Working Commit-members of the All India Audit & Accounts Association and Office-bearers of the Income Tax Employees Federation held in New Delhi it was decided to synchronise the industrial action by the Central Government employees with the railwaymen.

George Fernandes, Convener, National Co-ordination Committee of Railwaymen's struggle welcomed the unity of the Central Government employees movement for common struggle.

The Confederation gave a call for non-co-operation movement on may 8 and 9 and general strike from May 10.

The decision was taken in the light of the unanimous declaration by the National Convention of the Central Government Employees organisations (sponsored by the AIRF) held in New Delhi on March 15. The Convention was attended by all sections of the Central Government employees movement.

A section of the Central Government employees movement led by Madhusudhan and O. P. Gupta backed out from the commitment and opposed the industrial action by the Central Government employees. This attitude only pleased the Central Government and caused immense

harm to the Central Government employees and railway employees movements. Had they remained true to their commitment the industrial action of the Government employees would have been much more wide spread.

However the disruptive role played by a section of the leadership resulted in a partial strike of the Central Government employees.

It is noteworthy that large sections of Government employees showed courage to go on strike despite repressive and disruptive measures.

The strike continued for two days. Central Government employees organised several demonstrations and rallies all over India during this period and expressed their solidarity with the struggle of railwaymen.

The partial strike of the Central Government employees has highlighted the need for further strengthening of the unity of the Central Government employees movement. All the outstanding issues facing the Central Government employees movement still remain unsolved. They will not be solved within the framework of the hoax of negotiating machinery. The Central Government employees movement can advance only by relying on unity and struggle.

*In Press*

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# Beedi Workers Conference In W. Bengal & Madhya Pradesh

## West Bengal

The first Conference of West Bengal Beedi and Tobacco workers was held at Dhulian (Murshidabad) on 27th and 28th April last under the auspices of the West Bengal State Committee of CITU. The Conference was presided over by Comrade Md. Ismail, M.P. and attended by 229 delegates from all over the State. Fraternal greetings were received from many organisations.

Com. Kamal Sarkar, Convener of the Organising Committee placed the report on the conditions, struggles and demands of 3 lakh Beedi workers in West Bengal, and Com. Chandra Roy moved the main resolution on organisation and programme of movement. Many delegates, including some women delegates, took part in discussion.

The Conference unanimously adopted the proposal of the Organising Committee to form the Federation of West Bengal Beedi & Tobacco Workers' Unions to co-ordinate the activities of the CITU unions working in the Beedi and Tobacco industry. A fortythree-member Executive Committee of the Federation, with Md. Ismail, M.P. as President, Chandra Roy as General Secretary and Nizamuddin as Treasurer was also elected by the Conference.

The Conference adopted a Charter of Demands including a minimum wage of Rs. 5.50 for rolling 1000 beedis with a

guaranteed earning of Rs. 300/— p.m. with usual D.A. based on 1970 index, service guarantee, equal wages for equal work for male and female workers, abolition of 'Gaddi' system, bonus, leave, medical benefit, educational expenses of children etc.

The Conference also decided to observe 'All India Demands Day' on 15th May as per the decision of the meeting of CITU unions held in Vishakhapatnam on April 8 last. It also decided to organise a central rally of Beedi workers in Calcutta on November 4 and to lead a deputa-tion to the Governor on their demands.

## Madhya Pradesh Convention

A convention of Beedi workers in Madhy Pradesh was held at Damoh on April 24 last. Delegates representing Beedi workers' Unions from Bhopal, Damoh Jabalpur, Narsingpur and other districts attended the Conventions. Some unions not affiliated to the CITU also participated and supported the programme adopted by the Convention.

Com. M. K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU inaugurated the Convention.

The Convention decided to organise a demonstration of Beedi workers in front of the State Legislative Assembly during its monsoon session to press for their demands for the implementation of the Beedi & Cigar Workers' Act, minimum wage of Rs. 7/— per 1000 Beedis, abolition of contract labour system and end

## Balimela Project Workers Fight Against Retrenchment

Ten thousand Balimela Project workers in Orissa have been continuing an agitation under the leadership of the Balimela Project Workers and Employees Joint Council against retrenchment and for implementation of Tribunal award and other demands. They have been carrying on a successful cease work programme since 10th April thus paralysing the project work. The Joint Council is planning to intensify the agitation.

## West Bengal Rope Workers' Long Drawn Struggle

The 3500 workers of Rope industries in West Bengal have been carrying on continuous agitation for wage revisions for more than two years. They formed a Joint Action Committee consisting of the Unions belonging to CITU, AITUC, UTUC and INTUC. As a result of longdrawn agitation, the Government and the management were forced to a tripartite agreement, according to which the Rope workers received wage increase at a flat rate varying from Rs. 15 to 36. The total wage have been raised to Rs. 130 to Rs. 235 per month.

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to malpractices of Beedi factory owners.

The Convention elected a Co-ordination Committee with Shamlal Choubey as the Convener.

The Convention ended in a mass rally of workers which was presided over by Rajaram and addressed by M. K. Pandhe, Shamlal Choubey and others.

# Suppression Of T.U. Rights Of Railway Workers CITU Appeals To ILO To Intervene

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, has issued the following statement to the press :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns the reign of terror let loose by the police authorities in the railway colonies all over the country to intimidate the striking railwaymen and terrorise their women and children.

The CITU congratulates the wives and daughters of railwaymen for their exemplary courage while resisting the cowardly attacks of the police. It appeals to the working class and the people to rally behind the railwaymen and demand immediate end to these attacks.

The CITU appeals to the International Labour Organisation to take note of the gross violation of ILO convention relating to Freedom of Association by the Government of India and intervene without delay to stop the suppression of trade union and democratic rights of the workers. The mighty demonstration of solidarity of the railwaymen constitutes a serious rebuff to the repressive policy of the Govt. But the Govt. refuses to learn.

The CITU strongly condemns the arrests of over 15,000 trade union leaders and workers and large-scale summary dismissal of railwaymen for participating in the strike.

The CITU appeals to the trade union movement to redouble its solidarity with the railway

workers so that the Railway Board and the Govt. are forced to retrace their steps and arrive at a negotiated settlement with the representatives of railwaymen on their demands like parity with public sector undertakings, bonus and end to all victimisation.

The CITU calls upon the railwaymen to remain firm and united in carrying forward their

## From Hospital Bed To Death Bed Under DIR

Srigopal Dwivedi, ailing railway leader, who was arrested on May 20 from the Railway Loco Hospital under DIR, died in the Lala Lajpat Rai Hospital, Kanpur on May 22 while in police custody.

just struggle and not to be misled by the false propaganda carried by the railway administration through the radio and the press.

## India Government Violates ILO Convention "Equal Remuneration For Men And Women"

**T**HE CITU in a Memorandum to the Director General ILO has drawn his attention to the gross violation by the Government of India of the ILO Convention "Equal Remuneration for Men and Women".

Though the Government of India ratified the Convention in 1958, so far it has not been implemented with the result that women continue to get less wages than men though they do the same type of work. The CITU has mentioned in the memorandum that in plantations, beedi, coir, rice milling and agriculture the wages of women workers are far below those of men workers. It has given data from official sources to prove the contention.

Regarding the condition of women workers under contractors the memorandum says :

"The women workers under contract labour system suffer most both in the Public and

Private sectors. In the Steel Plant under Hindusthan Steel Limited, some departments are handed over to the contractors with a view to utilise cheap labour. The wages here are very low and particularly for women workers."

In the memorandum in the end, the CITU appeals to the ILO :

"We would therefore request the ILO to investigate thoroughly the implementation of the Convention in various industries in India in both Public and Private Sectors and prevail upon the Government of India to ensure its implementation without any delay. We have repeatedly raised this question on various available forms in India but we are sorry to note that the Government of India has not paid any attention to them. Hence we are approaching the ILO to set matters right".

# RAILWAY STRIKE : A.I.R.'s LYING PROPAGANDA NAILED DOWN

## Suppression of Trade Union Rights In West Bengal

*"Steel Output Halted :* Production of hot metal in all steel plants of the country has almost come to a grinding halt. The plant authorities are just maintaining the heat of their Coke-oven batteries during the past ten days.

"This alarming picture has emerged in the course of an inquiry into the actual delivery of washed coal and prime coking coal to different steel plants by the South Eastern and Eastern Railways.

"While discussing the question, a spokesman of the South Eastern Railway said that the matter could be explained only after the strike of the railwaymen was over, indicating that this could be a part of operation to hit the morale of striking employees without realising that country was being fed with wrong figures at the cost of the most vital sector of the Indian economy.

"Meanwhile, the Coal Mines Authority is finding it difficult to

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### All India Road Transport Workers' Convention Postponed

The All India Road Transport Workers Convention which was scheduled to be held at Calcutta on May 25-27 has been postponed due to the railway strike.

The new dates of the Convention will be announced later.

dispose of its huge pithead stocks of about 3.5 million tonnes in the Raneegeunge field alone, much of it being grade I and lower grade coal.....".

*(The Economic Times of May 21)*

*"Punjab Units feel pinch of strike :* Industrial undertakings in Punjab are closing down one after the other as a result of non-arrival of the essential raw materials, particularly coal, owing to the railway strike.

,"The most significant impact of the strike would be felt by the Punjab State Electricity Board because the commissioning of its 110-megawatt thermal plant at Bhatinda might be further delayed — Another important state unit, the Markfed Vanaspati and Allied industries at Khanna, has shut down for want of coal supplies.

"Production in the Surajpur cement factory, near here in Haryana, has come to a complete halt following non-availability of coal. The Surajpur thermal power plant, which mainly supplies power to the factory, had also been closed because of the same reason.

"The plight of privately owned industry is even worse".

*(The Economic Times of May 23)*

*"Rail Strike Hits Port Operations :* Despite the Railway Ministry's claim of 'substantial improvement in the movement of passenger and goods traffic',

IN another memorandum the CITU has requested the Director General ILO to enquire into the suppression of trade union rights of workers in West Bengal and demanded steps to ensure the protection of freedom of Association of workers in West Bengal.

The Memorandum says :

"Over 300 unions belonging to our organisation as well as other Central organisations have been forcibly occupied by the anti-social elements belonging to the ruling Congress Party with the help of Police. Many areas in the State are out of bounds for our trade union functionaries where any open functioning of unions has become impossible.

The question was repeatedly raised by our organisation with the West Bengal as well as the Central Government but no action has been taken in the matter.

In the meeting of West Bengal State Labour Advisory Committee meeting held in Calcutta on 11th and 19th September 1972, the West Bengal Labour Minister agreed to take steps to restore the union offices to the bonafide unions and do away with the reign of terror. However no step has been taken in the matter so far."

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the rail strike has led to mounting congestion at ports holding up the dispatch of foodgrains, fertilisers and critical industrial raw materials".

*(The Hindustan Times, May 26)*

# Magnificent Solidarity Action

## All India General Strike

### Of May 15

**A**T the call of all Central Trade Unions (except the INTUC) and democratic parties, the working class and toiling masses all over the country observed a successful General Strike on May 15 to express their solidarity and full support for the striking railway workers.

**Maharashtra :** After the successful bundh of May 3, Maharashtra and Bombay again observed a total General Strike and Bundh on May 15. In Bombay, all forms of transport were completely stopped. All hotels, shops and other establishments were closed. Factories, Banks, LIC and commercial offices did not function.

Reports received from Nasik, Satara, Sangli, Miraj, Nagpur and other centres show that the strike was successful.

**Goa :** successfully observed the General Strike on May 15. Loading and operations in the harbour came to a standstill from the midnight of May 14.

2000 workers belonging to Chowgule and its allied concerns like mines, engineering, workshops and Pale Pelletisation Plant led by the Chowgule Employees' Union (CITU) observed the strike.

**Tamil Nadu :** On 15th May 1974 entire working people in Tamil Nadu expressed their solidarity with the Railway workers on strike. Protest demonstrations, mass rallies and public

meeting were held throughout Tamil Nadu.

**Andhra pradesh :** The General Strike was observed successfully throughout the State.

On May 15, the strike was completely successful at Rajahmundry. Industrial workers and Bank employees joined the strike. RTC buses did not ply.

**West Bengal :** Following closely on the Bundh of May 7 on price-rise and other issues, the General Strike of May 15 was a massive success. The ruling Congress and the Government employed goondas in large numbers. On the eve of the strike about a thousand workers of left political parties and Trade Unions were arrested.

Despite this, General Strike proved a grand success. On the day, schools and colleges, majority of shops and markets remained closed. Banks, including Reserve Bank, Commercial offices and LIC offices did not function. Despite all threats and intimidation most of the tram workers and a large number of State Bus workers absented themselves. Factories in the industrial belt around Calcutta and Howrah were strike-bound. Jute, textile and engineering factories did not work on the day.

**Kerala :** Kerala observed successful general strike on 15th May. The police of C. Achutha Menon, resorted to lathi charges against demonstrations in

Kozhikode, Mananathawady and Quilon.

No auto-rickshaws, taxis, buses or lorries plied in Cannanore. In town, shops were not open. Hotel and bakery workers and 30,000 beedi and handloom workers participated in the strike. Saw mills and plywood mills in Valapatnam-Pappinisseri zone did not work. Majority of the trans

The general strike was a big success in Kozhikode Dist. Industrial establishments, Central Govt. offices, newspapers offices and the Corporation office were completely paralysed.

The working class of Malappuram Dist. actively participated in this general strike. The strike affected in a big way plantations, toddy tapping, Port, general workers, Tile, spinning, etc.

**Delhi :** The May 15 Bundh was a success in the Capital City.

Civic life was totally paralysed in the City. All the Banks, Newspaper Offices, hotels, Universities, LIC offices, all the Industrial areas and shopping centres remained closed. Taxies & Buses were off the road. 85% of textile workers participated in the Bundh.

**Assam :** In Assam call for the Industrial strike was jointly given by CITU, APTUC, HMS, and two UTUCS. It was a total success.

**Karnataka :** May 15, was observed as Bundh throughout the State of Karnataka.

In Gulbarga the Bundh was total and complete. All the shops and hotels in the town were closed. Cycle-rickshaws, Auto-rickshaws, buses and tongas were off the road. Workers in Bank, LIC, MSK Mills, and industrial establishments participated in the Bundh. There were no cinema shows.

## International Solidarity For The Striking Railway Workers

**I**N their heroic struggle, the striking Railwaymen of India have received support and solidarity from working class organisations in various parts of the world.

Messages of solidarity and support have come from Pierre Gensous, General Secretary WFTU, the Bureau of the WFTU, the Trade Union International, President of the Transport Industrial workers Eiflander, from Muirhead, Secretary of the Australian Locomotive Workers Federation, transport workers of Netherland, among others.

The Amnesty International has, in a cable to the Prime Minister of India; demanded release of all arrested railwaymen.

Meanwhile, Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU has sent telegrams to General Secretary of Trade Union International of Transport and Fisheries and Secretary General of the Transport and General Workers Union of Britain, requesting them to support the demands of railway workers and protest against the arrest and victimisation of large number of railway workers and leaders.

### All help to the valiant Railway Workers

(From page Two)

Rs. 120 crores by way of cut in tax rates to capitalists; it has allowed traders and speculators in Vanaspati, sugar, cement, foodgrains, all of which are charged uneconomic freight rates to raise prices and to pile up huge profits.

The same government has spent not less than Rs. 162 crores on the atomic explosion and its preparation and provided for Rs. 90 crores for further atomic developments.

Against these huge sums squandered for the benefit of the capitalists and landlords or for explosion, what are the workers demanding? How much their bonus for instance would cost? The grant of 8.1/3 per cent bonus

would not cost more than Rs 50 to 60 crores whereas the tax relief to the rich is Rs. 120 crores; and the loss due to low freights is Rs. 250 crores; and the expenditure on atomic exploiting is Rs. 162 crores. Is anything more needed to expose the mean calculations of the Indira Govt?

Those who have been sowing illusions among the workers that Indira is progressive and the Railway Board was misleading her should at least learn from the events. Some of the AITUC leaders hugged this illusion for a long time. Now at least, they should realise that the bourgeois-landlord Government will show no mercy towards the workers.

Let the entire trade union movement and the people rally

### COM. RAMASWAMY

Comrade Ramaswamy, CITU worker in Madurai, was run over by the pilot engine of Pandyan Express near Vaighai Bridge (Madurai) on May 24, while protesting against the running of trains with the help of blacklegs during the railway strike.

In a letter to the Railway Minister, B. T. Ranadive President CITU while condemning the murder demanded immediate arrest and drastic punishment to those responsible for the crime and expressed condolences on behalf of the CITU Secretariat to the Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU and to the bereaved members of Com. Ramaswamy's family.

round the railway workers and make their cause their own. The railway workers are fighting the battle of the people against terror and authoritarian policies. The entire people must demand an end to repression, release of all arrested leaders and workers, withdrawal of all cases and orders of mass dismissals and bring pressure on the Govt. to negotiate with the NCCRS to do justice to the demands comprising the charter.

*Just Out*

**Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU's speech at the General Council Meeting, Visakhapatnam, April 7-10, 1974,**

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