



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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## The Rail Budget And The Railwaymen

**T**HE RAILWAY BUDGET PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT on 20th February represented a colossal bureaucratic bungling of the railway finances. Within two weeks of his assuming the railway portfolio Kamalapati Tripathi ventured to say, "It appears that the Railways are seeing the end of the tunnel". His optimism however could not be substantiated by the performance of the railways.

The much advertised absence of rise in passenger fares can neither console the people because they have yet to overcome the wounds inflicted on them by a sudden jump of 33% in passenger fares some months back. Moreover the rise in freight rates will ultimately be passed on the consumers by way of price rise of the commodities affected by the freight hike.

Despite false claims by the Railway Minister about efficient working of the railways he had to admit that the indebtedness of the Railways on 31st March 1974 rose to Rs. 208.02 crores. "1973-74 was truly, in all respects, a depressing year in the financial history of the Railways", he said.

The matters became worse during 1974-75 when despite big rise in passenger fares the budgetary deficit was expected to be Rs. 128.19 crores !

Referring to the Plan outlay of Rs. 308 crores for 1974-75 the Railway Minister noted that the allocation was even less than the reduced allotment for the current year and in the background of the rise in material costs "the physical content of the development plans will naturally be compressed".

This being the position of the Railway finances one wonders from where the Railway Minister could see the light which he thought was the end of the tunnel.

The Budget speech of Railway Minister is conspicuously silent at the cause of this havoc played by the top heavy administrators of the Railway Board. Though he was merely echoing

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the arguments of the Railway Board his speech could not hide the reality behind the chaotic conditions prevailing in the Indian Railways.

As usual, he saw "the deterioration of staff discipline" and the paltry rise granted after the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission as factors responsible for the bad performance of the railways during 1973-74. But he conveniently forgot to mention that it was due to the recalcitrance of his Ministry towards workers demands that was responsible for bad industrial relations in the railways. During the May strike, despite claims of the failure of the strike, the Government now admitted that the loss of revenue during the April-June 1974 was Rs. 92.45 crores. Government preferred to lose revenue but refused to accept the legitimate demands of the railway workers. While the average monthly traffic of the railways stands at 15 million tonnes, the loss during the April-June 1974 was estimated to be 11.8 million tonnes i.e. total output of more than 23 days of the entire railways. These statistics given by the Railway Minister nail down the lie of the Railway Board that the railway workers did not respond to the strike call.

After withdrawal of the strike the Railway Board resorted to worst type of vindictiveness against the railwaymen to cow down them. Over 30,000 workers were kept out of service while break in service was imposed on lakhs of workers. Despite Court judgements in

favour of the workers the railway authorities appealed against the judgements and refused to implement the Court orders. The unity and determination shown by the railway workers in the face of the vindictiveness ultimately forced the Government to give up its high and mighty attitude and talk language of concession. The Railway Minister's decision to condone the break in service of all railway employees except those who are charged with sabotage and violence is an open admission of failure of high and mighty attitude of the Railway Board.

Instead of talking a language of firmness against the strike the Railway Minister had to say, "I expect senior railway officers to establish direct contacts with the staff working under them, so as to maintain good industrial relations" and "I have directed the Zonal Railway Administration to deal with all service matters speedily and sympathetically". This does not mean that all the victimisation measures would be withdrawn. The authorities are still talking against "hard core" elements and trying to keep them out. The railway workers and their movement will have to strive hard to get all the victimisation cases withdrawn by the authorities without any delay.

While outwardly talking a language of conciliation, the railway authorities are planning to introduce several mechanical devices and automation to reduce job potential of the workers and employees. The drive towards containerisation is already in full

swing. All these measures will further impose heavier workload on the workers with threat of retrenchment hanging over the shoulders of many workers. The authorities have almost equated efficiency with intensification of workload on the workers. On the plea of reducing operational expenses they are planning to minimise the wage bill of the workers.

On the plea of taking over the social burden the railways are suffering a dent in the finances to the tune of Rs. 203.91 crores! The Central Government is also taking its pound of flesh of Rs. 197.88 crores as dividend from its investment in Railways. When railway finances are drained out by about Rs. 400 crores in this manner the Railway Board will not have any funds to grant monetary concession to railway workers. So the workers must continue to toil, the loco running staff should work for excessive hours as before!

The railway continue to be a slaughter house for the railway employees as well as passengers. During 1973-74 the total number of accidents were 8070 and the total casualties were as high as 3016. The total casualties in railway accidents since 1961-62 have now reached a staggering figure of 46,659!

The railway budget thus represents a continuation of attack on the railway employees and the people of India. It is through the united strength that the trade union and democratic movement can repel these attacks and defeat the anti-worker and anti-people policies of the Railway Board!

# HEROIC JUTE STRIKE

## —A BALANCE SHEET

THE two and half lakh of jute workers have added another glorious page in the history of trade union movement by fighting a heroic strike battle for forty eight days. It is not only the largest strike battle so far in the history of jute workers' movement, but it is one of the longest strike battles involving such a huge number of workers.

The strike began on 6th January last. The INTUC which stayed away from last year's strike, by signing an anti-working class agreement just on the eve of strike, took initiative along with AITUC and HMS in organising strike this time and unilaterally declared date for strike without consulting CITU and other Central trade unions. It has been suggested by some observers that at the instance of a section of jute management who were interested in strike at this juncture, the INTUC took initiative in organising strike. In fact, in the joint meeting the CITU affiliated Bengal Chatkal Mazoor Union, the largest Union of the jute workers, actually proposed for a later date for strike in order to organise and prepare the strike in a better way. But this was opposed by INTUC. However, when the date for strike was finally fixed on 6th January, the BCMU threw itself whole-heartedly for the preparation of strike. The constant effort of BCMU resulted in not only unity at the top but also from below.

The strike began on 6th

January, the two and half lakh workers in 62 mills joined the battle to a man. The strike was launched on the basis of 10 point Charter of demands. This time, no demand for wage increase was raised. According to Bhattacharya Commission's recommendations, the workers are eligible to get Rs. 63/- as D.A., whereas the West Bengal Government invoked D.I.R. against it and scaled down the D.A. to Rs.16.00 thus depriving the workers of Rs. 47.00 and on this account only the jute owners will be able to save Rs. 15 crores. Even Union Labour Minister's recommendations and earlier promises were not implemented. When the jute barons are amassing a profit of thousands of crores of rupees, the demand for 20% bonus is most justified. Besides these, the workers raised demand in the interest of peasants and nation as a whole.

The jute management from the very beginning took an intransigent attitude in order to scuttle all negotiations. And the West Bengal Government instead of putting pressure on the jute barons shamelessly supported them and acted openly against the interests of the workers. And for this, more than hundred hours of protracted negotiations bore no fruit and in fact no demand of the workers was conceded. The proposals made by the Government did not meet the demands of the workers in the least; and all the Central trade unions on February

18 opined unanimously that the Government "recommendation was not worthy of any consideration, far less acceptance".

The workers fought heroically. No dissension was there even after such protracted battle. Many workers literally starved but not a single worker showed any vacillation. Many rallies were held. A mass squatting for 72 hours was organised before the IJMA Office from 18th February where thousands of jute workers gathered and thousands of other workers and employees assembled. A big solidarity campaign was organised. Demonstrations were held in support of striking jute workers by mercantile, L.I.C., Central and State Government employees and many CITU unions. The S.F.I. organised a strike on 19th. Though INTUC was a partner of the strike, the Congress goondas prevented holding of a meeting of jute workers at Kamarhati to be addressed by Jyoti Basu. However, the D.Y.F., Mahila Samiti, ABTA, the CPI(M) and other left parties conducted campaign in support of jute workers. More than ten thousand rupees were raised in support of the striking workers.

The jute workers, despite their enormous suffering, were prepared to continue the battle. But unfortunately, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, and NFITU decided to call off the strike from 21st February. When unity of workers was most needed to defeat the combined strength of the jute management and the

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# Power Workers Plan All India Movement

**T**HE All India Joint Council for Power Workers' United Struggle, formed at the All India Power Workers' Convention held at New Delhi on October 19-20, 1974 last met at Nagpur on February 5 to chalk out a programme of action for realisation of the demands of the Power workers. The demands include Need-based Minimum Wage, 100% neutralisation of D. A., regularisation of muster roll, work-charged and ad hoc staff and House Rent allowance etc.

As a preparatory step to a bigger programme of movement including a day's country-wide strike followed by indefinite strike, the Joint Council called for a 24-hours Dharna in all the State Capitals either before the State Assemblies or before the Secretariat on 18th March next.

At the call of the Delhi Convention, Power workers held State-level conventions during November, 1974 and observed All India Demands and Anti-Victimisation Day on December 11. In West Bengal, more than ten thousand Power Workers participated in a demonstration on that day. These have, however, failed so far to change the callous attitude of the managements and the Government. A complete dead-lock is continuing in the negotiations which were going on in the Wage Guidelines Committee, no meeting of which is being convened since October 1974 when it met last after several postponements.

Another burning issue before the Power workers is the mounting attack on the Power workers in different States. The worst affected are the workers of Haryana & Punjab State Electricity Boards, where hundreds of workers have been retrenched and hundreds of others suspended, their only crime being that

they demanded the implementation of the interim award of the Wage Guidelines Committee. Similar attacks are also being perpetrated on the workers of State Electricity Boards of West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and U.P.

A State Convention of the Power workers of West Bengal will be held on February 28 at Calcutta to chalk out plans for united movement in the State and to ensure success of the all-India programme.

## W. Bengal T.U. Convention Calls for State-wide Movement and General Strike

**A** Trade Union Convention was held at the University Institute Hall Calcutta on 10th February last. The convention was jointly organised by five Central T.U. organisations—CITU, UTUC, HMS, HMP and TUCC—and 32 other mass organisations of teachers and employers of Mercantile, LIC, Banks, Central and State Government offices etc. The convention was attended by more than 1500 delegates. A Presidium consisting of Suhrid Mullick Choudhury (CITU), Motish Roy (UTUC), Debu Bose (HMS), Dilip Roy (HMP) and Prasanta Dasgupta (TUCC) conducted the proceedings.

The main resolution moved by Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary of State CITU demanded cheap food and relief for the people, reduction in prices of essential commodities, withdrawal of Wage Freeze Act, end of corruption, repeal of

orders of victimisation on Railway and other Central Government and State employees, restoration of democratic and T.U. rights, release of all political prisoners, withdrawal of Emergency, DIR and MISA etc. In another resolution, all support was extended to the striking Jute workers and the just demands of Jute workers and growers. Nikhil Das, Saral Deb, Sunil Sengupta, Dipen Ghosh, Arabinda Ghosh, Amiya Chatterjee and others spoke in support of the resolutions.

The convention decided to organise a mass rally in Calcutta on March 4 next and to build up a State-wide movement through mass rallies and demonstrations in all the districts. It was unanimously decided to call for a State-wide General Strike at the end of March to protest against the anti-people policies of the Government and in support of urgent demands of the people.

# 8th General Conference of AIIEA

## Calls For Unity And United Struggles

THE eighth General Conference of the All India Insurance Employees' Association was held at New Delhi from 16th to 20th December last in the background of the heroic struggles waged by the Insurance employees since the last Conference held at Madras in 1972.

After the AIIEA flag was hoisted by Chandrasekhar Bose, President of AIIEA, Era Sezhiyan, M.P., Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates. Mathew Kurian M.P. inaugurated the Conference.

A record number of 571 delegates and observers from all parts of the country attended the Conference.

The Report of the Working Committee, presented by Saroj Chaudhuri, General Secretary analysed the economic crisis in the country and abroad, the struggles successfully organised by the employees against the machinations of the management and Government for a split in the ranks of the employees, against wage freeze and for realisation of their charter of demands and called upon the employees to overcome the shortcomings and weaknesses so that the anti-people policies of the Government and attacks being mounted on the working people can be defeated decisively.

Initiating the discussion on the report, Sunil Maitra, Joint Secretary highlighted the deepening capitalist crisis and called upon the employees to strengthen

the organisation, expand its base and unite with other sections of the working class and unitedly resist all attacks of the ruling class.

51 delegates participated in the discussion on the Report after which it was unanimously adopted.

The Conference adopted resolutions on Wage Freeze, on struggle of Railwaymen, on

Democratic and Trade Union Rights and on their Charter of demands and struggles, among others.

The Conference elected a new Working Committee with Chandrasekhar Bose as President and Saroj Chaudhuri as General Secretary.

The open session of the Conference held on December 21 was addressed, among others, by P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU, Era Sezhiyan M.P., Vice-President of AIIEA and Saroj Chaudhuri, General Secretary.

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## Conference of Hindusthan Steel Employees Union, Durgapur

Defying the prevailing atmosphere of terror created by Congress goondas aided by the Police, the 13th Annual Conference of Hindusthan Steel Employees, Union, Durgapur (CITU) was successfully held from 24th to 27th January last.

Since the rigged elections in West Bengal in 1972, the history of Durgapur Steel township has been one long nightmare of widespread goonda and police terror, murder and assaults of CITU activists, attacks on union offices. It was amidst this atmosphere that the HSEU decided to hold the Conference after three years. However, renewed attacks started immediately after the announcement. Following the stabbing of three union activists on January 6 the Police clamped Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. in the Steel township and arrested a large number of Union activists. Police also refused permission at the last

moment to hold the Conference in the township.

Undaunted by this attack, the Union shifted the venue of the Conference outside the township, overnight erected the pandal and the Conference started exactly on the dot as per schedule.

The Conference was attended by 1340 delegates of which 58 delegates participated in the discussion on the Report presented by Jiban Roy, Jt. Secretary of the Union.

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU gave the concluding address on 26th and Samar Mukherjee, Treasurer CITU addressed the delegates on 25th.

The Conference adopted resolutions on the struggles of Jute Workers and Railway Workers, against imposition of Sec. 144 in Durgapur, demanding withdrawal of DIR, MISA etc., against Wage Freeze and for release of political prisoners.

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# Conventions & Protest Actions Against Wage Freeze

## Tamilnadu

A Convention of the Working People of Kanyakumari District against Wage-Freeze was held at Nagercoil on January 5 last. It was attended by over 1200 delegates and 800 observers representing the P. & T., LIC, Bank, N. G. Os., Teachers, Electricity, Plantation, Transport, Cashewnut factories, Textile Mills, Indian Rare Earths, etc. The Convention adopted resolutions demanding immediate withdrawal of the C. D. Act, on supply of essential commodities at fair prices, against victimisation of T.U. workers, Bonus for All, etc. The convention was addressed by P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU, K. M. Sundaram (AITUC) and others. A public meeting was held in

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Resolutions were also adopted on the programme of action on the issues facing the Steel Workers Viz. eviction of 700 contractors' workers, illegal dismissal of Shyamal Banerjee, a Council Member of the Union, victimisation and repression on Steel employees, Wage revision etc.

The Conference elected a 208-member Council Committee, a 82-member Executive Committee and a 35 member Secretariat with Dilip Mazumder as President.

The open session of the Conference held on 27th January and attended by over 20,000 people, was addressed by B. T. Randive, Jyoti Basu, K. C. Haldar, M.P. and other leaders.

the evening addressed by Ramamurti, Sundaram, R. Ponnappanadar (Old Congress) etc.

More than one thousand workers and employees participated in Mass Dharna programme before the Collectorate at Coimbatore on January 27 to register their protest against price rise and Wage-Freeze. The programme was organised under the joint auspices of CITU, HMP, DMK, Joint Trade Union Council and other organisations. A memorandum with 50,000 signatures was handed over to the District Collector. The workers and employees were addressed by K. Ramani (CITU), Kattoor Gopal (DMK), Chinnadurai (HMP) and Krishnamachari (JTUC).

At the call of the UCTU, a convention against Wage-Freeze was held at Neyveli on February 9 by Trade Unions and other working class organisations of S. Arcot District. The initiative was taken by the District CITU Council. 300 delegates representing unions and organisations of NGO's, Bank, Insurance, P & T, Railways and public and private sector industries participated. The main resolution opposing Wage-Freeze was moved by C. Govindarajan, Secretary State CITU and supported by J. S. Bharathan (NGO's Union), T. Raja Rao (Insurance) and others. Rounding up the discussions, R. Umamath, General Secretary State CITU

called for united struggle against Wege Freeze. Resolutions were also adopted requesting State units of other Central T.U. s for a day's strike against the C. D. Act, appointing a committee to chalk out a programme of district-wide Dharna, etc. A huge procession and public meeting was organised in the evening which was addressed by R. Umamath, J. S. Bharathan and others.

## Andhra Pradesh

As per the decision of the State Convention against Wage Freeze held at Hyderabad on November 3, 1974, a programme of action was organised by LIC employees and other trade unions at Machalipatnam. Demonstrations were held before the offices on 7th and 8th January. A convention against Wage Freeze was held at Machalipatnam on 26th January attended by 312 delegates representing LIC, Railways, State Government employees, Municipality, Press, SEB, P & T etc. A largely attended public meeting was held after the convention. As a part of the programme, a Dharna was organised before the Taluk offices on 23th January and on February 4, a mass deputation of 600 employees of all organisations submitted a memorandum to the Collector.

## Orissa

At the call of the Orissa Convention of Working People against Wage Freeze held on February 4, a Protest Day was observed at Rayagada on February 6 through wearing of badges, postering etc. A public meeting was held at Sugar Factory gate and another at the Railway station, addressed by V.K. Sharma, Brundaban Bakshi Patra and others.

## *The Right to Strike*

We had occasion to discuss this topic earlier, but the present times are such that we would not overdo, if we again emphasised this right of the workers.

The present nakedly bourgeois government led by Mrs. Gandhi seems to have taken a comprehensive and ruthless programme to crush strikes wherever they occur. The method that they adopted to suppress the Railwaymen's strike is too green in the people's memory.

In West Bengal, nowadays, we are witnessing several strikes, the gigantic Jute strike among these. But, though lesser in scope, the FCI workers' strike evokes our admiration for its depth and far-reaching significance. As if in a photo-flash, the strike has discovered the class nature of the present Government in all its naked brutality and despicable meanness. The strike is ironically enough guided by the INTUC, the very organisation that the party of the bourgeoisie, the Congress, set up way back to disrupt the working class forces. But, since its very inception, life has proved more powerful than any scheming by the ruling class. Impelled by circumstances, the INTUC has also led and conducted many a struggle of the working class for better living, as it is now being compelled to do among the FCI workers.

The Government of West Bengal led by Shri S. S. Ray

whom Dange even at the AITUC conference held some time back in Calcutta called a bourgeois, though that bourgeois was invited to inaugurate that Conference—an anomaly to be explained only by the opportunism of the right C.P.I.—has unleashed an unprecedented terror against the FCI workers. Mass arrests are being made, workers have been killed by police firing, they have been lathicharged and no respect shown to the women workers.

The Defence of India Act has once again proved to be an Act for the defence of the interests of the ruling class and the strike has been banned under its provisions.

All this happens because the elementary right of the workers, namely, the right to strike has not yet been recognised.

There is a right of association guaranteed to the citizens, but it has been held by the Courts that right does not comprehend within its scope the right to strike, though there is a body of judicial decisions on the question whether a strike is legal or illegal, justified or unjustified. As early as Punjab National Bank v. Their Workmen (1), it was held by the Labour Appellate Tribunal that "a strike, legal or illegal, does not automatically put an end to (employer-employee) relation". The Tribunal categorically held that "it does not, when the strike is not illegal, whether justifiable or not".

In the case of Bihar Fireworkers and Potteries Workers Union v. Bihar Fireworkers and Potteries Ltd. (2), the same Tribunal held that a strike is not illegal if it does not fall within any of the provisions of sections 22, 23 and 24 of the Industrial Disputes Act, and, in Ramakrishna Iron Foundry v. Their Workers (3), the Appellate Tribunal said, "A strike which is not illegal and is justified, even though hasty, cannot be allowed to be used by the employer as a pretence for injuring an industrial worker who has joined such a strike, for justified strike implies that the employer himself is, to a certain extent, responsible for it, and, moreover a **recognised weapon** in the hands of the workman would be rendered ineffective" (emphasis ours).

In Swadeshi Industries Ltd. v. Workmen (4), the Supreme Court said, "Collective bargaining for securing improvement on matters like...Basic pay, dearness allowance...is the primary object of a trade union and when demands like these are put forward and there-after a strike is resorted to in an attempt to induce the Company to agree to the demands or at least to open negotiations the strike must prima facie be justified". The same Court observed in Chandramalai Estate v. Workmen (5), "...it has to be remembered that strike is a legitimate and sometimes unavoidable weapon in the hands of labour."

It is surprising that the Government have declared the strike of the FCI workers illegal in the face of so many judicial

opinion and observations that strike is a justified weapon in the hands of the workers. Defence of India is merely a handy instrument in the hands of the ruling class to deprive the workers of their human rights.

As against this, in the People's Republic of China which was born two years after independent India, the right to strike has been inscribed among the fundamental rights in its revised Constitution (Chapter 3, Article 28). In his report on the revision of the Constitution, Chang Chün-Chiao has stated, "The dictatorship of the proletariat on the one hand exercises dictatorship over the enemy and on the other hand practises democratic centralism within the ranks of the people. Without ample democracy, it is impossible to have a high degree of centralism, and without a high degree of centralism, it is impossible to build socialism. The draft stipulates that all organs of state shall practise democratic centralism and specifies the democratic rights of citizens, and especially the rights of the fraternal minority nationalities and of women. It also stipulates that the masses shall have the right to speak out freely, air views fully, hold great debates and write big-character posters. Moreover, in accordance with Chairman Mao's proposal, the specification that citizens enjoy freedom to strike has been added to article 28 of the draft..." (6). The draft referred to in the Report was adopted on January 17, 1975 by the Fourth National People's Congress of the Peo-

ple's Republic of China at its first session.

It is noteworthy that the right to strike is thus for the first time guaranteed in a Constitution in the world (including the Soviet Constitution).

There is, no doubt, that a great Programme of genuine democracy is being carried out in China under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, an inspiring example for the toiling people all over the world, and a lesson for the pseudo-socialists of our country.

Will it open the eyes of the Indian Government ?

- (1) (1952) 2 LLJ 648=1953 LAC 1  
 (2) (1953) 1 LLJ 49 (52)  
 (3) (1954) 2 LLJ 372 (374)=1954 LAC 73  
 (4) A. I. R. 1960 SC 1258=(1960) 2 LLJ 78  
 (5) A. I. R. 1960 SC 902=(1960) 2 LLJ 243  
 (6) Documents circulated by Information office of the Chinese Embassy at New Delhi.

**Arun Prakas Chatterjee**

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Dated, February 28, 1975

Sd/- **Monoranjan Roy**  
 Publisher

# **Railwaymen Force The Authorities to Negotiate**

Railwaymen of Adra Division (SER), in pursuance of the programme adopted by the DRAC conducted local demonstration on January 27, culminating in a massive rally on January 28 before the Divisional Supdt's office. The authorities closed all the gates and mobilised police and Youth Congress goondas inside the office with the intention to provoke a clash and beat the workers. The rally remained peaceful but firm and, after two hours, some of the representatives were allowed inside who submitted a memorandum. At their instance the authorities were forced to fix up time for negotiation on February 2 before the workers dispersed. The Staff of the D. S. Office, demonstrated inside the office against closure of the gates. During discussion on February 2, the workers representatives pointed out the fresh penal measures which are being taken to stop all movement. Thus the workers forced a reversal of the policy of the administration which has enthused the workers. Sadhan Gupta, Bar-at-law, addressed a meeting on February 15 at Adra.

### **Meeting and Conventions**

Workers Conventions were held at Chakradharpur and Tata Nagar (SER) on January 20 & 21 respectively. Samar Mnkherjee M. P. addressed the Conventions. He also addressed a workers meeting at Bondamunda (SER). There was a mass meeting at Chakradharpur.

The NCCRS at Dibrugarh (NFR) observed programmes of meetings etc. at different centres for a fortnight.

S. E. Railwaymen's Union (AITUC) held its Working Committee meetings on January 21 & 22 at Khargpur and decided to "plunge into mass mobilisations" and drew up a programme. The General Secretary in his report had however indicated that these rallies should not however be "demonstrations."

The Ministerial Staff Action Committee Bilaspur (SER) held their Conventions on February 11.

As decided earlier, a mass signature campaign was conducted by the Electrical Staff Council (SER) and the same was presented on February 7 to all Divisional Supdts through mass deputation. Annual meeting of CLW Labour Union is scheduled in March '75.

### **Developments in NCCRS**

Repeated demands were made to the Convenor NCCRS for holding meeting of the Action Committee. Samar Mukurjee M.P., sent a letter on February 2, requesting early meeting of NCCRS. The Action Committee met on February 17 and decided to hold the National Convention at Calcutta in the third or fourth week of April, 1975.

### **Developments in LRSA**

The Working Committee of the Loco Running Staff Association, which met at Lucknow on January 21 & 22, decided to hold

their annual meeting at Gauhati (NFR) on April 29, 30 & May 1st and also directed Zonal Organisations to build up movement against fresh attacks.

The LRSA (NER) had started its movement from the end of January and the LRSA (ER) is scheduled to start movement from March 1st. The LRSA (SER) is holding their Executive meeting at Nagpur on February 14 to decide their programme. The NFR LRSA is also scheduled to hold its CFC meeting on February 21 & 22.

M.R. Sabapathy, President of the LRSA, however in a letter to P.K. Barua differed with the decision and asked for fresh meeting in March to decide upon the venue of the annual meeting.

### **Another verdict against dismissal.**

The Division Bench of Kerala High Court (Justices P. Balakrishna Eradi and George Vadakkal) has dealt another blow to the policy of victimisation, by turning down the appeal preferred by the Railway authorities against the Single Bench judgement setting aside the order of removal of 25 casual workers of Cannanore Section. It has been made clear that these workers should be taken back to duty and paid all the wages and also that all casual workers who have completed 4 months service are entitled to all benefits and rights enjoyed by temporary Railway workers.

### **Appeal Hearing in Calcutta High Court**

Hearing on the appeal of the railway authorities against the

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# Water Transport Workers' Federation Formed

A new dimension was added to the all-India militant movement of Port & Dock workers and Seamen, when an All-India Convention decided to form the Water Transport Workers' Federation of India with the clarion call of "Unity and Struggle".

The fighting mood displayed by Port & Dock workers of eight major ports and Haldia during the recent glorious 4 day strike, despite imposition of ban on the strike under DIR and emergency, and the betrayal and surrender of their interests by leadership of the three existing Federations led by INTUC, HMS and AITUC, created a new urge for building up a militant leadership of the Port & Dock workers and Seamen of India on the basis of broadest possible unity. It was in this background that the All-India Convention of Port & Dock workers and Seamen was held in Calcutta from 12th to 14th February last under the auspices of the Port & Dock Workers and Seamen's Co-ordinating Committee.

Attended by 217 delegates and observers representing major and minor ports and Seamen in the country, the convention was inaugurated by B. T. Ranadive, President CITU. A five-member presidium conducted the deliberations of the convention.

### Build up Unity, Defeat Opportunist and Disruptive Influences

While inaugurating the convention, B. T. Ranadive congratulated the workers on the

unity and solidarity demonstrated during the recent strike and highlighted the role played by the CITU Unions and workers to strengthen unity during the strike.

While criticising the betrayal and surrender by the leadership of the three Federations, Ranadive said, "The workers must realise why the leadership betrayed in this irresponsible way. The reformist and revisionist leaders believe in class collaboration. The majority of them belong to the Congress Party. They carry on the trade union activity in a manner which suits the interests of the Government and their Party. To keep the workers' faith in them they enacted a strike making the workers believe that they were fighters and then accepted the Government's terms."

While demanding need-based wage for Port & Dock workers, he said, "The Port Trust authorities have the capacity to pay higher wages. The handling of cargo in the Ports has been increasing by leaps and bounds... Traffic handled at major ports rose from 40 million tonnes in 1960-61 to 55 million tonnes in 1968-69 and was expected to be 65 million tonnes in 1973-74, an increase of 60 per cent... But the workers were denied the minimum concessions because the Port authorities in collusion with the vested interests kept the port service charges at a low level."

Referring to the inhuman

exploitation of Seamen, Ranadive condemned the triple exploitation of Indian seamen by the Indian shipping interests, the foreign ship-owners and the Government and said, "Under the British rule, the Indian seamen were singled out for discriminatory treatment as the workers of an enslaved country. There was racial discrimination in treatment, in wages, in economic condition." Pointing out that things have not changed much after independence, he added, "The humiliating conditions of work imposed on them shows that the old racial discrimination against Indians still continues. The wage scale on Indian ships is far below the International standard."

Concluding his address, Ranadive called upon the delegates to "build strong unions and work for the unity of the entire Port and Dock Workers and Seamen. Our Unions must continue to wage the struggle for unity and see that the united strength of the workers is pitted against the designs of the employers and the Government, that the opportunist and disruptive influences are overcome by the enlarged class consciousness of the working class."

The convention was greeted by Krishanpada Ghosh, Chairman of the Reception Committee, M. K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU, Vimal Ranadive, Secretary AIPWF, Bimal Chatterjee,

Secretary West Bengal CITU, Dr. Naresh Banerjee (PRC), Shanti Ghatak, Secretary of Metal & Engineering Workers' Federation and others. Messages greeting the Convention were also received from George Fernandes, Convener UCTU, Sujit Das, General Secretary AIRTWF, N. Vasudevan, Hinterland Seamen's Union and others.

### Main Report

Gerald Pereira, Convener of the Co-ordinating Committee, presented the report covering a summary of events and struggles in the Water Transport industry, especially in the Port & Dock said, since the 11-day general strike in 1958. The report dealt in detail with the issues facing the Port & Dock workers and Seamen. In spite of the Wage Board recommendations having come to an end on 31st December, 1973 no new Bi-partite Wage Negotiating Machinery has been set up and the Government refuses to give any relief to the workers. Only last year, the bonus of Port & Dock workers has been cut down to the minimum of 8.33 per cent and the reformist leadership did not even protest against it. Along with the other sections of the working class, Port & Dock workers and Seamen are to-day the victims of serious erosion of their real wages, of the Wage Freeze policy of the Government. The immediate demands of the water transport workers is there-

fore, revision of pay structure, need-based minimum wage, higher quantum of bonus, total decasualisation etc. They also totally oppose mechanisation and automation which has led to serious unemployment among water transport workers.

The report emphasised "the need for a militant Federation which will work consistently to break the isolation of Waterfront Workers and bring them in the mainstream of the united Working Class struggle in the country."

Thirtynine delegates participated in the discussions after which the report was adopted unanimously.

The Convention adopted a number of resolutions on T. U. and democratic rights, against Wage Freeze, in support of striking Jute workers, on unemployment, on nationalisation of Shipping and ancillary industries, against mechanisation and automation, etc.

After reviewing the entire situation, the Convention decided to form a new militant Federation — "Water-Transport Workers' Federation of India" to unite the Port & Dock workers and Seamen and bring them on a common platform for joint action. A 23-member Working Committee of the Federation was elected with Gerald Pereira as President and Nilmony Ghosh as General Secretary.

The Convention ended in a huge mass rally on February 14 which was addressed by Jyoti Basu, Vice-President CITU, Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary West Bengal CITU, Gerald Pereira, Krishnapada Ghosh, Nilmony Ghosh and others. In his address, Jyoti Basu greeted the formation of the new Federation and called upon the Port & Dock Workers and Seamen to join this common platform and build a powerful unity to win their legitimate demands.

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## Forge Ahead For Struggles

# Call Given By A.I. Conference of Beedi & Cigar Workers

**T**HE All India Beedi and Cigar Workers Conference was held at Vellore in Tamilnadu on the 1st and 2nd February 1975 under the auspices of the CITU. 210 delegates from 8 States attended the Conference, majority being from Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and West Bengal.

The Conference started in the morning of February 1 with the hoisting of the CITU flag by Mohammed Ismail M.P. and a welcoming speech by R. Umanath, President of the Reception Committee and Secretary of Tamilnadu CITU. A presidium composed of Md. Ismail, Surya Narayan Rao, P.V. Kutty and Vimal Ranadive conducted the proceedings.

### Unbearable Conditions

While inaugurating the Conference, B.T. Ranadive, President CITU, congratulated the workers for their united struggles in Kerala, Tamilnadu and Karnataka which ultimately resulted in achieving some of their demands. He brought out the horrible conditions of the Beedi workers by quoting facts and figures from reports of several commissions and committees appointed by the Government from time to time. He said "What Marx described about the domestic industry in Britain applies in full to the Beedi industry of our country. The lack of space, ventilation and free air, low wages and

exploitation of women and children have been described in early official reports and the evils continue today".

### Miserable Wages

He continued, "thanks to the collous attitude of the Congress Government the wages of the Beedi workers have been kept miserably low. The minimum Wages Act had empowered the Government to fix wages from time to time but no Government, Central or State, has discharged its job to protect the workers against the sweated labour. "He said, "the misery of beedi workers can be imagined in the background of the continuing rise in prices and cost of living index".

### Discrimination against Women Workers

"The total number of Beedi workers in India are estimated to be 20 lakhs and only 2 lakhs are covered under the Factory Act, he said "the vast mass of workers, consisting mostly of women is being exploited on this miserable wage rate of Rs. 2/- to 3/-". Ranadive stressed the need of the Trade Union movement to take up the question of discrimination against women in regard to wages and said, "it must be taken as a serious challenge to our movement. It violates the basic principle of equal wage for equal work and enables the employers to

lower the wages of all sections. Taking advantage of the fact that a large number of workers are home workers and mostly women the employers impose unfair and differential rates on them". He charged the Government of India for encouraging this discrimination, though it is a signatory to the convention of the ILO. The Act which was passed 8 years back, is not implemented.

While concluding his speech, he explained how an increasing number of workers are gathering under CITU Flag, in spite of tremendous repression in West Bengal, Kerala and other States by the Congress rulers, and gave a stirring call to the delegates to organise themselves and forge ahead in the struggle for winning their demands.

### Main Report

C. Kannan, submitted a report on behalf of CITU detailing the various struggles waged by the Beedi workers, in different parts of the country. He mentioned particularly the successful General Strikes in South Zone for their demands and the achievements.

On account of the campaigns the Beedi and Cigar Act has been implemented in Karnataka and Kerala and the workers are getting benefit of Bonus and Festival holidays. The report outlined the details of the struggles and the 29th January, General Strike in West Bengal, which has succeeded in uniting and building the groundwork for organising the Beedi warkers in other States.

During the discussions, 17 delegates participated and

brought out important aspects of the industry, including the system of middlemen and denial of benefits to the workers. The delegates stressed the need of an All India Organisation to fight the common demands in all the States unitedly. After the discussion the conference adopted the report, Charter the Demands and programme of action for the future. It was decided to :—

1) Observe 17th March 1975 as "Demands day" throughout India by holding demonstrations before the Central and State Govern-

ments, distributing handbills etc. to popularise the demands.

2) A deputation on behalf of the Conference should meet the Union Labour Minister in the last week of March 1975.

3) A day should be fixed for the national one day strike.

From the point of view of vast number of workers employed in the industry, the 40 crores of Rupees tax on Tobacco the Central Government collects, and the domestic nature of the industry,

it was decided to have a committee consisting of four members to study the conditions in the Beedi and Cigar industry in different States and report back within 6 months. A call was given from the conference to collect funds from each worker.

### All India Committee Formed

After adopting resolutions on equal pay for equal work, in support of Jute Workers strike in West Bengal, on Repression on Railway Workers, against wage-freeze, on Vietnam and Cambodia etc., an All India Committee of Beedi and Cigar Workers was elected. C. Kannan of Kerala was unanimously elected as Secretary. The Conference also authorised Mohammed Ismail M.P., to approach other trade union centres to negotiate for a united country-wide Joint Action.

B. T. Randive, in his concluding speech, appealed to the delegates to resist the attempts of the capitalists and the landlords to crush movements, to remove the basic weakness from Trade Union movement and march forward along with the peasantry to overthrow the Congress rule.

The Conference concluded with a huge procession and a public meeting on 2nd February at Vellore town. The meeting was addressed by B. T. Ranadive, Md. Ismail, Surya Narayan Rao, C. Kannan, Vimala Ranadive, Pappa Umanath, Chandra Roy and others.

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## First Conference Of Orissa CITU

**T**HE first Conference of the CITU-affiliated Unions in Orissa was held at Rourkella from 17th to 19th January (partially reported in February, 1975 issue of the Working Class).

B.T. Ranadive, President CITU inaugurated the Conference and hoisted the CITU flag. A five-member presidium conducted the proceedings of the conference which was attended by delegates from 8 districts working in mines, steel, engineering, transport and various other industries.

Sivaji Patnaik, Convenner of the Preparatory Committee placed, the report on the activities of CITU unions in Orissa, the issues facing the working class and toiling people and the weaknesses which have to be overcome. The report was adopted after two days' of discussions.

The Conference adopted resolutions on the Jute Workers' strike, struggle of Bihar doctors and Port and Dock workers, Bihar movement, Wage Freeze, Price Rise, Unemployment, Trade Union and democratic rights, victimisation of Railway workers, Chile, Vietnam, Sikim, etc. Resolutions were also adopted in support of struggles of Central and State Government employees, Transport workers, workers of Tensa mine, contract workers, etc.

The Conference elected a 25-member State Committee with Ajeya Rout as Secretary.

The open session of the Conference was attended by over 5000 workers, employees, youth and students and addressed by B.T. Ranadive, Samar Mukherjee M.P., Sivaji Patnaik and other leaders.

## Second Conference Of Assam State CITU

**T**HE Second Conference of the Assam State Committee of CITU was held at Dhubri, headquarter of Goalpara district, from 1st to 3rd February, 1975. Although the working class is a small force in this district, the long history of struggle of the Railway workers of Bongaigaon and Dingtala and of the workers of the foreign-owned Match factory in Dhubri provided a fitting background for the Conference.

Monoranjan Roy, Secretary CITU inaugurated the Conference which was presided over by Dr. D. P. Barua, sitting

### Railwaymen

(From Page 9)

judgement of Justice A.K. Mukherjee setting aside orders of removal under 14 (ii) in 24 Cases involving 212 workers, has started in the Division Bench from January 20 and is still continuing. Shri R. C. Deb, Shri Somenath Chatterjee M.P. and Shri Sadhan Gupta led the defence on behalf of victimised railwaymen in such a thorough manner that not only the railwaymen but also many Advocates of Calcutta Bar flocked the Court room to hear their masterly arguments. The hearing is still continuing.

The authorities however are continuing its attacks. While issuing orders of reinstatement of 60 workers in NFR, the General Manager imposed penalties of stoppage of increment, reversion and penal transfers.

President of the State CITU. Jyoti Basu, Vice-President of CITU attended the Conference and guided its deliberations.

The Conference was attended by 75 delegates and 43 observers from all parts of the State.

The Conference started with the hoisting of the red flag by Achintya Bhattacharya. Paying homage to the martyrs' he urged upon the working class to take up the cause of the peasantry without which worker-peasant alliance can not be built up and the working class can not perform its basic task.

While inaugurating the Conference, Monoranjan Roy, Secretary CITU outlined the glowing record of the CITU in building up working class unity and united action and urged upon the delegates to work hard to build up worker-peasant alliance. He also pointed out the urgent need of building up T.U. movement among half a million tea workers of Assam

The Conference was greeted by J. Bhattacharya (JCTU), D. Bhowmick (N. E. Regional Committee of the Working People Against Wage-Freeze) and U. Burman (SFI). Messages of greeting were also received from B. T. Randive, President CITU, M. K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU, Vimal Ranadive, Secretary AIPWF and the State Committees of Orissa and Goa.

Amal Ghosh Dastidar, Secretary of the State CITU presented the report of the State Committee. While noting the magnificent struggles of the workers and employees, Railwaymen,

State and Central Government employees, Jute and Textile workers and other sections of toiling people in Assam, the report underlined the weaknesses of the State CITU and called for organising CITU's work in the bigger industries including Plantations etc. A number of delegates participated in the discussion after which the Report was adopted.

The Conference adopted a number of resolutions on current issues before the working class, viz. Wage-Freeze, Railwaymen's struggle, problems of tea workers and agricultural workers, food crisis and high prices, famine conditions in Dhubri, atrocities and repression on tribals etc.

A seminar on T.U. Problems and Tasks was held on the concluding day. It was attended by about 150 Trade Union workers and others. Addressing the seminar, Jyoti Basu gave a long report on the problems and tasks of militant trade union movement to-day.

The Open Session of the Conference held on February 2, saw the biggest-ever rally at Dhubri attended by thousands of toiling people from all parts of the district including tribal youths and women who converged on Dhubri in colourful processions. Addressing the rally, Jyoti Basu pointed out the famine conditions in the countryside, a result of Congress misrule, and called upon the working class to be ready to fight this inhuman oppression and misery by a general strike if necessary. Monoranjan Roy and others also addressed the rally presided over by Nurul Huda.

The Conference elected a new Committee with S. Hazarika as President and A. Ghosh Dastidar as Secretary.

# NEWSLETTERS

## Kerala

### United Strike By NGO's & Teachers

Overwhelming majority of Government employees and teachers of Kerala started their indefinite strike from 5th February last, defying mass arrests and black Acts, paralysing work in Government offices and educational institutions in the State.

The strike was led by the United Action Council comprising of 50 mass organisations of State Government employees and teachers. The convenors of the Action Council are E. Padmanabhan, President, N. G. O. Union and K. Karunakaran Pillai, General Secretary of N. G. O. Association.

The strike was in support of two demands. Earlier rules provided that the employees could take loans from their P. F. once in six months and the employees could take loans upto the limit of the amounts lying to the credit of their PF accounts. The Government recently introduced amendments unilaterally to the effect that loans could be taken only once in a year and as per the new formula evolved, only an insignificant amount could be taken as loan. Consequent to the employees' decision to go on strike, the Government came forward with some concessions in this matter, but they were not prepared to accept the demands of the employ-

ees to have the earlier conditions restored.

The second demand is increase in D. A. The State Government had earlier assured that consequent upon the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission, accepted by the Central Government, they would also give the same benefit to their employees. The principle accepted was to increase D. A. commensurate with the increase in CLI by every eight points. In accordance with this principle the employees are entitled to 8 instalments of increases in D. A. Although the Government recently granted two instalments the employees were deprived of 11 months arrears.

1600 employees and teachers were arrested, many of them under DIR. A good number of them were beaten up in police lock-up denied bail and kept in remand. The Government also did not allow use of loudspeakers for meetings.

The strike was called off on 12th February.

### Other Struggles

Workers employed by Tarapore Construction Co. in the Cochin Shipyard Construction resorted to a lightning strike on 30th January protesting against the non settlement of their demands.

Saw mill workers of 150 saw mills in Quilon under the leadership of the CITU went on an

indefinite strike from 29th January demanding implementation of minimum wages in saw mills industry.

Workers employed in earthwork in Manali—Pazhayi area resorted to a one-day strike on 8th February demanding increase in wages, time fixation, etc.

Private bus transport workers of Trichur-Ernakulam districts resorted to a one-day strike on 11th February in protest against the nationalisation of bus routes on unscientific lines.

300 employees of Kerala State Financial Enterprises (a Govt. of Kerala institution) resorted to an indefinite strike from 10th February demanding revision of salary, variable DA etc. The strike is being conducted under the joint auspices of Staff Association and Employees' Association.

State Transport services throughout the State were brought to a standstill on 15th February as the transport workers went on an indefinite strike in protest against the beating up of transport workers by Probation Sub-inspectors at Malappuram. The workers were demanding arrest and suspension of the police officers responsible.

2,000 workers of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Thumba (Trivandrum Dist.) struck work on 20th January in protest against the unprovoked beating up of the local people by the Industrial Security Force of ISRO.

The Kerala High Court ordered the reinstatement of N.P

Padmanabhan, Kerala Circle Secretary of All India Postal Employees' Union, Class III, in a judgement given on 13th February. Com. Padmanabhan was dismissed from service on the "charge" of inciting fellow workers to participate in the September 19, 1968 strike. He had filed a writ against this dismissal.

The judgement stated that it was unfortunate that an employee was dismissed from service on a charge of participating in Trade Union activities.

Following the judgement of the Division Bench of the Kerala High Court, the Rly. authorities have issued orders for the reinstatement of 90 out of 122 dismissed employees from various departments in Cochin, Ernakulam, etc. with full wages and other benefits with retrospective effect.

## Tamil Nadu

Led by Tamil Nadu Electricity Workers Unions (CITU), workmen in Madurai and Ramnad districts were on Dharna on 22nd January demanding Rs. 350/- at 200 points and Rs. 1.75 per point of rise in price index.

Ten thousand handloom workers went on strike on 21st January at Baramakudi demanding Ration at reasonable prices and condemning cut in their wages.

Thousands demonstrated before State and Central Government Offices throughout Tamil Nadu at the call of CPI (M),

CITU, KISHAN SABHA, DYF, Democratic Women's Organisation, demanding immediate relief measures in draught-affected areas in the State.

900 workers of Gomathi Mill, Veeranallur near Madurai are on strike from 6th January demanding increased amount as advance.

Sugar Mill workers' strike from 21st December in Tamil Nadu, demanding increased D.A., still continues.

2 Lakhs plantation workers at Kovai Dist. have decided to go on strike in February demanding interim relief. An Action Committee with CITU, AITUC and other union representatives is leading the workmen in their struggle.

Led by CITU and ADMK labour call, more than 4000 workers of the State Transport demonstrated before State Government head-quarters at Madras on January 25 demanding Rs. 350/- at 200 points and Rs. 1.75 per point of rise in price index.

450 contract labourers at Basin Bridge power house are on strike from January 30, demanding removal of automation affecting them and regular employment.

Led by CITU, State Transport workers of Kanya Kumari District are on hunger strike from January 27, 1975 condemning vindictive policy of the administration.

Led by CITU, workers of the State Transport at Madurai Dist. won their demand of revision of Standing Order and other demands.

## Annual General Meeting Of Forward Seamen's Union Held

The fifth Annual General Meeting of forward Seamen's Union (CITU) was held on January 29 last at Kidderpore, Calcutta. M.A. Sayeed, President of the Union presided and Ashutosh Banerjee, placed his report on the activities of the union and the issue confronting the Seamen of Bombay and Calcutta. After discussions, the report was adopted unanimously.

Krishnapada Ghosh, Vice-President CITU and M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU greeted the members and stressed on building up broad-based unity. The meeting was also greeted by Nilmony Ghosh (Dock Shramik Association), Hemlal Chatterjee (Calcutta Port & Shore Mazdoor Union), Amal Ghosh (Dock Labour Board Employees Association) and Safiur Rahman (Babcock & Wilcox Employees' Union).

Resolutions were adopted in support of Jute workers' struggle, restoration of T.U. and democratic rights, against Wage Freeze and repression of Indian Seamen, demanding amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act etc. The meeting elected a new Executive with M.A. Sayeed as President and Ashutosh Banerjee as General Secretary.

## Reports from Unions

### Bhilai Meeting addressed by Comrade Joyti Basu

More than 6000 workers and employees of Bhilai Steel Plant attended a public meeting held at Bhilai on 12th February under the auspices of Hindusthan Steel Employees Union (CITU). The meeting was addressed by Jyoti Basu and Suhrid Mullick Choudhury, Vice-Presidents of CITU and other leaders. Com. Bhichaiah, Vice-President of the Union and P. K. Moitra moved two resolutions on the Steel workers demands.

Addressing the meeting, Jyoti Basu called upon the workers to build up movement among workers of others industries in the area and carry on a united fight irrespective of affiliations which alone can force Steel management and Government to end their anti-worker policies. CITU publications worth Rs. 450 were sold during the meeting.

### Barsua Mine Workers Re-instated

In August, 1972, sixteen workers of Barsua Iron Mines (M.P.)—all leading activists of the United Mines Mazdoor Union (CITU), were dismissed from service by the Hindusthan Steel Management on flimsy grounds in order to crush the activities of the Union. After a long and bitter struggle led by the CITU, the workers compelled the Steel management to reinstate all the 16 workers on February 12 last. But the management is still continuing its anti-Union policy and, by the

same order, it transferred all the reinstated workers along with the Vice-President and General Secretary of the Union to Rourkella. The workers have protested against the transfer order and are determined to continue the struggle.

### 200 Burshane Employees Retrenched

As the result of a conspiracy between Cambata Industries, sole agent of Burshane gas in greater Bombay, and Diana Gas Service owned by the son of V. P. Naik, former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, 200 employees of Cambata Industries were illegally and suddenly thrown out of employment from January 1 last with the help of Police. Through a clandestine agreement, Cambata Industries made over their business to Diana Gas Service at a huge profit and threw the workers to the wolves. The conspiracy started precisely when the workers organised themselves under the General Labour Union (Red Flag) and raised their demands for wage scales etc. which is pending before a Tribunal. Although the Union repeatedly represented the case of the retrenched workers to the State Labour Minister Tidke and the Labour Commissioner, both of them pleaded helplessness presumably because the son of the Chief Minister was involved.

### Seven CITU Workers Sentenced to Life Imprisonment

During the General Strike and Hartal of 2nd March, 1972

the workers of J. K. Synthetics, Kota were attacked by hired goondas of the management while they were holding a gate meeting. Although the goondas were armed with lethal weapons, the workers resisted valiantly and many of them received serious injuries. The goondas fled away and later one of their leaders died in hospital. Instead of taking steps against the goondas and the management, the Government started a murder case against the workers which resulted in this sentence. The sentenced workers include the General Secretary and several Working Committee members of J.K. Synthetics Mazdoor Union (CITU). The Calcutta State Transport Employees Union (CITU) has contributed Rs. 100 for the legal defence of these workers.

### Indore Workers on Struggle

Led by the Laghu Udyog Kamghar Union (CITU), workers of Raj Traders India are on continuous struggle since December 16, 1974 in support of their demands for higher wages, D.A., gratuity, leave etc.

### Anti-Wage Freeze Convention in Jamnagar.

A Convention of Working People against Wage Freeze was held in Jamnagar (Gujarat) on February 8 last at the initiative of the United Labour Front, central organisation of Trade Unions in Jamnagar. More than 400 delegates representing 72 unions of Central and State Govt. employees, Banks, LIC, municipality, Electricity Board, Transport and industrial workers and teachers attended. Resolutions were adopted at the Convention condemning the Wage freeze measures and demanding their withdrawal.

**Contribution to Victimisation  
Fighting Fund for Electricity  
Workers.**

The Central Organisation of Tamilnadu Electricity Workers has donated a total amount of Rs. 800 towards the Victimisation Fighting Fund for Haryana and Punjab Electricity Workers.

**SEB Workers of Rajkot on  
Struggle**

Protesting against victimisation of Union workers and denial of seniority, Medical Leave etc. by two local officers, workers and employees of Gujarat State Electricity Board at Rajkot are carrying on an agitation for more than 3 months under the leadership of Shri Vidhyut Kamdar Sangh. About 950 employees observed token fast on the first day, about 250 on the second day. Moreover, 10 workers are observing token fast every day. A memorandum has been submitted to Shri H.C. Sarin, Adviser to the Governor and other Trade Unions have been requested to form a Co-ordination Committee to unitedly fight this offensive.

**Joint Trade Union Morcha in  
Bombay**

Led by the Trade Union Joint Action Committee composed of the CITU, HMP, and Sarva Shramik Sangh, over 5000 workers took out a morcha from Azad Maidan to the Secretariat, Bombay on February 20 last to press their demands for need-based minimum wage and 5-day week. The AITUC, which had so long been a member of the Action Committee, did not participate in this programme.

**Consumer Price Index Numbers**

(Industrial Workers/1960=100)

State/Centre	1974			State/Centre	1974		
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.		Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>				<b>Orissa</b>			
Gudur	350	347	348	Barbil	305	308	301
Guntur	345	340	348	Sambalpur	343	343	340
Hyderabad	316	316	321	<b>Punjab</b>			
<b>Assam</b>				Amritsar	335	336	336
Digboi	337	335	328	<b>Rajasthan</b>			
Doom Dooma	361	303	289	Ajmer	346	337	336
Labac	342	359	315	Jaipur	356	349	344
Mariani	338	309	315	<b>Tamilnadu</b>			
Rangapara	325	294	288	Coimbatore	319	326	329
<b>Bihar</b>				Coonoor	365	353	315
Jamshedpur	336	323	307	Madras	311	319	323
Jharia	357	348	330	Madurai	360	356	348
Kodarma	429	416	378	<b>U. P.</b>			
Monghyr	388	366	345	Kanpur	347	347	339
Noamundi	359	320	324	Saharanpur	355	350	359
<b>Gujarat</b>				Varanasi	395	400	395
Ahmedabad	322	321	317	<b>West Bengal</b>			
Bhavnagar	345	344	342	Asansol	337	329	319
<b>Haryana</b>				Calcutta	314	308	297
Yamunanagar	342	339	341	Darjeeling	295	281	263
<b>J &amp; K</b>				Howrah	324	317	307
Srinagar	253	257	252	Jalpaiguri	303	269	251
<b>Karnataka</b>				Raniganj	357	338	324
Ammathi	345	326	324	<b>Delhi</b>			
Bangalore	326	328	330	350	344	342	
Chikmagalur	330	321	333	<b>Other Centres*</b>			
Kolar G. F.	328	330	335	Berhampur ('49)	463	453	450
<b>Kerala</b>				Cuttack (1949)	395	394	376
Alleppey	373	378	390	Jabalpur (1949)	436	447	436
Alwaye	344	354	369	Beawar ('51-'52)	389	378	379
Mundakayam	338	347	348	Tripura (1961)	275	265	258
<b>M. P.</b>				H. P. (1965)	244	244	244
Balaghat	378	358	360	Goa (1966)	209	209	207
Bhopal	338	329	330	Bhilai (1966)	214	216	209
Gwalior	369	367	350	Kothagudam('66)	209	211	215
Indore	370	364	360	<b>All India</b> ('49) 407 402 396			
<b>Maharashtra</b>				do ('60) 335 331 326			
Bombay	297	301	298	* Figures in bracket indicate base year.			
Nagpur	314	327	321	(Labour Bureau, Simla)			
Sholapur	338	336	335				

## Third Conference Of Rajasthan CITU

**T**HIRD Conference of Rajasthan State Committee of CITU held at Bharatpur on 14th to 16th February highlighted a remarkable advance made by the CITU in the State. At the foundation Conference of the CITU 29 unions with 8559 members participated, but to day the CITU claims in Rajasthan about 80 unions with over 22500 membership.

Three hundred and forty five delegates and one hundred forty three observers participated in the Conference. Among the delegates 20 were women while overwhelming majority of the delegates were below 30 years of age.

The CITU State Committee rightly selected Bharatpur as a venue of the Conference because it was in this town that 3 SIMCO workers laid down their lives in August last year in the struggle against wage freeze. The Bharatpur workers constructed a permanent memorial of these martyrs near the factory. When all the delegates and observers assembled at the memorial to pay their homage to the martyrs, the workers of SIMCO also struck work and joined them. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU was present on the occasion. Brother of one of the martyrs was overwhelmed at the sight.

After the flag hoisting Mukut Behari Lal Goyal, Chairman Reception Committee welcomed the delegates and Mohan Punamia, President Rajasthan State Committee of

CITU delivered his Presidential Address. In his speech he reviewed the recent struggles in Rajasthan and pointed out growing role played by the CITU during these struggles. He called upon the delegates to strengthen the CITU so that the struggles can be better led and guided.

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU in his speech criticised the policies of the Government which were responsible for the deepening economic crisis in the country. He gave facts to show how the workers were swindled with the help of fraudulent Price index and the Labour Bureau of the Government was directly involved in manipulations. Referring to the problem of unemployment he pointed out how the alarming unemployment was the direct result of the measures taken by the Government and demanded right to work to be considered as a fundamental right in the Constitution or payment of relief to the jobless. He warned the working class against the pernicious theory of "jobs for sons of the soil" which was being advanced to disrupt the T.U. movement.

Ranadive pointed out how growing unity is emerging all over the country which was reflected during the recent all India Railway strike and campaign against wage freeze. He then referred to the growing repression faced by the trade union and democratic movement all over the country and called upon the working class to unitedly resist it.

He emphasised the need for worker-peasant alliance to defeat the policies of the Government which are hitting hard both these toiling sections. It was through such a unity that the democratic movement in our country could victoriously march towards Socialism.

Durgadas Shirali, General Secretary, Rajasthan State Committee of CITU in his Report gave a review of activities of the CITU in the State since the Second Conference and pointed out how the policy of unity and struggle is becoming popular among the mass of workers. He further noted how CITU is developing in new centres and more and more sections of workers are getting attracted towards the line of CITU.

Fifty two delegates participated during the discussion on the Report. In their speeches the delegates condemned the life imprisonment sentences served on 7 workers of Kota. They also narrated how growing attacks by anti-social elements during strike struggles have become a matter of common occurrence in Rajasthan. Some of the CITU activists have been involved in 20-30 cases and defending the comrades have become a major problem in many centres.

Some delegates reported how Birla Management of SIMCO made attempts to frustrate the Conference. Casual leave was denied to delegates participating in the Conference. Huge bribes were offered to workers to give up CITU work. On the first

day of the Conference some hirelings of the management surrounded the Conference and shouted slogans to intimidate the workers. On the last day of the Conference special "cultural programmes" were organised by Birlas to divert the workers from the rally.

One worker who split away from the CITU and was made to form a rival union later on understood the game of the management and joined the Conference. He spoke about his experiences while speaking on the Report. Many speakers criticised the despicable role of the AITUC which often joined the management to disrupt the working class actions. Similar attacks were made by speakers against INTUC leaders. Delegates also pointed out how despite opposition of INTUC and AITUC leadership united struggles were growing all over the State. They also noted that the CITU did not leave a single opportunity to join hands with workers fighting under the leadership of other organisations. In the Coca-Cola workers struggle the INTUC union requested the CITU for help and it was given in full measure.

Two women delegates who spoke narrated their experience and strongly criticised the role of INTUC leaders.

The report of General Secretary was adopted after amendments.

Punamia moved a resolution of campaign in which it was decided to organise Rajasthan Bandh

to protest against repression on workers, students, peasants, press correspondents and others along with some working class demtnds. It also decided to open negotiations with other trade unions to fix a common date for the purpose. By a separate resolution it was decided to raise Rs. one lakh by May next to defend the workers in Court cases and give relief to families of victimised workers. It was also meant to help the appeal cases of Kota comrades. The proposal was enthusiastically welcomed by the delegates and some fraternal unions including an affiliate of AIEA made handsome contribution on the spot and promised to contribute more in future.

The delegates collected Rs. 501 during the Conference and handed over the money to B.T. Ranadive for forwarding to Orissa State Committee of CITU to rebuild the office burnt by the goondas recently.

The Conference passed a number of resolutions including on Rs. 250 as minimum wage, demands of mine workers, greeting jute workers in Bengal, supporting the struggle of Shardul Textile workers and others. The conference also decided to increase the levy on the union in view of the growing expenditure of the State Committee.

The Conference elected a new State Committee including Mohan Punamia as President and Durgadas Shirali as General Secretary. The Committee includes 2 women workers and one representative of agricultural workers.

A colourful procession was taken out after the Conference which paraded the main streets of the town and culminated in a rally which was addressed among others by B.T. Ranadive, Mohan Punamia and Dhanda.

## HEROIC JUTE STRIKE

(Contd. From page 3)

State Government, the INTUC and others brought disruption in the ranks of the jute workers and thus betrayed their interests. The CITU and five other trade unions — the two UTUCs, T.U.C.C., HMP and HMS— decided to continue the strike which actually continued for two more days. But in a meeting of six Central Trade Unions (CITU and others) held on February 22, it was decided unanimously to call off the strike from February 23rd after reviewing the situation. The meeting noted with deep indignation that after the strike was called off by INTUC and others, the Government had become more brutal and used police force to break the strike in the interest of IJMA. The six trade unions appealed to the workers to strengthen their unity and to prepare themselves for another struggle in no distant future.

The jute workers' heroic battle has shown on the one hand the tenacity and determination of the workers to fight protracted battle and, on the other, it has further exposed the shameless role of the Congress Government in support of the jute monopolists against the interests of the workers and the nation.