



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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## A Menacing Situation

B. T. Ranadive, *President, CITU*

**T**HE NIGHTMARE OF A CRISIS OF THE 1929 TYPE HAS been haunting the advanced capitalist countries for some time now. Now there is official admission that these countries are already in the throes of a crisis. The inflationary boom is being followed by production stagnation, decline and rising unemployment.

Against the burdens of inflationary prices against unemployment and the gathering recession, against wage cuts the working class of the capitalist countries has been waging a continuous struggle.

Between 1961-72, 550 million workers joined the strike battle. In 1972 alone 43 million struck work while in the first 9 months of 1973, the participants numbered many more. This resistance of the working class bars the way to direct attack on wages to solve the crisis at the expense of the workers. This is now one of the biggest headaches of the monopolists who dominate the State and the economy of the capitalist countries.

The various steps of the capitalist States, the austerity programmes, the budget cuts, the anti inflationary measures all in the end lead to decline in production and unemployment. But in today's conditions any increase in unemployment in these countries will have to be compensated by relief at the expenses of the State which again means putting huge sums of money in circulation. Without inflation and price rise the capitalist States cannot keep down unemployment and with inflation and price rise they are heading for a crash. This is the dilemma of capitalist society. An American Professor puts it in the following words, "would it not be desirable, in the interests of keeping inflation from accelerating to countenance and even contrive slow U.S. growth for two or three years, so that unemployment will remain above the 5½ per cent level? Even if desirable, is such austerity feasible in the present American political situation?"

This spells the bankruptcy of the capitalist society. Less than 6 per cent unemployment is a curse for it and the economy must have more and more of it to keep itself going.

The consequences of the developing world recession are already visible in India with recession and over-production replacing "shortages" and ever-rising "demand".

The situation in India was already grave with inflation having brought about a forcible transfer of value from the lower to the upper classes. The denudation had gone to the extreme in rural areas where masses of agricultural workers and poor peasants were being reduced to destitution, thus cutting the market for industrial goods for mass consumption.

On the one hand, high prices had reduced the purchasing power of the people making it difficult for the country to exploit the full productive capacity of the plants built in recent times. On the otherhand, speculative activities and high prices created an impression of shortage thereby making it appear as if over production in relation to the purchasing capacity of the people had not taken place.

Now, we are witnessing the beginning of a recession in India notwithstanding the refusal of Mrs. Gandhi to acknowledge the reality. Thousands of powerlooms in Maharashtra, West Bengal and other States are not working. Handlooms have no orders. The

organised cotton textile industry records lack of orders and accumulation of stocks. The Deputy Minister for Industries acknowledged in Ralya Sabha in November that the mills have 2.5 lakh bales of cloth in their goodowns. They are valued at Rs. 100 crores. Financial stringency, lack of purchasing power, failure to lift ordered stock are the reasons for this state of affairs.

Some Ahmedabad Mills, closed their third shift throwing out 5,000 workers. The Buckingham & Carnatic Mill of Madras have reduced their production by 25 per cent. The South Indian Millowners have announced large stock of unsold yarn.

The Steel industry is also faced with accumulation of stocks. The Iron and Steel Controller stated in Bangalore in October that the Centre may have to think of decontrol or partial decontrol within two or three months. He said the steel plants had accumulated stocks amounting to 3.5 lakh tonnes. Hindusthan Steel alone had piled up to one lakh tonnes against allocations. He said "Even when we make allocations, they are not lifted. In the light of these indications, the position of the steel sector is alarming".

Engineering factories in West Bengal and U. P. are throwing out thousands of workers—in many cases without any retrenchment compensation. Heavy Electrical Plant of Bhopal complains that State Electricity Boards are not lifting their orders

with result that stocks valued at half the value of the total production, this year have accumulated in the factory.

This is the alarming situation that faces the working class and the trade union movement. It presages closures, loss of jobs and wage reduction.

It is a menace which faces the entire working class and employees and it threatens all sections of our toilers—the agricultural labourers, poor peasants. It is due to the capitalist-landlord policies of the Government, the policies which protect the profits of the foreign and Indian monopolists, of the landlords and attacks the incomes of the workers and the toilers.

It calls the entire working class, all trade unions to unite to resist this offensive more all-pervading and pernicious than the wage freeze. The workers and employees have achieved unprecedented unity at the August convention in Delhi and carried forth the battle in various conventions and above all, strikes and bundhs. This unity in action has to be further strengthened to ward off the coming attack. Against the threat of unemployment, the workers must unitedly raise the demand for right to work, unemployment benefit. They must again raise their voice against rising prices, wage freeze and demand drastic reduction in profits, nationalisation of monopoly concerns, confiscation of foodstocks of landlords to distribute them among the people at prices within their

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# Movement Against Wage-Freeze All Over India

**I**N pursuance of the decision of the National Convention against wage-freeze held in New Delhi on 28th August last, the movement against wage-freeze is gathering momentum and spreading in different parts of the country.

In **Punjab**, many district conventions were held. A Convention against wage-freeze was held on October 13 last at Nangal (Punjab) at the call of Nangal Township unit of UCTU. About 200 delegates representing sixteen workers, Central, State and Semi-Government employees' organisations participated in the Convention which demanded immediate repeal of the wage-freeze Act. The Convention was followed by a rally. Another Convention against wage-freeze was held on October 20 at Amritsar under the auspices of the UCTU Amritsar. 600 delegates representing 34 unions including those of the Railways participated in the Convention which also demanded immediate withdrawal of the Wage-Freeze Act. On October 27, a Convention was held at Jullundur at the call of local UCTU. 225 delegates representing 28 organisations of Central and State Governments, L.I.C., Bank, Press and CITU affiliated unions participated. AITUC despite repeated requests did not participate. The Convention besides demanding withdrawal of the Act took programmes for developing movement against the Wage-Freeze Act. A

convention against Wage Freeze was also held on September 8 at Panipat. Representatives of CITU, AITUC and other Trade unions participated.

In **Andhra Pradesh**, under the auspices of the State Struggle Committee formed on 15th September, a sustained movement against wage-freeze was continued on throughout the State. The programme included wearing of badges, organising demonstrations etc. which were successfully carried out in Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Guntur and other towns. These were followed by a State-wide Convention held in Hyderabad on November 3. 854 delegates from 103 unions and organisations were represented in the Convention which was the biggest of its kind in recent period. The participants included representatives of CITU, HMP, State and Central Government, L.I.C., Reserve Bank, Municipalities, Transport, H.M.T. and Railways. The AITUC did not join. Comrade P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of the CITU inaugurated the Convention which demanded immediate withdrawal of the Wage Freeze Act. The Convention was followed by a mass rally.

In **West Bengal**, a joint Convention against Wage-Freeze was organised in Calcutta on July 31 under the auspices of CITU, AITUC, two UTUC's, TUCC and HMP. As per the decision of the Convention, a 'Protest Day' was observed

throughout the State on August 13 through rallies, demonstrations and meetings. The State Electricity Board Workmen's Union (CITU) organised a big demonstration and the Tea garden workers in North Bengal observed the day through protest rallies and demonstrations. Protest demonstrations, rallies and gate meetings are also being held almost daily in factories and offices throughout the State, with thousands of workers and employees participating. On October 11, six Central Trade Unions—CITU, two UTUC's, TUCC, HMP and HMS, and 76 mass organisations of teachers, middle class, employees and workers jointly organised a massive demonstration and rally in Calcutta to protest against the Wage Freeze Act. Besides demanding Withdrawal of the Black Act, the rally also demanded supply of cheap food, lowering of prices of essential commodities, withdrawal of punitive measures against Railway employees etc.

In **Tamilnadu**, a Anti-wage Freeze Convention was held at Madurai on October 27 under the auspices of 24 Central and other trade Unions including the CITU, AITUC, DMK, NCCRS, AIBEA, AIIEA etc. The Convention was attended by representative of CITU, AITUC, DMK, Bank and Insurance employees, Railway employees, teachers and other sections of workers and employees and addressed by R. Umanath, General Secretary Tamilnadu State CITU and other leaders. A

public meeting was held in the evening addressed by R. Umanath (CITU), T. Krishnan (DMK) and others. Earlier, a meeting of 45 Trade Unions of Central and State Govt. employees, Bank, LIC and General Insurance employees and the CITU and AITUC met at Madurai and formed an All-T.U. Anti-Wage Freeze Committee to unite the Working class against the Wage-Freeze law. At the call of the Committee, a mammoth demonstration and meeting was held at Madurai on July 30 and a Dharna was staged in front of the Madurai Railway Station. Similarly, a joint meeting held at Coimbatore and attended by 50 delegates representing 15 trade unions formed a Joint Trade Unions Committee to organise the struggle against Wage Freeze and on other issues facing the working class. On October 28, an all Trade Unions Co-ordination Committee was formed to organise against Wage-Freeze, at a meeting participated by DMK unions, NCCRS, P & T Unions, Banks Tannery and Handloom workers, etc. In Madras, an anti-Wage Freeze Convention was held on November 3 under the auspices of the major T.U. organisations including the CITU, AITUC, Central & State Govt. employees etc. The Convention was addressed by R. Umanath, R. Kuchelar and others. In all these Conventions resolutions were passed condemning the Wage-Freeze Act and continued victimisation of Railway employees and demanding end of these victimisation measures

and amendment of the Bonus Act to extend the benefit to Railway, P & T and other Govt. employees.

In **Kerala**, a State-wide general strike was observed on September 10 to protest against the Wage Freeze law at the call of the Left Parties and Trade Unions.

The Electricity workers observed Protest Day in Trivandrum on August 13 along with power workers of other States. At the call of their Federation, State employees and teachers of the State protested against Wage Freeze Ordinance on August 7 through demonstrations, rallies and Dharnas.

In **Maharashtra**, a Convention against Wage Freeze was organised at Satara on August 28 under the auspices of the District T. U. Co-ordination Committee. Trade union activists and representatives of organisations of workers and employees with different T.U. affiliation, except the INTUC, participated in the Convention. Similar Conventions and meetings were also held at Sangli, Sholapur, Kolhapur, Parbhani, Nanded and other centres. On October 30, a successful general strike and Bundh was observed all over Maharashtra at the call of the Joint Action Committee of Trade unions comprising the CITU, AITUC, HMS, and Sarva Shramik Sangh to protest against the Wage Freeze legislation (see detailed report elsewhere).

In **Karnataka**, a Convention against Wage Freeze and other anti-people policies of the Gov-

ernment was held at Hubli on September 8-9. 167 delegates and 80 observers representing 34 Trade Unions and mass organisations including AIBEA in four districts of North Karnataka, SFI, S.C. Rly. Workers Union (AITUC) and others participated. The Convention was inaugurated by R. Umanath General Secretary, Tamilnadu State CITU. The Convention decided to organise District and Taluka Conventions and to observe a 3-day Anti-Wage Freeze Week from October 14 to 16. After the Convention a largely attended public meeting was held on September 9. A Convention against Wage Freeze was also held at Chikmagalur on November 10-11.

In **Uttar Pradesh**, a district Convention was held in Etah on September 29 which was attended by representatives of CITU unions, State Government and State Bank employees, railway employees, etc. S.F.I., Kisan Sabha and other organisations sent fraternal delegates. A joint Struggle Committee was formed from the Convention. Conventions against Wage Freeze were also held at Mirzapur (August 17), Muzaffarpur (Nov. 10-11), Kanpur (Nov. 4) and other centres. An anti-wage freeze Convention was held at Bullandshahr under the auspices of the Samyukt T. U. Council. 500 delegates from 28 unions participated. K. N. Bhatt, General Council member of CITU presided. A resolution condemning the Wage Freeze Act and

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# Newspaper Employees Need Action Programme

by

**Samajit Ghosh,**

Member, National Council, IFWJ

The living conditions of nearly 90 per cent working journalists in the country remain miserable despite awards by two statutory wage boards, the first in 1958 and the second in 1967. The third wage board is in the offing, and this time the non-journalists are also to be covered by a statutory wage board through an amendment of the Working Journalists (Conditions of Service and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act.

Out of about 10,000 working journalists employed in over 790 daily newspapers, weeklies and other periodicals, not more than 50 per cent are unionised. Barring about 1000 employed in big newspapers, full-time employment is not enjoyed by large number of journalists in smaller units. In this respect, the position of non journalist employees appears to be marginally better. This aspect of the newspaper industry has not been examined seriously either by the trade unions or by the government so far. The benefits of wage board remain therefore confined to a very small number, assuming that employers make proper implementation of the statutory awards. In fact, even the unionised full time employees have failed in many instances to

get the benefits and had to compromise with the employers with less than the statutory benefits under pressure and machinations and particularly due to long-drawn legal process involved in getting redress against illegal act of the employers. There are instances of surrendering the rights of working journalists even by such resourceful unions existing in big organisations including the Times of India and the Statesman. Indeed, this kind of weakness has been allowed by the trade unions to stay due to failure to find the collective issue based on the real essence of the problem confronting the newspaper employees in the country.

It is common knowledge that the basic cost structure for making of a newspaper remains around the same level for different newspapers using similar kind of machinery and equipment. The revenue receipts vary mainly due to the location of the unit, because units in the metropolitan centres attract advertisement revenue more than those established in non-metropolitan centres. Hence from the beginning, newspaper units in non-metropolitan centres remain in a disadvantageous position from the revenue point

of view, unless package advertisement rates for simultaneous display in multiple editions coming out from both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas of the same house of newspapers owners enable dispersal of the advertisement revenue. But this kind of operation is possible only by monopoly houses. Even there, the benefit of dispersal of revenue is not offered to the newspaper employees due to the practice of keeping each of this chain-units under different companies.

From the employees' point of interest, a movement therefore should be built up on the basic principles of 'Equal Pay For Equal Work' so that uniformity in the wage structure (to begin with the minimum wage) may be achieved by collective demand and struggle. This involves, first, detaching the newspaper industry from other industries on the legal plane; secondly, establishing the concept that advertisement revenue arising out of general economic and commercial activities comes to the newspaper industry as such; thirdly, amending of the statutes and enacting laws enabling enjoyment of advertisement revenue received in any one unit of newspaper by other units over a ceiling on slab system fixed on the calculations of break-even points by way of 'wage cess'; and fourthly, creation of workers councils both in units and industry-wise to supervise the distribution of the cess for payment of uniform wages.

This formulation fits in with  
(Contd. On Page Six)

# Maharashtra Bundh Of October 30—A Grand Success

**A**T the call of Trade Unions' Joint Action Committee (TUIAC) consisting of CITU, HMP, HMS, AITUC and Sarwa Shramik Sangh, among others, Maharashtra and Bombay observed a total Bundh on October 30 to protest against the Wage Freeze Act and demanding its withdrawal. Mills, Factories, State Transport, Bombay Electric Supply and Transport LIC, Banks, Government and Private Offices, daily Press. Municipality, Taxis in other words all participated in the Bundh. This was a magnificent Bundh—a bundh in true tradition of the earlier four bundhs observed by Bombay and Maharashtra in 1974.

When the clock struck 12 midnight on October 29-30, no wheel moved on the road, no wheel moved in mills and factories. All shops had their shutters down and the offices wore a deserted look. And all this despite the determined opposition of the INTUC. Shiv Sena's T.U. wing, which earlier opposed the strike, had to revise its stand on the eve of the strike.

On the day, the organisers of the Bundh took out a might procession in Bombay which was not witnessed before. Over 40,000 workers and middle class employees, men and women, paraded the streets of Bombay for over an hour. The procession ended at the oval Maidan where

a massive rally was held which was addressed among others by B.T. Ranadive, President CITU. Addressing the rally, Ranadive congratulated the people of Maharashtra and Bombay for this great strike. Tracing the fight waged so far against the Act, he narrated how in the recent Kerala Bundh, even the AIR had to go off the air. He called for not only worker-middle class unity but worker-peasant unity, to defeat the Congress Government's anti-people policies which were so bankrupt that they now attacked the doctors, engineers, lawyers also, in a bid to save the capitalist class. Should the Government not heed the notice of the strike, not retrace its anti-people and anti-working class policies, the workers and employees will have to plan a Bharat Bundh, he said.

Reflecting the anger and fighting mood of the people, the TUIAC had spared no effort to mobilise all sections of the people for this great Bundh. Promptly reacting to the promulgation of the Wage Freeze Ordinance, the TUIAC called for a Conference on July 28 to chalk out the programme to unify the resentment of all sections of working people against this hated law. This was followed by local Conferences in all the principal industrial centres of Maharashtra culminating in the all-Maharashtra "Resolve Conference" at

Poona on October 13. Besides CITU, the Conference was attended by representatives of AITUC, SSS, HMP and HMS. The Conference, attended by over 2500 delegates and representing the united resolve of the workers and employees to fight back the Black Act, gave call for a one-day strike on October 30. This was followed by a fortnight of tearing campaign by CITU and other constituents of the TUIAC including posterings, pamphleting and mass joint rallies to ensure a truly great strike on October 30, which it actually turned out to be.

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## Newspaper Employees Need Action Programme

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the general policy declared even by the central government for diffusion of ownership and breaking the hold of monopolists in the newspaper industry. Those newspaper establishments, now described as weak units are very likely to support this and organise themselves against the monopolists provided the working journalists and non-journalist employees are able to give leadership.

A resolution based on this idea was placed in the Poona conference of Indian Federation of Working Journalists last October. It was indeed sad that the resolution was taken up for discussion only about half an hour before the close of the conference, ultimately to be referred to the working committee.

## Court Set Aside Removal Orders

**A**FTER the decision of the Calcutta High Court, setting aside removal/dismissal orders under 14(ii) or 311(2)(B), the Ahmedabad High Court has passed a judgement in favour of railwaymen and has asked the authorities to reinstate all without forcing the workers to go through prolonged litigation.

Andhra High Court has also passed a judgement invalidating application of Rule 149 RI to all casual labour who did not join duties during strike, as such orders were obviously a penal measure in which case Rule 149 RI does not apply. The authorities have not honoured this judgement and have gone on appeal. In another case in Calcutta High Court, an order was passed setting aside order under Rule 149 RI to 200 employees, on the grounds that wages and notice pay was not paid before such termination. The authorities have now drawn up bills to pay wages and also notice pay so that they could issue orders under Rule 149 RI.

It is also understood that the High Court of Kerala has also passed a judgement in favour of railwaymen. Details are awaited.

The Government appears to pursue its policy of victimisation with vindictiveness forcing the employees to go through protracted litigation from Court to Court.

### Workers of Japan Support Indian Railwaymen

A resolution, demanding immediate stoppage of unjustifiable oppression and discrimination against the railway workers of India and immediate grant of basic labour rights and extending support to the Indian railwaymen's struggle, has been adopted on August 22, 1974 by the 48th National Convention of General Council of Trade Unions (Sohyo) of Japan, which is the biggest working class organisation of the country. It is understood that they have also sent some monetary help to the victimised workers. This is one of the outstanding examples of international working class solidarity.

### AIRF Working Committee Meets

The working Committee of AIRF met at Delhi on November 1-2, 1974 and urged upon the Government to normalise the situation by reinstating the victimised railwaymen without further delay. The next meeting of the Working Committee has been fixed in December where the date and venue of the annual Convention of AIRF would be fixed. A glance at the chart below will show that barely 50% of the workers have so far been taken back to duty

Position as on	Dismissed/Removed/Terminated			Suspended	Total
	Permanent	Temporary	Casual		
30.5.74	16532	25350	15685	6229	63796
2.11.74	4157	11693	11065	4141	31056

### Demonstration and Conventions by LRSA

On November 7, 1974, Loco Running Staff, all over the country observed "Anti-victimisation Day" by observing shed-wise demonstration. At Khargpur, the Loco Shed was packed with RPF and police, who allowed only a few representatives to go inside to hand over the memorandum. No victimised workers were however allowed inside. Preparations for observing "Demand Week" from November 24, Divisional demonstration on November 25 and the Democratic Convention on November 30 are in full swing. In Calcutta the Convention will be held by Eastern and South Eastern Rly. LRSA jointly in the Students Hall.

### General manager (NFR) faces Demonstration

More than two thousand railwaymen of Katihar, demonstrated against the General Manager N.F. Railway during his last visit there demanding reinstatement of victimised workers and opening of negotiation with NCCRS. As usual the authorities suspended 7 workers in an attempt to brow-beat them but the resistance is growing.

### Railwaymen resist Oppressive measures

Workers of Diesel shed Sili-guri (NFR) launched protest  
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## Absolute Liability

THROUGHOUT the capitalist world, social legislations have had to be enacted under pressure of democratic movements to impose duties and create liabilities in the interest of the exploited sections of the people. Such duties and liabilities are usually absolute, so that those who are saddled with liabilities may not escape on the usual plea of absence of *mens rea* (guilty intention) which is available to an accused in ordinary criminal cases.

Indian labour legislations providing for safety measures to be adopted by the employer in mines, factories or plantations are in the category of such social measures and therefore, Courts have often inclined to the view that the duties imposed by such measures are absolute irrespective of any guilty intent of the employer. Moreover, the burden of proof that he had taken all precautions required to be taken under the relevant enactment is on the employer.

A series of such provisions may be seen in Chapter IV of the Factories Act, 1948.

It is not invariably true, however, that the Courts have completely erased the doctrine of *mens rea* from their mind. But the doctrine is heavily diluted, for, obligation is absolute except in case of unforeseeable danger which again is a question of fact to be proved by the employer.

In the case of *The State of Gujrat V. Jethalal Ghelabhi Patel* (1), the Supreme Court, while interpreting section 21 (1) (iv) (c) of the Factories Act which requires every dangerous part of any machinery to be securely fenced, held that the occupier or the manager has to show that he had done everything to carry out his duty under the statute. The mere plea that somebody had removed the guard without his knowledge would not help him, because that would show that he had failed to exercise due diligence.

The manager or the occupier of the factory must prove that he had used due diligence to enforce the execution of the Act which can only mean "that he exercised due diligence to see that the fence which under the Act it was his duty to see was kept in position all along, had not been removed".

Section 18(1) of the English Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act of 1963 prohibited young persons from cleaning any machinery if doing so exposed him to risk of injury from a moving part of that or any adjacent machinery. In a butcher's shop, the bacon slicing machine had a rotating blade which was protected by a guard but the guard, was removed when the blade had to be cleaned. There was a second way to clean it—to keep the blade on half guard, and the injured boy was instructed to use the second method but also told never to turn the handle after getting the blade in position. The boy turned the handle

and cut off the tip of his left index finger. He was in the habit of doing this, when the manager was not looking on, because it was a quicker method. In the case of *J. H. Dewhurst v. Coventry Corporation* (2), it was held by the Queen's Bench that "the prohibition against the employment of any young person to clean machinery of this type in my view imposes a special obligation of supervision which cannot be said to have been discharged in the present case". The liability could not be avoided unless the employer could show that "what happened in this case was something which no reasonable care could have prevented, and that what happened here was something which they could not reasonably foresee".

In another English case, however, of *James v. Hepworth & Grandage Ltd.* (3) the workman was a metal spinner and his work was to ladle molten metal into a channel or guide to feed it to a rotating machine for the purpose of making metal links. There was a notice on the board instructing the workmen to wear protective clothes including safety spats. But the workman was illiterate, a fact that the employer did not know, and he was injured while doing his work without the safety spat. On a claim by the workman for damages, the trial judge awarded damages, holding, *inter alia*, that the display of notices was not enough information to the plaintiff who was illiterate that safety spats were available. The employer appea-

ied and the Court of Appeal allowed the appeal holding, inter alia, there was no reason why the defendants should have known that the plaintiff was illiterate and they had no burden upon them to enquire whether their workmen were literate. But the main ground on which the appeal was allowed was that according to evidence the wearing of spats was not only unnecessary but also undesirable. What the employers could do was to make provision for the spats and then to let the employees make their choice. And that was what was done in this case. Obviously this case will not govern those others where the statute specifies the protective measures.

Section 27 of the Factories Act of 1948 correspond to section 20 of the Act of 1911 and provides that no woman or child shall be employed in any part of a factory for pressing cotton in which a cotton opener is at work. It was held in the case of *B. N. Gamadia v. Emperor* (4), that the provisions of section 20 are not fulfilled if there is a door made a partition between two portions of the room and that door is shown to be open at a particular time, or even although it is shut, yet it is not locked or other effective means taken to prevent its being opened by a woman or child wishing to get into the press room. It may be noted that this case was decided, not on the principle of absolute liability, but taking into consideration the principle that all penal statutes must be construed strictly.

Section 72(1) of the English Factories Act is in identical

terms with section 34(1) of the Indian Factories Act of 1948. That section came up for consideration in the case of *Brown v. Allied Ironfounders Ltd.*, (5) before the House of Lords. The plaintiff, a woman, had been employed to paint the stillages which were admittedly too heavy for a single woman worker. It was also admitted that it was necessary to turn a stillage in order to paint it. The practice was for two women to turn the stillages though the evidence was that sometimes the women workers did it single-handed. The plaintiff was working alone and turned the stillages without asking for assistance which was available and, in doing so, she suffered injury to her back. In an action for damages, it was held by the House of Lords that there was a breach of statutory duty. According to the House, since the plaintiff had been employed to paint the stillages which had to be turned in order to be painted it followed that she had been employed to turn them. And, as it was known that the stillages had in the past been moved by women on their own, section 72(1) imposed a duty on the defendants to instruct the plaintiff not to turn the stillages without assistance. It was immaterial that the plaintiff could have obtained assistance. Since the defendants had not instructed her to do so it followed that the plaintiff had been employed to turn the stillages single-handed and the defendants were, therefore, in breach of their statutory duty. It may be noted in passing that

the defendants had been held to be not guilty at common law.

Thus, the preponderant view seems to be that, where the statute imposes obligations on the employer for the safety of the workers, those obligations must be fulfilled and the Courts would not infer any benefit of *mens rea* or *onus* of proof usually available to an accused in favour of the employer.

—Arun Prokas Chatterjee

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- (1) AIR 1964 SC 779 = (1964) 5SCR 801  
 (2) 1970 Lab. I.C. 915 = (1969) 8 WLR 249  
 (3) 1968 Lab. I.C. 298 = (1967) 3 WLR 178  
 (4) AIR 1926 Bom 57 = 27 Cr. L. J. 165  
 (5) (1974) 2 All ER 135
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## Railwaymen

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action on two occasions when the gates of the shed were closed and a worker was suspended arbitrarily. The resentment amongst the workers were such that the authorities had to accept the demand of the workers.

In the Electric Car Shed—Bhilai (SER) the workers mobilised protest demonstrations on two occasions when half holiday was denied during Rakhi Purnima and when leave for more than two days was denied to them. On both the issues, the authorities had to concede the demands of the workers.

### United Committee of Railwaymen (NFR) meets

In the meeting of the U.C.R. held at Alipurduar Junction on November 12-13, a resolution protesting against penal transfer of leading cadres of UCR and demanding immediate withdrawal of victimisation was adopted. In another resolution, the NCCRS was requested to fix up the date of national Convention and the zonal body was urged to fix up a programme of movement in N. F. Rly. A largely attended mass meeting was held on November 12.

# CITU Memorandum To The Workers Education Review Committee

(The Government of India has constituted in July last Worker's Education Review Committee with G. Ramanujan, General Secretary INTUC as the Chairman to review the activities of the Central Board for Workers' Education. The following is the text of the Memorandum submitted by the CITU to the Committee.)

1. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions considers that workers education is primary responsibility of trade unions. It is the trade unions who should chalk out programme of educating their members so that they can consciously participate in the trade union activities. The strength of trade unions essentially lies in the active participation of rank and file members in day to day functioning of unions.

2. Trade unions have been rightly called Schools of Socialism. The workers learn their valuable lessons through struggles they conduct under the leadership of a union that unless they organise and fight, there would be no improvement in their standard of living. Through practical experience, the workers have learnt the hard realities that as a class they have interest distinct from the employers who can earn higher profits only by depressing the wage level of the workers. Whoever relied on the benevolence of the employers had to come to grief. It is several trade union struggles that have developed class consciousness among the workers.

3. We consider the main objective of the workers education should be to develop socialist consciousness among

the workers. The trade union education should enable the workers to develop a link with the other suffering sections of the society, particularly the rural poor, get over trade union narrowness which considers about their own interests only irrespective of other social factors, build a living link with the movement of people and struggle for democracy. However, whenever workers participate in such activity, the Government immediately characterises such activity as "politically motivated" activity. We are also of the opinion that the purpose of workers education should be to teach the workers evils of the present day society and the mechanism of its operation, to impart general knowledge about the economic laws of the capitalist society and its financial operations. It will also be the task of workers education to educate the workers about the legal machinery created by the Government and explain them its shortcomings, to train them as active participant in the union activities and effective trade union functionaries, to increase their intellectual level so that they can discharge functions of advance detachment of the working class in a disciplined manner. Unless these tasks of education are effectively fulfilled the advance of

the trade union movement itself will be stunted.

4. Though Socialism is loudly acclaimed in India very little effort is made to educate the workers about the principles of Socialism. Even the Central Board for Workers Education which has published nearly 75 booklets not a single is devoted to Socialism. Therefore, all education that is divorced from the goal of Socialism, is not objectively serving the purpose of the working class.

5. The other objectives of the workers education should be linked with the struggle for changing the present social order which alone is a right path to secure all round independent economic development and national advance. It must be admitted that the trade union movement has not done its best in fulfilling those requirements as a result of which we see to day that despite substantial growth in the trade union movement, the qualitative growth is far below the requirements of the situation. The Central trade unions have to ponder over this weakness in the movement and take expeditious steps so that the unpardonable neglect is removed without any further delay.

6. The shortcomings arising out of the weakness of the movement cannot be overcome by a scheme from outside agency. The necessary initiative must come from within the working class movement and educational

activities must be sustained by the trade union movement itself.

7. The Government of India introduced the Workers Education in 1957 with the purpose of making the working class docile to the present social order and making the trade union movement to act as a subservient to the social system prevailing in the country. That is why it is keen to have the association of employers representatives with the scheme while the association of trade unions only acts as a cover to fulfil these objectives.

8. The International Team of Experts as early as in 1957, envisaged that while the Government should arrange directly for the workers education in initial stages, the programme should ultimately be run mainly by workers organisation. Yet the experience of the working of the Board clearly shows that the Government wants to remain in the commanding position in every respect so that its real objective behind its scheme is fulfilled.

9. The National Commission on Labour noted "we recognise that the programme can be bookish if there is no cooperation between the trade unions and those who administer the programme. Unfortunately, this still remains halting inspite of the efforts of those who are in charge of it". This was written in 1969 and condition have not changed since then. The Central Board has done precious little to find

out the root cause behind it. Some measures suggested from time to time were only token in nature and they failed to change the basic character of the scheme.

10. The Fourth Report of the Estimates Committee (1971-72) on Workers Education Programme submitted to first Lok Sabha, stated, "The Committee are distressed to note that the workers' response to unit level classes during the last three years i.e. from 1967-68 to 1969-70 has been on the decline". A Sub-Committee of the Central Board for Workers Education suggested increase in the honourarium of worker teachers as a solution to this. Such monetary incentive may provide a source of income to some needy workers who are under paid but it will not improve the matters with regard to the workers education. So long the approach of education is to serve the end of the State apparatus the Scheme cannot enthuse the ranks of workers.

11. The Central Board of Workers Education is essentially an agency of the Government though it is claimed to be tripartite in character. Its Chairman is always a top official of the Government and the representatives of Government are in strong number on the Board. Out of 14 members of the Board, only 4 are nominees of the trade unions while the Central and

State Governments have 7 nominees. Two other nominees are also nominated by the Government of India. Its meetings are invariably inaugurated by the Union Labour Minister. Though the Board is characterised as an autonomous body it is almost being run as a department of the Government. Since the Government is supplying funds to the Board it is always in a position to have a final say in the matter. The things have become so ridiculous that even the Director of the Board is at the mercy of the bureaucrats in Shram Shakti Bhawan in New Delhi. There is no wonder that even the innocuous recommendation of the National Labour Commission that the Chairman of the Board should be a representative of the trade unions is not considered as a worthwhile suggestion for implementation, though five years have passed since then. So long the bureaucratic influence of the Government continues to rule over the entire functioning of the Board, it cannot evoke any enthusiasm among the workers.

12. The employers have also developed a vested interest in the Workers' Education Scheme. They are at present associated at all levels of functioning of the scheme. At unit level classes, the scheme is at times entirely dependent on them. They provide accommodation, leave facility, take classes of workers and provide financial assistance to workers going on tours. Even in

the matter of selection of the candidates, they have say, or at times a final say.

13. It has been our experience that whenever trade unions on their own conduct classes the same employers not only refuse leave facilities but even go to the extent of issuing charge sheets to the workers on some other flimsy ground in order to dissuade them from joining such classes. Workers often face harassment after their participation in trade union classes. Even the Report of the National Commission on Labour has noted, "Another difficulty in the way of the union has been that while employers have given certain facilities to the Board to run the official programme, the same facilities have not been extended to the unions for running their classes even when they have the Board's approval". (Page—190) This only goes to prove that employers co-operate with the educational programme only when it suits their overall interests. Whenever they find that the programme goes against their interests they do everything to obstruct it.

14. We are of the opinion that employers should have no association with any activity of the workers education. It should be the sole responsibility of the trade unions. Whatever outside help is required in running of the scheme should be decided by the respective trade unions.

15. Much is said about the trade union apathy toward the scheme but very little is done to find out the causes for it. The trade unions are not to-day

enthusiastic because the Scheme does not help in strengthening the trade union movement. Many workers find the classes uninteresting because the issues taught are not relevant to their life. The workers are asked to increase productivity on the plea that it leads to increase in wages for the workers, profits to the employers and cheaper goods to the community. However, in practical life they experience that more productivity has led to job displacement and unemployment for the workers, while the prices continue to rise higher and higher. The only beneficiary is the employers who add to their profitability.

16. Similarly the workers are told about the wonderful machinery of Industrial Disputes Act where employers and workers are considered to be on equal footing. However, during the strike the workers and their leaders become victims of D.I.R. MISA, etc., while the employers are free to organise disruption of strike. The arbitrary powers to declare every industry as essential service for the purpose of banning strikes are also recklessly used against the workers during their struggles for improvement in their standard of living. But in the classes conducted by the Board virtues of such machinery are preached. How such education, which goes contrary to their practical experience, can inspire the workers?

17. The grants-in-aid given to trade unions under the scheme hardly forms one percent of the annual expenditure of the Board.

This only highlights the fact the grants-in aid are just symbolic and are utilised as a facade to the otherwise bureaucratic scheme. These reflects the official attitude towards the concept of handing over the scheme ultimately to the trade unions. If this is the progress during the last 17 years of existence of the Board, one can imagine how many more years or decades it will take to achieve the declared objective of the workers Education Scheme. At present the grants-in-aid are just used as Donkeys carrot to attract workers to the scheme. Moreover, the trade unions do not feel like approaching the Board due to the bureaucratic interference in the classes conducted by the trade unions under such grants-in aid. The quantum of grants offered is also so small that it really does not serve the purpose of an effective scheme. While the quantum of aid is small the interference of the officials is indeed harassing. The misuse of grants cannot be checked by official interference. It should be stopped by trade unions themselves by proper supervision of such classes. The present bureaucratic check up virtually shields the malpractices while genuine cases are faced with vindictiveness.

18. The CITU feels that the scheme in its present form does not serve the purpose of genuine workers education. It therefore suggests that the central trade unions should come together and taking into account the experience of the working of the Scheme

ON PAGE THIRTEEN

during the last 17 years, the entire scheme should be reshaped on the basis of following points :

- i) The Workers Education Scheme should be completely free from the bureaucratic and managements interference. It should be run at all stages by the trade unions themselves.
- ii) Every trade union should be free to draft syllabus for the classes conducted by it. The content of the subjects taught in the classes should be decided by the respective trade union.
- iii) The employers should provide leave facilities to workers participating in the classes conducted by the trade unions. There should be no victimisation of workers participating in the trade union classes.
- iv) Trade unions may invite leaders of other central trade unions to participate in their programme so that workers know different shades of opinion within the trade union movement.

The CITU hopes that the Committee would give serious consideration to the views expressed by us in this memorandum.

## Consumers Price Index Numbers

(Industrial Workers/1960=100)

State/Centre	1974			State/Centre	1974		
	July	Aug.	Sept.		July	Aug.	Sept.
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>				<b>Orissa</b>			
Gudur	313	324	351	Barbil	302	309	306
Guntur	318	327	343	Sambalpur	297	315	336
Hyderabad	291	299	308	<b>Punjab</b>			
<b>Assam</b>				Amritsar	328	328	334
Digboi	297	316	339	<b>Rajasthan</b>			
Doom Dooma	287	321	358	Ajmer	325	332	355
Labac	299	298	322	Jaipur	326	341	360
Mariani	279	311	333	<b>Tamilnadu</b>			
Rangapara	290	300	335	Coimbatore	280	303	319
<b>Bihar</b>				Coonoor	314	334	356
Jamshedpur	317	324	331	Madras	280	299	308
Jharia	348	354	361	Madurai	311	332	353
Kodarma	419	421	427	<b>U. P.</b>			
Monghyr	378	389	399	Kanpur	312	326	339
Noamundi	369	378	378	Saharanpur	333	332	358
<b>Gujarat</b>				Varanasi	364	382	383
Ahmedabad	295	307	327	<b>West Bengal</b>			
Bhavnagar	310	320	341	Asansol	312	325	332
<b>Haryana</b>				Calcutta	282	295	308
Yamunanagar	323	331	343	Darjeeling	272	282	293
<b>J &amp; K</b>				Howrah	291	304	316
Srinagar	240	245	250	Jalpaiguri	283	296	304
<b>Karnataka</b>				Raniganj	337	349	356
Ammathi	332	328	343	<b>Other Centres</b>			
Bangalore	306	314	328	Berhampur ('49)	374	398	429
Chikmagalur	324	324	334	Cuttack (1949)	346	365	384
Kolar G. F.	309	317	324	Jabalpur (1949)	396	405	418
<b>Kerala</b>				Beawar ('51-'52)	358	363	389
Alleppey	377	369	374	Tripura (1961)	266	264	265
Alwaye	338	353	349	H. P. (1965)	226	232	240
Mundakayam	333	338	347	Goa (1966)	202	201	202
<b>M. P.</b>				Bhilai (1966)	188	195	206
Balaghat	341	349	367	Kothagudam ('66)	188	192	203
Bhopal	311	321	334	<b>All India</b> ('49)	378	390	406
Gwalior	342	354	371	do ('60)	311	321	334
Indore	351	357	372	* Figures in bracket indicate base year.			
<b>Maharashtra</b>				(Labour Bureau, Simla)			
Bombay	282	290	291				
Nagpur	308	310	326				
Sholapur	314	318	330				

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# West Bengal Beedi Workers To Go On Strike On Charter Of Demands

**L**ED by the Federation of West Bengal Beedi and Tobacco Workers' Union, thousands of Beedi workers including large number of women participated in an impressive rally and procession on November 4 last from the Shahid Minar Maidan, Calcutta. Before starting the procession a meeting was held which was addressed, among others, by Jyoti Basu, Monoranjan Roy, Md. Ismail, Chandra Roy and Vimal Ranadive.

A deputation on behalf of the workers submitted a 14 point charter of Demands to the Rajyapal and the State Labour Minister. The main demands included in the charter were Rs. 5.50 as minimum wage for one thousand beedi, immediate implementation of the Beedi and Cigar Act, 1966 in West Bengal, ending the contract system of Munashi, Thekedari

etc, one day leave in a week, maternity benefit etc.

Prior to the 4th November rally, strikes, gheraoes, meetings and Conventions on the 14 point demands were held in Bankura, Purulia, Malda, Coochbehar, Siliguri, 24-Parganas, Calcutta and other districts.

At its meeting held on November 5, the working Committee of the Federation decided to give a call for a General Strike on January 29 if the demands are not met in the mean time. Meetings and Conventions are to be held in different districts to prepare for the strike and a memorandum, signed by thousands of Beedi workers will be submitted to the State Labour Minister on January 13 to press for the demands. Copies of the memorandum will also be submitted to the district authorities by the unions.

## Annual Conference Of BCMU

The 36th Annual Conference of the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU), the leading force in the T.U. movement in the Jute industry, will be held on November 29 to December 1, 1974 at Jagatdal (24-Parganas). The open session and rally will held on December 1.

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU will inaugurate the Conference and the open rally will be addressed by B. T. Ranadive and Jyoti Basu.

The Conference is being held in the background of the grim determination and fighting unity of the workers who are preparing for another continuous strike to realise their demands. From the platform of the Conference, the workers will renew their pledge to carry on this struggle till victory.

## Second Conference Of West Bengal CITU

The Second Conference of West Bengal State CITU will be held at Malbazar (Jalpaiguri Dist). from 25th to 28th December, 1974. The first Conference was held at Asansol in September, 1971.

About 1800 delegates from all over West Bengal (one delegate for every 300 members) are expected to attend the Conference. Fraternal delegates from Assam, Tripura, Bihar, U. P., Orissa, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and other States will also attend.

The Delegates Conference will be inaugurated by B. T. Ranadive, President CITU on December 25 and the open Conference will be held on December 28 to be addressed by B. T. Ranadive, Jyoti Basu, Md. Ismail, Monoranjan Roy and other leaders.

The Conference will be presided over by Md. Ismail, M.P., President of the State Committee and Monoranjan Roy, M. P., General Secretary will present the Report.

Elaborate arrangements are

being made by CITU Unions in Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and other North Bengal districts to make the Conference a grand success. A Reception Committee has been formed with Ratanlal Brahman, M. P. as President, Parimal Mitra as General Secretary and representatives of 105 unions in N. Bengal. Tea garden workers have decided to contribute one-day's wage to meet the expenses of the Conference and workers and employees, local people, organisations of Students, Youth, women and Kisans are extending all help and co-operation for the success of the Conference.

# NEWSLETTERS

## Tamil Nadu

Workers of the Nilgiris protein Food Factory went on strike from October 12 to secure implementation of their wage agreement with the management signed on January 1, 1974. After the failure of the conciliation talks the management suspended 15 workers and 13 workers were arrested by the Police. The strike continues.

### Co-ordination Committee of Transport Unions Formed

More than 65 representatives of Transport Unions all over Tamilnadu, including Kattabomman, Pandyan, Cheran, Anna and Pallavan Transport Corporations and State Transport Unions met at Trichy on October 14-15. The meeting endorsed the 35-point Charter of Demands formulated by the A.I. Road Transport Workers' Federation. It also adopted resolutions demanding 25 per cent Bonus and revision of D.A. and decided to affiliate the unions working in the Transport Industry with the Federation. Vishwanatha Menon, M.P., President of the Federation addressed the meeting. A Co-ordination Committee of Transport Workers' Unions was also formed at the meeting with K.M. Haribhat as Convener.

### Agitation By Local Bodies Workers

At the call of the Action Committee, demonstrations, public meetings and other forms of agitations by municipal

workers were organised on October 31, by the Local Bodies Unions, in N. Arcot, Trichy, Salem, Madurai, and Kanyakumari districts and in most of the towns to press for their demands for revision of wages, pension, leave facilities, housing, medical benefits etc.

### Cement Workers Demand Higher Bonus

Workers of the Sankagiri (Salem Dist.) and Thalayuthu (Tirunneveli Dt.) factories of India Cements went on strike from November 11 demanding 20 per cent Bonus and rejecting 8.33 per cent declared unilaterally by the management. The workers of the Sankagiri factory formed a Joint Action Committee, representing quarry and factory workers, to lead the united strike. The workers of the foundry unit at Nangambakkam (Madras) staged a hunger strike in front of the factory in support of the demands.

At the call of the unions, the workers of Thuluckapatti Cement factory went on strike from November 8 demanding 15 per cent Bonus, housing, leave, medical, and other benefits etc. Although the CITU has no union in the factory—INTUC and DMK unions are the main unions—the CITU militants actively supported the demands and the strike.

A joint Convention of workers of the Alangulam Cement factory (belonging to Tamilnadu

Industrial development Corporation) was organised by the CITU union, section of DMK Union, and the ADMK union. The Convention formulated 10-point Demands including 20 per cent Bonus, housing, medical leave, ESI and other benefits. The management has unilaterally declared 6 per cent gratia to the workers. The unions are preparing for strike to realise the demands and have issued strike notice.

### Ceramic Workers' Strike

Workers of the Seshasayee Ceramic Industry were on strike for more than 80 days in support of their demands for revision of wages and higher D. A. A settlement was reached on November 10 after which the strike was withdrawn.

### Cigar Workers' Win Demands After Struggle

After the agreement following the State-wide agitation by Beedi and Cigar workers, the management and unions of the Kalai Mark Cigar factory came to a settlement before the Deputy Labour Commissioner conceding increase of 25 per cent in existing wages. Instead of implementing the agreement, the management declared an illegal closure of their factory at Cuddalore (S. Arcot) throwing 150 workers out of employment. In protest the workers went to Mayavaram, Home town of the management situated 60 miles from Cuddalore, and gheraoed his house for two days. The local CITU unions and

workers arranged for their food. Ultimately the management had to come to a settlement and the strike was withdrawn from November 11.

### **Nellikuppam Sugar Factory Workers' Struggle**

About 2500 workers of the E. I. D. Sugar Factory at Nellikuppam are on struggle since September 20 last against the unilateral declaration of lay-off and illegal lock-out by the management.

The sugar-cane growers demanded a higher and fair price for their produce. Following the refusal of the Central and State Governments to fix a fair price, the growers refused to supply sugar cane to the factory. The management refused to come to an agreement with the growers and declared a lay-off and lock-out.

In protest, the workers started the struggle demanding withdrawal of the lock-out and full wages for the lay-off period. Their struggle has received fraternal support from wide sections of the people including workers, mercantile employees, students and women. A general strike and hartal was observed on November 5, in support of the workers, the students organised demonstrations on October 18 and Democratic Women's Organisation took out a procession on November 10. The workers organised a hunger strike before the factory and residence of the management from November 13. The struggle is continuing. The State Govt. has referred the issue to a Tribunal.

## **Rajasthan**

### **Rajasthan Bundh On November 21**

At the call of a joint Convention of Trade Unions held on October 6 last, workers and peasants, employees, youth and other sections of the toiling people of Rajasthan will observe a State-wide Bundh on November 21 to protest against the anti-worker, anti-people policies of the Government. The Convention against Wage freeze and Price Rise was participated by representatives of CITU, AITUC HMP and unions and mass organisations of Bank, Insurance and other sections of employees.

The Bundh call has been supported by the State Committee of CPI (M) and Socialist Party, the Rajasthan Kisan Conference and the Student Youth Co-ordination Committee which includes the SFI, SYS and other Student and Youth organisations, excepting the AISF and Vidyaarthi Parishad.

The State Government is reported to be busy marshalling its repressive machinery—Police, CRP and BSF—to launch widespread repression to disrupt the Bundh. The Jana Sangh and other right reactionary elements are also making every effort to confuse the people and have unilaterally called a Bundh on November 19 to disrupt the militant unity of the working people. Strangely enough the AITUC, which was a party to the Bundh call, is now trying to back out under one pretext or

another and has requested the Trade Union Sangharsh Samity to change the Bundh programme. The State Committees of CITU and CPI (M) and the Trade Union Sangharsh Samity have appealed to the AITUC and Right CP to desist from disrupting the fighting unity of the working class and to participate in the Bundh to make it successful.

### **SIMCO Workers join CITU**

2500 workers of Simco Wagon factory in Bharatpur, who created history by first shedding blood on August 11 last while resisting the Wage Freeze law, have now come out of the stooge INTUC Union and have organised themselves for militant struggle under the banner of the CITU. So far the Simco workers were not being paid anything more than the minimum bonus. This year they have demanded 20 per cent bonus. At a large gate meeting held on November 5, Darbar Singh, President of the Union, declared that the workers are ready to go into action if their demand for 20 per cent Bonus is not met by the Management.

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## West Bengal

### CITU—West Bengal Committee Meets

The West Bengal Committee of CITU met on 15th November under the Chairmanship of Hrishii Banerjee, Vice-President State CITU. Monoranjan Roy M.P., General Secretary of State CITU introduced the main agenda for discussion. He emphasised that movement against Wage-Freeze Act, against Price rise, for food and in defence of peasant's struggle for defending their harvest should be stepped up with the perspective of organising a State wide General Strike. Leaders of different districts participating in the discussions supported this view. It was decided that the detailed programme will be finalised in consultation with other Central Trade Unions

### A Menacing Situation

FROM PAGE TWO

reach. Raising the demand for need based wage they must demand better living conditions for the agricultural labourers, fair price to the peasant for his produce and drastic increase in taxation against the monopolists, big capitalists and the landlords. They must demand elimination of black market and its operations and confiscation of all wealth earned in blackmarket transactions.

It is only with this programme that the workers can fight the attempts of the capitalists and landlords to make them along with the people the scape goats of the crisis.

which would be meeting on 18th November.

The meeting also discussed the ensuing State Conference scheduled to be held at Mal, Jalpaiguri District from 25th to 27th December next. Monoranjan Roy reported about the enthusiastic preparations being made by the local CITU leaders and workers in general for making the Conference successful. It was decided to raise Rs. 20,000/- for the ensuing CITU Conference.

The meeting adopted a resolution in support of the people's movement in Bihar and protesting against the repression let loose on the people there by the Congress Government. Niren Ghosh, M.P. moved the resolution.

### Victory for Bengal Lamp Employees

The Head office employees of Bengal Lamp Co. at Calcutta, have been struggling for the last 5 months against the vindictive transfer of employees from the Head office to its Jadavpur factory and demanding implementation of the Tripartite Engineering Agreement. When, during the Puja holidays, the management without prior notice shifted most of the departments to Jadavpur and transferred the employees, they went on indefinite strike from October 28. After 18 days of complete strike, the management was forced to conclude a bilateral agreement and open the Head Office on November 15.

### CITU Leader Brutally Assaulted by Congress Goondas

Shanti Ghatak, Secretary of

CITU-West Bengal Committee was attacked with iron rod and sticks and brutally assaulted by Congress Goondas at Mograhat (24-Parganas) on November 25. He was going there to attend a Beedi Workers' Conference when a gang of goondas come out of the Mograhat Congress office and attacked him along with some other delegates to the Conference. Com. Ghatak was seriously injured and transferred to hospital for treatment. The CITU has strongly condemned this attack and demanded stern action against the Congress goondas.

### Kerala

Rubber tapping workers of 11 estates of Idayar, Kothattukulam started an indefinite strike from 4th November demanding minimum Wages.

One lakh coir workers of Trivandrum Dist. Started an indefinite strike from 1st November demanding minimum Wages.

Employees of village offices of Kerala resorted to a one-day token strike November 2 completely paralysing work in the 120 village offices of Kerala. This strike was part of their agitation demanding rectification of defects in pay revision.

In sympathy with the workers of steel Complex, Cheruvannoor (Calicut) who have been on strike for 62 days. workers of tile, match, plywood, ceramics, coir and engineering industries of Cheruvannoor Panchayat struck work for 2 hours after 3 p.m. on 15th November.

## UCTU General Council To Meet

A meeting of the General Council of the United Council of Trade Unions will be held at the Constitution Club, New Delhi on December 21-22.

### Against Wage-Freeze

FROM PAGE FOUR

demanding its withdrawal was passed.

In Bihar, the State Convention against Wage Freeze was held at Patna on September 29 under the auspices of the UCTU, Bihar. It was inaugurated by Saroj Choudhuri (AIIEA) and was attended by about 500 delegates representing 90 unions of Central & State Government employees, railwaymen, Bank, Insurance and Pharmaceutical industry etc. besides constituents of Central Trade Unions except AITUC and INTUC. The Convention decided to organise District level Conventions by November 10, to observe a Protest Day all over the State and boycott pay-packets for November. A Convention against Wage Freeze was also held at Bhagalpur under the banner of UCTU. The Convention was inaugurated by Hari Krishna, Convener UCTU and attended by more than 100 representatives of 24 affiliated unions.

A Convention of the working people of the North East Region against Wage Freeze and price rise was held at Shillong (Meghalaya) on November 9-10. Conventions against Wage Freeze were also held at Bhilai, Gwalior Nagda (M.P.)-

## Scindia Employees Win Significant Victory

An agreement was signed at Bombay on 5.10.74 last between the Scindia Management and their workmen represented by Scindia Employees Union, Bombay and Scindia Employees' Union Calcutta.

It is well known that Scindias have monopoly trade in Shipping. On the expiry of the agreement on 31st December, 1973, the Union submitted a Charter of

demands and started agitations. At first, the management was uncompromising but the movement forced them to sign the agreement as stated earlier. The agreement covered Wage, D. A., Bonus etc. According to the said agreement the total starting salary of a sub-staff as on 31st December, 1974 is Rs. 810/- per month and for a Graduate Clerk Rs. 1057/- per month. This is highest starting salary obtaining in India. The agreement signifies a very important event in the matter of determination of wages. The aspiration of working class to have need-based minimum wage have at least been realised in one Industry.

### CITU Working Committee To Meet on Dec. 11-13

The Working Committee of the CITU will meet on December 11-13, 1974 at Shibpore, Howrah (West Bengal). B. T. Ranadive, President CITU will preside over the meeting and P. Ramamurti, General Secretary will present the Report. The meeting will review the activities of the CITU since the General Council meeting held at Vishakhapatnam in April, 1974 and to chalk out the programme of action on the urgent issues facing the working class. The meeting will also consider the proposal to hold the Third Conference of CITU in May 1975.

Along with the Working Committee meeting, some Industry-wise meetings for Port and Dock, Rayon, Electricity, Plantation and Road Transport industries will also be held during the same period. The extended office-bearers' meetings of the A.I. Plantation Workers' Federation and A. I. Road Transport Workers' Federation will be held on December 14.

### Second Conference of AIPWF

The Second Conference of the All India Plantation Workers' Federation will be held at Vandiperiyar, Permade, Idikk District, Kerala from January 31 to February 2, 1975. The Conference will review the activities of the Federation since the foundation Conference held in November, 1972.

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## Reports From Unions

### New Spurt of victimisation in S. E. Rly.

Despite Government propaganda to the contrary, victimisation of railwaymen in the S. E. Rly still continues. Till date, 866 permanent staff and 2291 temporary, substitute and CPC staff dismissed and 503 permanent staff are under suspension in S. E. Rly. Rather, in recent days, there has been a new spurt of vindictive victimisation measures against Railwaymen in this Railway.

Following a mass deputation of Railwaymen and submission of a memorandum to the D.S., Kharagpur through the Loco Foreman, Santragachi, 33 Loco Running Staff have been served with Charge Sheets by the DME, Kharagpur, while 5 staff of the Train Lighting Section have been chargesheeted by the Asstt. Electrical Engineer, Garden Reach. Besides, mass scale penal transfer orders have been issued on all Locomen who were chargesheeted earlier and the present G.M. is issuing notice of premature and forced retirement orders to senior staff of 25-30 years qualifying service.

### Closure in Mercury Travels

The management of Mercury Travels (India) Ltd. have declared a closure in their Calcutta Office from the midnight of November 20.

Following an agreement with the employees on March 1, the management unilaterally declared a closure on May 2 which was lifted on June 25. But simul-

taneously, 23 employees, including five Union leaders, were retrenched illegally. When the employees, led by the Mercury Travels (India) Ltd. Employees' Union (CITU), continued united protest struggle against the retrenchment the management declared an illegal lock-out on September 7. Despite extreme hardships, the employees refused to bow down and have been continuing united struggle all along with the help and solidarity support of different units of the Mercantile Federation and CITU unions.

### Annual Conference of Chowgule Employees' Union (CITU)

The third Conference of Chowgule Employees' Union (CITU) was held on October 10 at Sirigao (Goa). The Conference was inaugurated by Ahilyabai Rangnekar, a prominent leader of Maharashtra and was presided over by Gerald Pereira, the General Secretary of the Union. Some 200 delegates representing 2000 and odd Chowgule employees from mining, engineering and commercial establishments of the organisation attended the Conference.

### Annual Conference of United Mines Mazdoor Union (CITU)

The Tenth Annual Conference of the United Mines Mazdoor Union (CITU) was held at Tensa on October 12-13. Delegates from all the mines of Rourkella Steel Plant attended along with fraternal delegates

from Steel Employees Unions of Rourkella, Joda, Birmiritapur etc. and mass organisations of youth and students. A presidium conducted the proceedings and A. C. Roy, General Secretary read out the report.

Resolutions were adopted in support of democratic movement in Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and other States, in support of victimised railwaymen, against food scarcity, high prices, Wage Freeze, etc. The Conference elected a 45-member Executive with Niren Ghosh, M. P. as President and A. C. Roy as General Secretary.

### Annual Meeting of National Tobacco Co. Employees Union

The Annual Meeting of National Tobacco Co. Cigarette Factory Employees' (CITU) was held at Rajahmundry (Andhra Pradesh) on October 25. G. S. Balaji Das, Vice-President of the State CITU addressed the

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meeting. The meeting approved the Charter of Demands including need-based Minimum Wage, D.A. with full neutralisation, 20 per cent Bonus etc. The meeting elected a new Executive Committee with M.A. Mohiddin as President and G. S. Balaji Das as General Secretary.

### **Victory for Employees of Times of India & Allied Publications**

Following a 4-hour Gherao and Dharna on September 29 before the management by over 2500 employees, the management of Times of India & Allied Publications recently concluded an Interim Agreement with the Employees' Union conceding Rs. 50 per month as interim D.A. with effect from October 1, 1974 and agreed that there will be no wage-cut whatsoever for any course of agitation. It may be recalled that earlier on August 23, Times of India employees all over India went on a day's strike completely paralysing publication in all its units. The present agreement is an important victory of the employees gained through unity and militant struggles.

### **Unfair Labour practice in IBM**

The management of international Business Machines (I.B.M.), is persuing heinous labour exploitation methods. In its Delhi Branch, drivers employed by officers and paid by them are engaged in driving company vehicles. Thus the drivers are not shown on the company Payroll and are

## **Comrade K. I. Rajan**

Comrade K. I. Rajan, a valient fighter for the emancipation of the working class and joint Secretary of the Kerala State Committee of CITU died of heart attack on November 6 last at Cannanore (Kerala). He was only 37 at the time of his death.

While still a college student, Comrade Rajan was attracted to the Communist Movement. Till his death he was amember of the Commnist Party of India (Marxist). He was a dedicated organiser of the working class movement, organised several wokers' unions and was at one time the Secretary of the Kerala Electricity Workers' Association. However, his main activities were in the field of Plantation Labour movement, and at the time of his death he was the Secretary of the Peermedu Plantation Labour Union (Iddikki Dist.), of which he was the founder leader and President of the Kerala unit of A. I. Plantation Workers' Federation. Even to his last days, he was in the thick of the Plantation Workers' struggles and at the time of his death he was engaged in preparations for the success of the Second Conference of the AIPWF to be held at Peermedu in January, 1975.

Comrade Rajan was a Member of the Kerala Assembly, representing Peermedu Constituency from where he was returned to the Assembly in the last three elections.

The CITU offers its homage to the memory of Comrade Rajan and sends its condolences to his wife and other members of the bereaved family.

deprived of Bonus, D. A. pay-scale enjoyed by other employees. When the workers formed their own union to resist these unfair practices, the management started victimisation and re-trenched several office-bearers of the Union including the General Secretary and Vice-President.

### **Successful strike by Indore Textile Workers**

Led by the Indore Mill Mazdoor Sabha, Kapada Mill Mazdoor Sangh and BMS

Unions, workers of Swadeshi Kalyanmal and Malwa Mills at Indore, Ujjain and Burhanpur went on strike from October 3 to 7 to protest against wrong interpretation of a provision of the Ordinance aiming at depriving the workers of their Gratuity and P. F. accumulation in pre-nationalisation period. Despite opposition of INTUC and AITUC unions, the strike proved a grand success and even workers following the INTUC and AITUC joined the strike.