

THE WORKING CLASS



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Special ! 8-Page Supplement On Repression In West Bengal

Editorial Board

B. T. Ranadive (Chairman)
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The National Council Of Trade Unions

WHAT IT MEANS TO THE WORKERS

B. T. Ranadive, President of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions issued the following statement to the Press on May 23 :

It is no surprise that the Labour Minister describes the formation of a National Council of the All India Trade Union Congress, Indian National Trade Union Congress and the Hind Mazdoor Sabha as a historic agreement. He has every reason to be satisfied over it because he has been the main inspirer and guide of the negotiations that were taking place to bring the three organisations together. The purpose of Mr. Khadiolkar was to forge an instrument which will enable the Government to impose its labour policy on the working class and at the same time, provide a facade of labour support to all its measures.

The coming together of these three organisations is nothing short of an alliance of the Government and the pro-Government parties on the T. U. front. It is not a combination to resist the anti-working class policies of the Government but one to give prestige to the measures which the Government is planing against the working class and at the same time divide the T.U. movement and facilitate the task of the administration to suppress the left T. Us. The basis of this unity is made quite clear by Mr. Khadiolkar. It is to lend support to the reactionary recommendations of the National Labour Commission which seek to impose arbitration on the workers and to eliminate the right to strike. Another reactionary proposal is to reject ballot as the basis of trade union recognition and have it decided through verification by a High Court Judge. The basic right of the workers to decide who should represent them in the vital negotiations with the employers is being done away with by the Government and the three central organisations have shamelessly decided to sell it. It is this that is the basis of the so-called unity of the three organisations.

The three organisations are signing a pact with the help of the Labour Minister and in support of Government's policies when the Government has unleashed widespread terror in West Bengal against the T. U. movement and

**GREETINGS ON THE OCCASION OF
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virtually illegalised a large number of militant T. Us. Occupation of T. U. offices by gangsters, murders of T. U. leaders, forcible contributions from the workers and victimisation of militant T. U. leaders constitute the order of the day in West Bengal under the Congress rule. Instead of protesting against this monstrosity, joining hands with the other militant T. Us to defeat this offensive of the Government, the three organisations have decided to come together to lend their support to Government policies and split the ranks of the workers. The agreement is no doubt historic because very rarely in Indian T. U. history was there such a blatant betrayal of T. U. rights by trade union leaders to suit the

convenience of the ruling party and curry favour with it. The Right Communist leaders who are shooting down workers in Kerala in partnership with the ruling party have no scruples in surrendering the rights of the working class all over India.

The CITU warns the Government that this method of creating fake support through subservient organisations will not deceive the workers and will not contribute to industrial peace. It has invariably failed where it has tried to bypass the real representatives of the workers and impose agreements through its own nominees. The CITU warns the workers that this formation of so-called National Council of the three organisations is but a

prelude to further attacks by the Government and the capitalist class on their rights and standard of living. It is an instrument through which the Government seeks to mislead the democratic opinion and isolate the militant working class movement.

Let all militant unions and their central organisations expose this game of the Government and its labour lieutenants and take firm steps to maintain and develop the unity of the T.Us in the common fight against the attacks on democratic and T. U. rights.

CITU Denounces U. S. Blockade of North Vietnam

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, issued the following statement to the Press on May 10 :

"President Nixon's decision to blockade North Vietnam and resume intensified mass bombing on its territory constitutes a naked act of unscrupulous aggression and the CITU denounces it as one more proof of imperialist crimes in Vietnam. The CITU urges all Central Trade Union Organisations to come together and hold joint and united demonstrations of India's workers to condemn this new barbarous offensive against an Asian nation. The CITU calls upon all its unions to approach the constituents of the various Central Organisations and make the protest a success.

The CITU urges upon the Government of India to sever immediately all relations with the puppet Government of South Vietnam and recognise the Provincial Revolutionary Government constituted by the National Liberation Front.

"The CITU hopes that in face of this arrogant imperialist challenge the two great Socialist countries will come together to rebuff American intervention and halt its offensive in Vietnam."

Socialism-Ours And Theirs

"Comrades, our movement must take note of the ruling party's cry of Socialism. The ruling party talks of Socialism. But what is working class Socialism? Socialism means the abolition of exploitation of man by man, it means abolition of unemployment and poverty. It can be achieved only under the rule of the working class and the toiling masses, i. e. after the abolition of the capitalist state and capture of political power by the working class. That power is necessary because Socialism cannot be established without abolishing private property in the means of production and distribution, without socialising all the factories and concerns owned by the capitalists and all the means of distribution. Then alone society can be organised on the basis of freedom from exploitation. Socialism is inconsistent with the maintenance of Tatas and Birlas and with the public sector helping them to gather more profits. A Government which cannot even nationalise the foreign concerns and the monopolists is cheating the people when it talks of Socialism. It is only maintaining the capitalist structure under the cry of Socialism. It is for our T. U. movement to make the masses realise what exactly Socialism is and how the ruling party's Socialism is just a stunt to defend the present capitalist order.

"The destiny of T.U. movement is to take the working class and the country towards the proletarian Socialism which really means freedom from unemployment, poverty and exploitation. If the T.U. movement forgets this objective, directs itself only in the channel of daily economic conflicts it will become a narrow petty sectarian movement unable even to defend its daily interests."

From the opening speech of B. T. Ranadive to the Working Committee held at New Delhi.

The Menace Of Unemployment

The growing unemployment is haunting the whole of India with each passing day. The registered unemployment has crossed the 51 lakh mark.

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU in his opening speech before the working Committee highlighted the importance of this question for the trade union movement. He observed, "Last year has seen a remarkable resistance in the working class in defending its standard of living and advancing new claims. But at the same time, it has also brought to the forefront a problem which confronts the trade union movement as a serious menace to its very existence. The neglect of this problem or a mere superficial recognition of it will spell great danger to the future of trade unions. During the course of last year alone the registered unemployment in the cities rose by 25%, i.e. 4 to 5 million. Considering that according to official statistics only 43 to 45% of the city unemployed are registered, the total urban unemployment may easily raise the figure to 10 million. Along with this is of course the mass unemployment in rural areas. It is estimated by well-known economists that in another few years that is less than a decade the figure of unemployed in India will rise to 60 million. It seems in the coming few years almost every child born in the working class family will be stamped with the birth-mark of either a destitute or unemployed."

Criticising the Government which is solely responsible for growth in unemployment, Ranadive said, "Face to face with this colo-

ssal problem the Government has no solution to offer except misleading the people with a few scheme and announcing expenditure of a few crores of rupees. Almost all these schemes relate to the rural areas and will hardly have an impact on the situation there. So far as the cities and industrial areas are concerned, the Government cannot boast of any measures except some assurances for re-opening some of the closed factories and that too, on the basis of depriving the workers of all the benefits under the existing law, cutting their dearness allowance and even the the basic wage,

"The People and the working class are paying heavily for allowing the Congress to impose the capitalist path on India. Unemployment is an inevitable accompaniment of all capitalist societies. America has nearly 6 million unemployed. In England unemployment has reached the highest figure since the war, it exceeded the million mark ; several other countries including West Germany are daily adding to their number of unemployed. Obviously, to end unemployment finally it is necessary to abandon the capitalist path and go over to Socialism which alone as in USSR and China, can put an end to the unemployment problem. This truth has to be mastered by the working class."

The CITU President gave a special emphasis on the need for the trade unions to take up this question seriously. Explaining how the capitalist class is using this unemployed youth against the T.U. and democratic movement Ranadive said, "The trade union movement

has to take up this problem and demand some immediate measures of relief to the unemployed. All the trade unions must come together to demand that a law must be passed ensuring minimum benefits for all those who are ready to work and for whom there is no work. This should include not only the industrial workers, and the rural workers but also the educated unemployed, the clerks, professors, the engineers, all of whom must be provided with unemployment benefit. Secondly, all trade unions and and all democratic organisation including the organisation of employees must come together and demand a change in the Constitution providing as one of the fundamental rights the right to work. Also a movement should be launched in various cities, corporations and municipalities to see that they provide immediate relief to the needy unemployed and their families. The success of this movement depends upon the joint efforts of all the trade unions, their central organisations and the mass of workers.

All the trade unions have to take up the question because its neglect has already created a dangerous situation. With so many lakhs unemployed and unconnected with the trade union movement, is it possible to defend the standard of living of the workers or to conduct strikes? If the unemployed do not see the trade unions fighting for them are they likely to fight and support the workers when they are on strike? It is very strange that there is hardly one instance in which the organised trade union movement has taken cudgels on behalf of the unemployed. Perhaps, the solitary exception is that of the

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Spectacular Victory Of Jute Workers

The two and a half lakhs jute workers of West Bengal have won significant wage rise through their united struggle when an agreement was signed on May 7 last. The jute barons who were opposing any settlement of the issues facing the bipartite committee were forced to concede Rs.45.60 per month as wage rise making the total minimum wage of a jute worker Rs.235 per month. According to a press release issued by the Indian Jute Millowners Association (IJMA), the total wage bill of the jute mills is likely to go up by about Rs. 20 crores annually.

In 1969, the jute millowners had to concede Rs. 30 as interim relief to the workers. The final settlement of the demands of the jute workers was deliberately delayed by the recalcitrant attitude of the jute magnates which received indiscreet support from the Congress Government. In a period of three years the jute millowners were forced to grant another sizable concession to workers resulting in pushing up the minimum wages by over Rs. 75.

This was possible only because of the remarkable unity achieved by them during the struggle. Their determination to do away with the age-old backward wage system was so firm that both the employers and the Government had to climb down from their high and mighty attitude and agree to another wage increase.

The one lakh strong Bengal Chatkal Mazdur Union (CITU) had been stressing during 1971

that the employers would listen to their demands only if the jute workers go in for an indefinite strike. The BCMU appealed to all other trade unions working in jute industry but the leadership of AITUC, INTUC and HMS refused to give a favourable response.

The reign of terror created in West Bengal by the Congress gangsters and Police resulted in day dreaming by the jute barons who thought that the strike of jute workers would not materialise in such an atmosphere. The estimated annual profits of jute millowners reached Rs. 4000 per worker in view of the situation in Bangladesh.

The foreign exchange earnings of jute millowners went up from Rs. 189 crores in 1969-70 to Rs. 289 crores in 1970-71. The earnings in 1971-72 are estimated to be Rs. 300 crores !

The jute workers realised the need fight back the greed of the jute millowners and the urge for strike struggle was most pronounced throughout the jute belt. As a result of which a magnificent unity was achieved behind the call for indefinite strike from May 8. This united call was supported by all the unions, viz Bengal Chatkal Mazdur Union (CITU), National Union of Jute Workers (INTUC), Jute Workers Federation (HMS), Federation of Chatkal Mazdoor Union (AITUC), Jute Textile Workers Union (NFITU), Bengal Provincial Chatkal Mazdoor Union (UTUC), Bengal Jute Mill Workers Union (UTUC-Lenin Sarani)

and Poschim Bango Chatkal Mazdoor Federation (TUCC).

Apart from winning Rs. 235 as minimum wage the jute workers earned DA at the rate of 25 paisa per point over Calcutta Index Number 817 (base 1939). It was also agreed that the permanent complement in each jute mill would be 90 percent of the total working complement. The workers also got concessions regarding fall back wages, night shift allowance and gratuity which the employers were always opposing.

The workers would have got much more concessions if the leadership of AITUC, INTUC, and HMS remained firm. Therefore, while signing the agreement, the representatives of CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC unions expressed their reservations at some clauses of the agreement. Niren Ghosh and Kamal Sarkar while congratulating the jute workers for their victory pointed out these weaknesses to the workers. The BCMU issued 70,000 leaflets in Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and Oriya languages.

The 30 thousand jute workers outside West Bengal also fought for similar concessions and in some places they have won victories. In U.P. the strike was to commence on May 8 which was averted because employers agreed to grant an equivalent increase. In Bihar, Hurdut Rai Jute Mill, workers also got Rs. 235 as minimum wage.

In Raigarh, the employer refused to give more than Rs. 20 as wage rise and workers continued their strike struggle from May 8. The BCMU supported the struggle of the workers and demanded that the terms of the Bengal settlement be made applicable to all over India.

CITU West Bengal State Committee Prepares For Further Struggles

The West Bengal State Committee of the CITU in its meeting held on May 20 in Calcutta reviewed the situation following the elections and chalked out a programme of action to carry forward the struggle to defend democracy and trade union rights. Md. Ismil M.P. President, West Bengal State Committee of the CITU, Presided over the meeting and Monoranjan Roy, the General Secretary, gave a report on the activities of the State Committee since the last meeting.

The member from the industrial belt in Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly and Burdwan districts reported in detail the attacks mounted on the workers in various areas.

The State Committee resolved that unions should not surrender but resist the attacks unitedly in cooperation with the unions of CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC and build up broad-based united struggles.

In the coming months the State Committee decided to intensify the campaign on the issues of unemployment, high prices and taxation, attacks on trade unions and democratic rights and release of prisoners. It would give maximum emphasis on building up united movements on the demands of the workers in Engineering, Tea Garden and Cotton Textile Industries.

It was decided in the meeting that the first meeting of the State Council would be held on June 17 and 18 in Calcutta. The State council was formed in the previous meeting with 489 members.

Resolutions were adopted in the

meeting condemning American aggression in Vietnam, on the severe drought in West Bengal, conveying greetings to the jute workers of West Bengal for a remarkable achievement and to 5 lakh Kerala Workers for their successful one day strike.

A decision was also taken in the meeting to start a Bengali journal of the State Committee from August 1972.

Goa State Working Committee Of CITU Meets

A meeting of the Working Committee of Goa State Trade Union Council of CITU met on May 7 at Vasco. Gerald Pereira, General Secretary, Goa State Committee of CITU reported on the CITU Working Committee meeting held in New Delhi.

The meeting decided to organise a demonstration in front of Esso Company and the Mamlatdars Office at Vasco-da-Gama on May 11.

Accordingly impressive demonstration was organised on the day which was addressed by Gerald Pereira and Sitaram Manzarekar.

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Coimbatore Textile mill workers who during their strike championed the demand of the unemployed and forced the Government to open some mills. The existence of this mass unemployment has already become a danger to organise trade union activity. Besides, their very frustration is used by the capitalist

class, the Government and the Congress Party to attack the organised trade union movement. This is being strikingly seen in West Bengal where a section of the unemployed youth acts as goonda gangs of Congress and occupy trade union offices, kill leaders and terrorise workers. This danger in this form was not there before. It is now making its appearance on the Indian scene. One must remember that Hitler used the frustration of the unemployed youth to inflict fascism on Germany. The ruling party is already exploiting the unemployed youth for their own purpose, in West Bengal. The trade union movement can neglect this question only at its own peril.

A "marked decline" in employment growth in the private sector has been admitted in the Annual Report of the Department of Labour and Employment, Government of India. From 2.7 per cent during 1969-70 the growth rate fell to 0.7 per cent in nonagricultural establishments in the private sector employing 10 or more persons. The public sector has however shown 3.2 per cent rise in employment.

In absolute terms the employment in organised sector on the whole, increased from 17.1 million to 17.5 million—a rise only 2.2 per cent compared to 2.5 per cent last year.

At the end of December 1971 the educated unemployed were 22.96 lakhs out of 51 lakhs on the live register of Employment Exchanges and included 3.94 lakh graduates and post graduates. Educated applicants on the register alone accounted for a 26 per cent increase of total increase during 1971.

LIC EMPLOYEES PREPARE FOR BIGGER STRUGGLE

The Seventh General Conference of the All India Insurance Employees' Association was held at Madras from May 9 to 14 attended by 262 delegates and 193 observers, representing the life and general insurance employees throughout the country.

The Conference after a review of the general economic conditions in the country, expressed its alarm over the continuous price spiral, increasing unemployment, greater and greater tax burden on the common man and the proposal of moratorium on strikes.

Taking place as it did, closely following the one-day strike of the L.I.C. employees on April 25, the Conference expressed its resentment that the demands on which the employees had gone on strike and which had been submitted to the management long back remained unresolved. In spite of the AIIEA representing over 80% of the employees in LIC, it still remained unrecognised. The rate of bonus stagnated at the rate fixed in 1959 and in the sphere of amenities such as medical scheme, leave, fare concession, free insurance, etc. the employees of LIC lagged far behind their counterparts in analogous institutions. There also existed invidious distinction in the matter of benefits between the various classes of employees in the Corporation, with the result that while the Class IV and the Class III employees were granted a fixed house rent allowance of Rs. 15 and Rs. 20 per month, the officers in the higher salary bracket were entitled to 15% of basic salary with a minimum of Rs. 75. The Conference resolved that in case these demands

were not settled expeditiously, the employees would embark upon higher forms of action in the weeks to come.

The Conference noted with serious concern the attack on the leaders and activists of the Association by the Youth Congress and the Chaatra Parishad at Calcutta on April 25, the day of strike. While congratulating the employees for the magnificent response to the strike call despite this fascist attack, the Conference strongly condemned the attack and called upon the employees to protest against such undemocratic and fascist trends and stoutly protect Trade Union democracy and rights.

The Conference deplored that the agreement between the management and the employees on rules of promotion signed in October 1971 had not yet been implemented. While demanding scrapping of automation in LIC, the Conference demanded opening of more Divisional and Branch Offices in various parts of the country to decentralise the powers and functions for better servicing to policyholders, recruit more Class III and Class IV employees to cope up with the fast expanding business and called for stoppage of diversion of funds of the Life Insurance to the monopoly houses. Expressing satisfaction over the increasing membership, the AIIEA called upon the employees to strengthen their organisation and unity so as to be able to carry forward the struggle to realise their legitimate demands.

The Conference, discussing the problems confronting the General Insurance Industry, deplored that the Central Government had not yet

taken steps to give full shape to the nationalisation of the industry and continued to pay Rs. 34 lakhs per month by way of compensation to erst-while managements. The Conference opposed the proposal to constitute four Corporations and demanded only one All-India Corporation for nationalised general insurance, standardisation of wages, settlement of all pending problems, job-security for employees.

The Conference adopted a number of resolutions, supporting the struggles of the people of Vietnam, welcoming the emergence of Bangla Desh as a sovereign nation, demanding repealing of all laws curtailing the fundamental rights of the citizens, reopening of all closed mills and factories in the country, stoppage of automation in LIC and other industries, declaration of May Day as a national holiday, solution of all pending problems, etc.

The Open Session of the Conference on May 12 was inaugurated by N.V. Natarajan, Labour Minister, Government of Tamilnadu. P. Ramamurti General Secretary, CITU, Dr. H. V. Hande, MLA, Shri L. A. Prasad of NFPTE, Shri Varadarajan of RBI Staff Union, Madras and Shri D. Sundarakannu spoke. The Open Session was preceded by a mammoth and colourful procession of Delegates and Observers to the Conference and the employees of LIC and General Insurance in the city of Madras.

The Conference unanimously elected a new Working Committee of 66 members, with Rajni Patel as President and Saroj Chaudhuri as General Secretary.

The sessions of the Conference were presided over by Chandrasekhar Bose, Vice-President.

The Select Committee Report On The Gratuity Bill

by A. P. Chatterjee

Till now, gratuity was being secured by the workmen by their collective struggles through trade unions and by getting their charter of demands conceded to by the employers. There has been no all-India statute to regulate the payment of gratuity. Of late, though, some States have enacted legislations to provide for payment of gratuity.

The workmen, therefore, throughout India hoped a lot when it was announced that a Bill was coming. But both the Bill and the Select Committee Report on it are, to say the least, disappointing. Even the judgements of the Supreme Court, not to speak of the awards of the Tribunals, have been ignored by the Select Committee in certain vital matters.

The Select Committee have thought it fit to exclude the period of "illegal" strike from the definition of "continuous service". But as early as 1961 the Supreme Court did not accept the definition of "continuous service" given in section 79 of the Factories Act or section 2 (eee) (now repealed) of the Industrial Disputes Act. The Supreme Court held that the meaning of the words given in either of those Acts was not relevant in determining their meaning in relation to the question of gratuity. Here the Court held that an employee must be considered to be in continuous service as long as the relationship of master and servant existed. Participation in an illegal strike may make an employee liable to punishment but that strike by itself would not terminate the relationship of master and servant.

Mr. Justice Gajendragadkar who delivered the judgement in that case *Joewanlal (1929) Ltd, versus its workmen* reported in 1961 (2) *Factories and Labour Reports* at page 537, observed as follows :

"Continuous service in the context of the scheme of gratuity framed by the Tribunal...postulates the continuance of the relationship of master and servant between the employer and the employee. If the servant resigns his employment, service automatically comes to an end. If the employer terminates the service of his employee, that again brings the continuity of service to an end. If the service of an

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employee is brought to an end by the operation of any law, that again is another instance where the continuance is disrupted; but it is difficult to hold that merely because an employee is absent without obtaining leave that itself would bring to an end the continuity of his service. Similarly participation in an illegal strike which may incur the punishment of dismissal may not by itself bring to an end the relationship of master and servant. It may be a good cause for the termination of service provided that of course the relevant provisions in the standing orders in that behalf are complied with; but mere participation in an illegal strike cannot be said to cause breach in continuity for the purposes of gratuity..."

It is strange, therefore, that, in spite of the aforesaid pronouncement by the Supreme Court which, by

virtue of the operation of Article 141 of the Constitution of India, became the law of the land, it should now be thought that West Bengal Employees' Payment of Compulsory Gratuity Act, 1971 where the period of "illegal" strike has been excluded from the calculation of continuous service is the ideal law on the subject. After all that Act is a President's Act and it was passed by an executive fiat without the participation of the elected members of the West Bengal Legislature. No wonder that such Executive Act would contain that kind of definition of continuous service. We hope that the Lok Sabha, when it discusses the Bill, would refuse to be guided by that executive Act, namely, the West Bengal Employees' Payment of Compulsory Gratuity Act, and restore the definition of continuous service adopted by the Supreme Court.

The next clause that is open to serious objection is clause 4 (6) whereby gratuity could be forfeited if the employee's service is terminated for any misconduct. I cannot help quoting the observations of the Supreme Court in another case, namely, the case between *Garment Cleaning Works* and its workmen reported in 1961 (2) *Factories and Labour Reports* at page 534. Here also Mr. Justice Gajendragadkar delivered the judgement and observed :

"Gratuity which is in the nature of retirement benefit is based on long and meritorious service, and the argument is that if the service of an employee is terminated on the ground of misconduct it would not be open to him on principle to claim gratuity because misconduct put a blot on the character of his service and that disqualifies him from any

claim of gratuity...On principle, if gratuity is earned by an employee for long and meritorious service, it is difficult to understand why the benefit thus earned by long and meritorious service should not be available to the employee even though at the end of such service he may have been found guilty of misconduct which entails his dismissal. Gratuity is not paid to the employee gratuitously or merely as a matter of boon. It is paid to him for the service rendered by him to the employer, and when it is once earned, it is difficult to understand why it should necessarily be denied to him whatever may be the nature of misconduct for his dismissal'.

Of course, in that case, the Supreme Court approved the clause in the Gratuity scheme whereby, if the misconduct of the employee had resulted in any financial loss to the employer, he might call upon the employee to compensate him for the loss caused to him before the gratuity is paid. In the Select Committee report, however, no such reservation is made and the employer has been given the right to forfeit the entire gratuity if the employee's service has been terminated for any misconduct.

I quote without comment a portion from the dissenting report of Shri N. Sreekantan Nair—"It is indeed a disgrace that the Government, which amended the Constitution of India in three successive legislative outbursts in order to curtail the powers of the Supreme Court to meddle with the progressive measures they claim to be ushering in, could not accept the ruling of the Supreme Court that gratuity is a payment for past services rendered by the workmen and hence it cannot

be denied for any future misconduct."

Strangely enough the AITUC leader Ranen Sen who was a member of the Select Committee did not press for one month's gratuity per year of service—a demand unitedly raised earlier by the Central T. U. organisations. In view of this, Dinen Bhattacharya CITU M.P. who was also a member of the Study Group write another note of dissent to the Report advocating the position taken by the Central T.U. Organisations.

Not that the Supreme Court recommended a better deal to the workmen in the matter of gratuity from any altruistic motive. Rather the Supreme Court's formulation of the need for a liberal gratuity scheme is buttressed by an argument that is based on pure profit motive. Mr. Justice Gajendragadkar uses a reasoning which would strike the sympathetic chord of every bourgeois to persuade the employer not to make any fuss about gratuity. For, "it is beneficial all round.....By inducing voluntary retirement of old and worn out workmen it confers on the employer a benefit akin to the replacing of old and worn out machinery..." (Burhanpur Tapti Mills Ltd. vs B. T. Mills Mazdur Sangh reported in 1965 (10) Factories and Labour Reports at page 171.

But what a bourgeois easily appreciates his representative may not. To please the master he may go to lengths which it is not necessary to traverse.

It is difficult to appreciate why the ceiling of 20 months' wages is laid down by subclauses 2 and 3 of clause 4 of the Bill. If a man works in an establishment for thirty years, his 5 years of service is clean washed out. If there were an integrated pension scheme, the hardship

of the ceiling might have been mitigated to an extent. As it is, however, the employee is really thrown out like an old and worn out machinery unceremoniously and without the least compunction.

Then again it is not also understood why the payment should at all be made at the rate of 15 days, wages for every completed year of service or why a workman should work at least for five years in order to qualify for gratuity. If the principle of gratuity is that a workman is compensated for his past service, any period of past service should be good enough for earning that qualification.

The gratuity should also be paid at the rate of one month's total wages per year of service.

In effect, the Bill is not an improved social legislation for the workmen. It does not even pretend to be more than a codification of the prevailing norms laid down by the courts with modifications that are all to the detriment to the interests of the employee. It is worse than old wine in new bottle.

Otherwise, who would have thought that even after the massive mandate for "socialism" that the Congress got in the last elections, the workman cannot still file a complaint straightway in a criminal court for violation of the provisions of the Bill? To the contention that this short of restraint on a workman's right of action should be removed, the answer of the majority of the Select Committee is that such a provision should remain so that frivolous accusation could not be made against the employer. It is nothing but denying equality to a workman in the eye of law. If an employer can have the unfettered right to file any number of false complaints

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Western Railway Labour Union Holds Annual Convention

The annual Convention of the Western Railway Labour Union was held at Gangapur City on 29th and 30th April '72 under the presidency of Shiv Vishal Singh, a well-known railway leader. Md. Ismail, M. P., Vice-President, CITU, was present as Chief Guest. 62 delegates participated in the Convention. The report placed by Com. George Mathews, General Secretary of the Union, was accepted unanimously by the delegates after deliberation. It was revealed that the Western Railway authorities have resorted to victimisation of the office-bearers and leading workers of this Union. At times the charges levelled against them are fantastic. Parasuram Sharma, Asst. General Secretary

of the Union, was charged with gross misconduct, on the ground that he had addressed a meeting which was organised by the Western Railway Mazdur Sangh and incited the staff. The Convention adopted several resolutions including one urging the Government to stop the terror that has been unleashed in West Bengal against all democratic movement. The Convention elected an Executive Committee of 37 members with Shiv Vishal Singh as President and George Mathews as General Secretary.

The open session of the Convention was held on 29th April in which about a thousand railwaymen participated. Md. Ismail, M. P., and Nrisingha Chakraborty, among others, addressed the meeting.

U.P. State Committee of CITU Meets

A meeting of the U. P. State Committee of CITU held at Kanpur on April 28-29 decided to observe May 22-29 as West Bengal week to express solidarity with the workers in West Bengal in their struggle against police repression and gangsterism of anti-social elements. It was decided to collect funds during the week. The meeting further chalked out programme of observation of CITU Foundation Day on May 30.

Satya Narain Tewari, President, U. P. State Committee, presided over the meeting which was attended by 16 out of 22 members. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, guided the deliberation of the meeting.

Ravi Sinha, General Secretary, U.P. State Committee, presented a report of the activities in the State since the last meeting held on August 1-2. Twelve comrades participated in the discussion on the Report.

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU gave a report of the meeting of the Working Committee of the CITU held in New Delhi recently and emphasised the need for launching a powerful movement throughout the country in defence of democracy and T. U. rights in West Bengal. He laid stress on the improvement in the functioning of the U. P. State Committee so that it could discharge its responsibilities effectively.

Andhra Workers Deplore Bombing on N. Vietnam

The Andhra Pradesh Federation of I.L.T.D. Co. Workers, Anaparty Factory Branch, in its 3rd Annual Conference condemned the brutal attacks on North Vietnam by the U. S. imperialists and demanded immediate stopping of bombings.

The meeting also condemned the lathi charge by Police on the workers of Barium Chemical, Kothagudem.

Provident Fund Employees Agitate

Over 5000 employees of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation all over India launched a weeklong lunch-hour demonstration from May 4, for the settlement of their long-standing demands like increase in wage scales, payment of house allowance etc. Members of the Executive Committees of all the regional offices throughout India staged a 24-hour hunger strike on May 11.

The hunger strike was staged by all the 25 members of the Executive of the Regional Provident Fund Staff Association, West Bengal, in Calcutta. In the evening 1000 employees of the offices assembled in front of the Park Street Office where they were addressed by M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Samar Chakraborty (INTUC), Sudhir Bera (M. L. A.), Bibhas Ghose (H.M.S.), and Dhiren Das Gupta.

★ From Page Eight
against the workman, why should not the workman have the right to file a complaint against his employer when it is obvious that he is contravening the provisions of the Gratuity Bill? The fact that the necessity for a sanction by the Government before a court could take cognisance of an offence committed by the employer is recognised in the Industrial Disputes Act, is no argument because was not that Act enacted in the imperialist days before we obtained independence?

Moreover, we swear by Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence and the declared cornerstone of that jurisprudence is that every citizen has the right to initiate any legal proceeding against any person of whatever status. There should not have been any distinction between a citizen and a citizen.

The Bill has yet to be passed by Parliament. Let us hope that its retrograde aspects will be removed and some real benefit to the workman assured.

MAY DAY RALLIES

Unity was the theme of May Day celebrations this year, and the working class of India, on this occasion, renewed its pledge to work for the consolidation of this unity at all costs. Reports are coming in of numerous meetings, and rallies held all over the country.

Calcutta

Calcutta's historic Shaheed Minar Maidan once again turned into a vast sea of humanity (see picture below) when four Central Trade Unions—the CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC held a joint May Day rally.

The meeting adopted a resolution moved by Monoranjan Roy, M. P. condemning the assaults on trade union activists in West Bengal and warned the Congress which, in collaboration with the leadership of the CPI, was engineering them, that the toiling people could not be cowed down by sheer force for long.

Speakers including Jatin Chakrabarty (UTUC) who presided, Fatik Ghosh (UTUC-Lenin Sarani) and Chitta Basu (TUCC) reminded the gathering of the stupendous tasks ahead. It was time, they thought, the working class made tactical changes in the mode of struggles in keeping with changes in the course of events.

Speaking on behalf of the CITU, Jyoti Basu said that the Congress after having made a complete mockery of democracy in West Bengal was now posing as the friend the working class. In dealing with the anti-social elements and the political riff-raff now on the rampage in the State, the working class will have to contend with the whole State machinery which was undoubtedly behind them. But there could be no surrender to these forces, Basu declared.

Bombay

Over 7000 workers from several factories paraded the streets of Bombay in an impressive May Day demonstration organised by the Maharashtra State Committee of the CITU. The demonstration culminated in a rally at Nare Park which was addressed by B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, along with S. Y. Kolhatkar and P. K. Kurane, Vice-President and General Secretary of the Maharashtra State Committee of the CITU.

The maiden issue of the *Warg Yuddha*, CITU's fortnightly Marathi journal, was released on this occasion.

Speaking to the rally, B. T. Ranadive paid glowing tributes to the valiant struggles of the people of Vietnam who were inflicting crushing blows on U. S. imperialism. In India, he said, the Government and the employers were resorting to strong-arm methods in the face of growing unity in working class struggles.



**Memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister of
West Bengal**

by

**Centre of Indian Trade Unions
West Bengal Committee**

**United Trades Union Congress
West Bengal Committee**

**United Trades Union Congress
(Lenin Sarani)
West Bengal Committee**

and

**Trade Union Co-ordination Centre
in a MASS DEPUTATION ON 19th May
1972 in Calcutta**

The terror and repression that the working class and the people of West Bengal faced during the last 2 years, has been greatly intensified after the election held on 11th March, 1972. There is no precedence of it in any state of India since independence. The armed rowdies and gangsters carrying the flag of ruling Congress Party have started systematic attacks against workers and employees, against trade unions and democratic organisations. In this deliberate move to destroy democracy and to suppress democratic organisations and trade unions, the police, CRP and administration is aiding and abetting the armed rowdies and gangsters who are perpetrating the attacks with open declaration that any person or any organisation opposed to the ruling party will not be allowed to exist.

From the election day itself,

the workers and supporters of the left democratic parties and various trade unions affiliated to CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC were evicted from their houses and localities and this process is still continuing. About 20,000 families in Baranagore,, Beliaghata North & South, Belgachia, Cossipore, Tollygang, Jadavpur, Dum Dum, Panihati, Bijpur, Titagurh, Noyapara, Khardah, Haltu Bansdrani, Belgharia, Nabadwip, Kalna, Burdwan town, Durgapur, Memari, Manteswar, Faridpur, Nadanghat, Raniganj Coal-belt, Tea garden areas and various other places of West Bengal have been forcibly uprooted from their houses and localities and their condition today is worst than evacuees. Besides, hundreds of workers and supporters of left democratic parties and trade unions have been arrested on various false

charges and also detained without trial.

The attack against the workers and employees and trade unions has made it impossible to function trade unions in any form. It is a virtual illegalisation of trade unions. These attacks are taking place at a time when the economic condition of the people is most depressed due to acute unemployment, soaring prices of essential commodities and heavy taxation. The closed factories, offices, coal-mines and establishments are still not reopened. The suffering of the people has further been increased due to unprecedented drought while there is hardly any arrangement for relief.

When the working class and the people of West Bengal are demanding solution of the present burning problems and asking for immediate relief,

attempt is being made to gag their voice and to suppress them.

The trade unions in West Bengal irrespective of their affiliation and political leanings could function without any direct interference in their freedom under tenure of all the Governments in the earlier period since independence.

The Governments in West Bengal irrespective of their attitude to trade unions movements never tried to directly intervene in trade union affairs or impose upon the workers and employees of its own view point. This accepted norm is being grossly violated now as will be evident from the nature of attack, enumerated below, perpetrated against workers and employees and trade unions :

1. Forcibly occupying union offices. The union offices have also been looted and burnt.
2. Forcing the members of the unions affiliated to CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC to join the unions of Congress(R). Workers and employees are assaulted and threatened with murder if they refuse to join the union of Congress (R). This is followed by forcibly preventing the workers and employees from reporting to their duties.
3. The office bearers, executive committee members and leading organisers of unions affiliated to CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC are assaulted and threatened

with murder and forcibly evicted from their houses and localities and prevented from reporting to their duties in offices and factories. The union officials are forcibly prevented from organising meeting of the unions, to open union offices and to function from there and to meet the workers. The workers are threatened and assaulted even inside factories and offices.

4. Forcibly collecting money from workers and their families and assault and humiliate them when they refuse to pay. Money is demanded for "ATMA SUDHHI" (i.e. self purification) for remaining members of unions other than of Congress(R). The rowdies and gangsters are asking the Secretaries and Treasurers of the unions to hand over the union funds to them.
5. The workers are forced to sign bonds or on blank papers which is subsequently used as voluntary resignations from their previous unions and joining the unions of Congress(R).
6. The houses of the office bearers and leading workers of the unions are looted.
7. Tension is created by provoking provincial feeling to play one section of the workers against the other and thus break harmonious relation and unity of the working class. The rowdies and unemployed Youths

are openly encouraged to forcibly prevent workers and employees from reporting to duties with assurance to provide them (rowdies) with employment in places of absentee employees and workers.

It will take hundreds of pages to enlist the incidents of attacks on Trade Unions and workers and employees since the last election. We, therefore, cite here some of the glaring cases :

FORCIBLE OCCUPATION OF UNION OFFICES :

- (a) The Zonal office of UTUC at Paikpara.
- (b) Branch Offices of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union at Khardah, Beliaghata, Titagarh and Gouripur (CITU).
- (c) Dunbar Cotton Mills Workers Union at Garulia, 24-Parganas (CITU).
- (d) Bengal Enamel Shramik Karmachari Union, Nawabganj, Ichapore, 24-Parganas (CITU)
- (e) Sri Annapurna Cotton Mills Workers Union (CITU), Shamnagar 24-Parganas.
- (f) Offices of 22 unions at Baranagar ransacked, looted and forcibly occupied (CITU)
- (g) A.V.B. Employees Union, Durgapur (CITU).
- (h) Saktigarh Textile & Industries Ltd. Workers Union, Barsul, Burdwan (CITU).
- (i) Burdwan Zilla Motor Transport Shramik Union (CITU), Burdwan town (CITU)
- (j) Sen-Raleigh Employees Union (CITU) Kanyapur, Asansol :

On 23rd March 1972, the Labour Minister of West Bengal was officially informed about forcible occupation of the union office. On 27th March 1972 the Labour Minister assured that the office of Sen-Raleigh Employees Union would be vacated and handed over to union officials. But it was not vacated even after the Chief Minister and Labour Minister visited Sen-Raleigh factory at Asansol on 31.3. 1972. The Chief Minister of West Bengal issued the following public Statement appeared in the Statesman, Calcutta on 29.4. 1972 :

“RAY ORDERS RETURN OF UNION OFFICE

By a Staff Reporter

Mr. Siddhartha Ray said in Calcutta on Friday that, as soon as he received a report that his party's followers had captured the office of CPI(M) dominated union of Sen-Raleigh Company he had ordered its return within 48 hours.”

But even after this public Statement of the Chief Minister the office of Sen-Raleigh Employees union was not vacated. On 16th May 1972 when the Secretary of Sen-Raleigh Employees Union along with Shri Robin Sen, M.P. went to take possession of the Union Office giving prior intimation to the Additional Superintendent of Police, Asansol, he found the union office under 'heavy lock placed by ruling Congressmen' and police also did not help them to take possession of the union office.

- (k) Bengal Kagazhkal Mazdoor Union, Titagarh (CITU)
- (l) Bird & Co. Employees Union, Dakhindari CITU Hindusthan Steel & Metal Employees Union (CITU). Eastern Paper Mills Ltd. Workers Union. (CITU) Dum Dum Weaving Factory Workers Union (CITU)
- (m) Bangur Hospital special G.D.A. Union (UTUC)
- (n) UTUC Zonal office at Kumar-gram was raided and demolished.
- (o) Rubber Mazdoor Union of Calcutta (Central Rubber Works (P) Ltd).
- (p) UTUC (Lenin Sarani) zonal office at Dum Dum.
- (q) Posta Mazdoor Congress (TUCC).
- (r) Railway Hawkers Association, Burdwan (TUCC).
- (s) Khan Mazdoor Sangha, Asansol Unit (TUCC).
- (t) Hindusthan Steel Mazdoor Union, Dum Dum(TUCC).

UNION OFFICE LOOTED :

1. Hindusthan Steel Employees Union (CITU) (Durgapur Steel Plant), Edison Road, Durgapur.
2. Calcutta State Transport Employees Union—(CITU) union office at the allotted space of CSTC Building at Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Calcutta—all records destroyed.
3. Patipukur Area—5 unions (CITU).
4. Kalyani Spinning Mills Employees Union (CITU)

5. Dabur Mazdoor Union, Garia (CITU).

UNION OFFICES FORCIBLY PREVENTED FROM FUNCTIONING BY ARMED GANGESTERS :

1. Durgapur Project Employees Union, Durgapur (CITU)
2. Durgapur Chemicals Employees Union, Durgapur (CITU)
3. Jay Engineering Works Union at Tollyganj and Bansdroni (CITU)
4. Calcutta State Transport Employees (CITU) in Belghoria Depot., Paikpara Depot, Lake Depot, Howrah Depot, Belgharia Workshop.
5. Dum Dum —24 unions including Jessop Mazdoor Union (CITU)
6. Patipukur—5 unions(CITU)
7. Baranagar—22 unions including Bengal Immunity (CITU)
8. Maheshtolla —6 Unions (CITU)
9. Khardah —all unions
10. Titagarh —all unions
11. Panihati—6 unions (CITU)
12. Tollyganj—9 unions(CITU)
13. South Beliaghata—8 unions (CITU)
14. North Beliaghata—all unions
15. Cossipore—all unions
16. Belgachia—all unions
17. Sonarpur area—12 unions (CITU)

TRADE UNION WORKERS FORCIBLY PREVENTED FROM REPORTING TO DUTIES :

1. Calcutta State Transport Employees Union, Calcutta

2. Joy Engineering Workers Union, Calcutta	23	15. DAKHINDARI AREA :	23. Manicktolla West	13
3. Durgapur Project Employees Union, Durgapur	45	Lansdowne Jute Mill	24. Dhakuria West	3
4. Durgapur Chemicals Employees Union, Durgapur	7	Bird & Co. (Process Engineering Divn.)	25. Cossipore	18
5. Durgapur State Transport Service, Durgapur	12	Sadhana Ausadhalaya Factory	25. Jadavpur-Tollyganj area	27
6. Dum Dum Area	150	Eastern Paper Mill	The names of the affected employees have already been intimated to the Government by the respective unions. Their names will be submitted again if demanded.	
7. Bengal Enamel Factory	100	Hindusthan Sheet & Metal	TRADE UNION WORKERS EVICTED FROM THEIR HOUSES/QUARTERS AND LOCALITIES	
8. Shree Annapurna Cotton Mills	200	Balhuri Sardar (Cotton Weaving Fy.)	Hundreds of Trade union workers have been evicted from their houses/quarters and localities by the armed gangster in the entire industrial belt of of Barrackpore Sub-Division, Sonarpur, Haltu, Gorla and Barasat in the district of 24 Parganas, in Beliaghata North & South, Manicktolla, Cossipore Belgachia, Tollyganj, Jadavpur, in Calcutta, in Durgapur industrial belt, Assansol, Burdwan town and Raniganj in Burdwan District, in industrial areas of Howrah and Hooghly. Some of the cases of eviction are mentioned here :	
9. Gourishankar Jute Mills	10	16. KALYANI INDUSTRIAL AREA :	1. Jadavpur-Tollyganj Calcutta area	
10. Dunbar Cotton Mills	2	Kalyani Spinning Mills	2. Calcutta State Transport Employees Union Calcutta	
11. Bengal Immunity	40	Ruttanji & Co.	3. Jay Engineering Works Union, Calcutta	
12. Carter Pooler	9	Andrew Yule & Co.	4. Durgapur Project Ltd., Durgapur	
13. BARANAGORE AREA :		Sen Pandit Ancillary Units	5. Durgapur Chemicals Ltd., Durgapur	
P. C. Chanda	15	20. Entally	6. Dum Dum Area	
Diamond Products	6	21. Noth Calcutta	7. Sen Raleigh Factory, Assansol	
A. T. Koomar	5	22. Ballyganj	8. Sen Pandit, Kalyani	
Sreegopal Chemicals	2		9. Kalyani Spinning Mills, Kalyani	
J. K. Dey Secretary of the Union.			10. Beliaghata North	
Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (Alambazar Jute Mill Branch)	20		11. Beliaghata South	
Baranagar Municipal Employees Union	20		12. North Calcutta	
Bharat Press	2		13. Entally	
AESBY Industries	8		14. Ballyganj	
Thirani & Shiva Glass	14		15. Manicktolla	
RIC (Bonhooghly)	36		16. Shyampukur	
14. PANIHATI AREA :			17. Cossipore	
Bengal Chemical	8		18. Dhakuria West	
Sarkar Dairy	2			
Basanti Cotton Mills	6			
Bengal Waterproof	2			
Oriental Electric	1			
Hindusthan Wires	6			
Oriental Metal	5			
Murarka Paints	2			
Sulekha Works	6			
Texmaco (Boiler Section)	7			
Panihati Municipality	5			
K. P. K. Consumers Co-operative	1			

The names of the evicted workers have been submitted to the Government by the individual unions on various occasions. Their names may be submitted again if demanded.

WORKERS FORCED TO JOIN THE UNIONS OF CONGRESS (R)

The armed rowdies and gangster organised by Chhatra Parishad and Youth Congress of Congress (R) are forcing the workers to join the unions of Congress (R) in the entire Barrackpore industrial belt, Sonarpur, Barasat, Jadavpur-Tollyganj area, Cossipore, Belgachia, Beliaghata North and South, in Raniganj Coal field area, Durgapur industrial belt, Assansol, Raniganj, in the tea Garden areas and in various other places.

In A. V. B. factory at Durgapur the rowdies forced the workers at the time of punching their attendance cards to sign membership forms of the union of Congress(R). The workers were not allowed to punch their cards as long as they did not sign the membership forms. Shri Atin Mukherjee, Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police, specially posted in A. V. B township, threatened to arrest the workers and evict them from their quarters if they did not join the union of Congress(R). This police officer even prevented the workers from going to market to purchase their daily necessities, as long as they did not join the union of Congress (R). When wives of these workers went for marketing, they were also insulted and humiliated.

In Durgapur Project Ltd., Durgapur the rowdies and gangsters enter into the quarters of the active members of Durgapur Project Employees Union and threaten to murder them if they do not join the union of Congress(R).

In Durgapur industrial area the houses of the workers were looted. Hundreds of workers were assaulted in Durgapur Steel Project, A. V. B. Factory, Durgapur Chemicals, Durgapur Project, Mining & Allied Machinery Corporation, Alloy Steel Plant, Shankey Wheel and other industrial undertakings. The workers are still being terrorised with direct support from police and local administration.

In Calcutta State Transport Corporation 45 employees were assaulted. The employees were assaulted inside the Depot. One employee Sri Santosh Dey was kidnapped on 6th April 1972 from Paikpara Depot. This was immediately brought to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, North Division Calcutta. The Chief Minister of West Bengal was also informed. But whereabouts of this employee is still not known. It is apprehended that he has been murdered.

In Jay Engineering Works Ltd. Tollyganj 23 workers were assaulted by the rowdies of Congress(R). On 31 March 1970 at 5:30 P.M. Sri Paramananda Bhattacharjee, Sri Samir Ganguly and Sri Sekhar Neogy were assaulted, while returning home from duty, in the vicinity of Jadavpur Police Station. The rowdies broke one of the legs of

Sri Paramananda Bhattacharjee and burnt the face of Sri Sekhar Neogy with burning Cigarettes.

In Dum Dum area in all the factories including Jessop & Co., Gramophone Co., Hindusthan Iron & Steel, Sudsons and India Aluminium Mfg., Co., workers are forced to join the union of Congress(R).

In Bengal Enamel Factory 27 workers including 13 Executive Committee members of Bengal Enamel Shramik Karmachari Union were severely beaten.

In Panihati and Khardah area, the workers of the following factories are threatened and terrorised in order to force them to join the union of Congress(R):

PANIHATI AREA

Oriental Electric & Engineering.

Sirkar Dairy
Johnstone Pump
Bangodoy Cotton Mills
Hindusthan Wires
Panihati Municipality
Labour Welfare Union

KHARDAH AREA

Indian Oxygen
India Pin
Bharati Chemicals
Calcutta Steel
Modern India

Construction

In Maheshtolla area, the workers of the following factories are intimidated on a large scale :

Bata Shoe Factory
E. C. E. Factory
S. F. Products
Indian Chain Works
Andaman Timbers
Spring Sales
R. Sen Group of Industries

The workers of Dolphin Laboratories at Tollyganj were forced to leave their union (UTUC) and join the union of Congress (R). Attempt was made to murder the union Leaders of Hindusthan Development Mazdoor Union (UTUC). Durga Hela, a worker of Baranagar Municipality and belonging to UTUC union was murdered.

The activities of R. I. C. Concern Employees Union, Shiva Glass Workers Union, Metal Press Works Ltd., Sree Durga Processing & Finishing Mills Mazdoor Union (Ranaghat) are forcibly suspended.

The workers of UTUC unions in the following Printing Press are being constantly chased and harassed by the rowdies in order to force them to join the Union of Congress (R) :

Reliance Printing (Howrah)	
K. P. Bose	(Calcutta)
Star Printing Works	do
Gupta Press	do
Nalanda Press	do
Laxmi Sri Mudran Silpa	do
Kalika Press (P) Ltd.	do
Mazim (P) Ltd.	do

The workers belonging to the union of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) in following factories are threatened of dire consequences and intimidated by the rowdies in order to force them to join the Union of Congress (R) :

Central Rubber Workers	
	(P) Ltd.
Capital Rubber Workers	
	(Entally)
Hind Rubber Works	
Unique Rubber Works	
	(Entally)

Himani Works
Agarpara Jute Mills
Paramount Rubber

The unions of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) in the following factories have been forcibly captured by the rowdies of Congress(R) :

Jay Bharat Rubbers
Industries

32, B. C. Dey Road
Calcutta-15

Baba Rubber Works
36, D. C. Dey Road, Cal-15

The members of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) union in Metal & Tin Box (India) Private Limited were compelled by the rowdies of Youth Congress and Chatra Parishad to join the union of Congress (R). The union of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) in Calcutta Industries at 101, B. T. Road, Calcutta-15 was forcibly occupied by AITUC followers with the help of Congress (R).

The members of the unions affiliated to Trade Union Co-ordination Centre (TUCC) in Barasat, Shyamnagar, Dum Dum, Burdwan, Assansol are also threatened & forced to join the unions of Congress (R).

IN WORKS-COMMITTEE ELECTION in Empire Jute Mill, representatives of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union were forced at the point of Pistols to withdraw their nominations while 4 representatives were forcibly prevented from filing their nomination papers.

ROLE OF POLICE :

In most of the cases, police is directly helping the rowdies

and gangsters to capture the unions and to harass and intimidate the workers. Workers prevented from reporting to duties are not given any protection by police inspite of consistent demands and series of representations. Police ignore written complaints and donot take any action against the rowdies who assault the workers and physically prevent them from reporting to duties.

The employees of Calcutta State Transport Corporation who were prevented from reporting to their duties, went to resume their duties at Howrah Depot on 4th May 1972 giving prior intimation to Howrah Police. The employees were attacked inside the depots and police instead of taking action against the rowdies, arrested 13 employees who were actually prevented from reporting to duties.

Hundreds of warrants have been issued by police against leading workers of the unions belonging to CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and TUCC on false charges in order to help the rowdies and gangsters to capture the unions in the absence of union leaders. When police fail to involve the trade union leaders in false cases, they are detained without trial under MISA AND PVA Act.

IN INDO-JAPANESE INDUSTRIES LTD., CALCUTTA the Management declared closure with effect from 30th July, 1971. Indo Japanese Industries Ltd. Employees Union, was the only union in this industrial

undertaking, duly recognised by the management. Series of meetings were held before the Governments Conciliation Officer and certain terms were agreed upon regarding reopening of the factory. But, after the election, a fictitious agreement was signed by the Company with some individual men before the Deputy Labour Commissioner, Government of West Bengal completely by-passing the union. Following this agreement when the factory reopened, 43 leading workers including all committee members and office bearers of the recognised union were not allowed to resume their duties. When the workers protested, the Management said that the agreement they have signed provided a clause empowering them to keep the said 43 workmen out of employment. This agreement is legally invalid. But a responsible Government officer of the rank of Deputy Labour Commissioner took initiative to impose such an agreement on the workmen.

DISMISSAL OF WORKERS PREVENTED FROM REPORTING TO DUTIES

The Managements of various concern have already started issuing dismissal order to the employees and workers who are physically prevented from reporting to duties, on the plea of unauthorised absence. In Sree Annapurna Cotton Mills 150 workers, in Bengal Enamel factory 51 workers and in Kolay Biscuit Co. Calcutta 13 leading worker have already been dismissed. In Jay Engineering Works Ltd.,

9 workers have been dismissed, in Durgapur Project Ltd., 2 workers detained under MISA were dismissed immediately after the election. In Durgapur Steel Plant, Sri Dayamoy Ruidas was dismissed without assigning any reason.

In Calcutta State Transport Corporation the Management under the Standing order may dismiss the employees after 90 days absence and as such 115 employees now forcibly prevented from reporting to their duties will face the threat of dismissal if they are not given protection to resume their duties.

The employers and the Government have jointly worked out this scheme to dismiss the leading workers of the unions to thwart Trade union movement and to throw the workers and employees completely under the influence of Congress (R).

IN THE WHOLE SITUATION two things strikingly stand before the people :

- I) Hundreds of union leaders and activists and workers are forcibly restrained from reporting to duties.
- II) Thousands of peoples and their families in various areas all-over West Bengal have been evicted from their houses and localities.

In both cases, the workers/employees and the affected families are forced to live in an unbearable situation without earning and home and hearth.

In the circumstances, we, the four Central Trade Union organisations demand of the Government of West Bengal to ensure that :

- a) all employees and workers prevented from reporting to their duties would be allowed to resume their duties and work in peace with full safety and security.
- b) all workers and employees and all families evicted from their houses and localities before and after the election would be rehabilitated in their respective houses and localities and allowed to live with full safety and security.
- (c) Employees and workers prevented from reporting to duties and served with dismissal orders would be immediately allowed to resume their duties and dismissal orders be withdrawn.

The people of West Bengal have learnt from their experience that the ruling party has deliberately created this situation in their determined bid to eliminate all democratic forces in West Bengal opposed to it.

We therefore, demand that :

1. Attacks on trade union and democratic rights should stop and the terror created by the rowdies and gangster must end.

2. Forcible capture of unions and occupation of union offices should be discontinued as a matter of policy and unions captured and unions office occupied should be immediately returned and vacated.
3. Trade union and democratic freedom should be restored.
4. All persons arrested in connection with democratic movement should be immediately released, arrest warrants issued should be withdrawn and the rowdies and gangster disturbing peace should be immediately arrested.
5. Police and administration should be neutral.

Sd. Monoranjan Roy
General Secretary
C.I.T.U.
West Bengal Committee

Motish Roy,
Secretary
-U.T.U.C.
West Bengal Committee

Fatick Ghosh
General Secretary
U.T.U.C.
(Lenin Sarani)
West Bengal Committee

Prasanta Das Gupta
General Secretary
T.U.C.C.

ALL OVER INDIA

Ranadive criticized the leadership of the INTUC, AITUC and HMS for conspiring to collaborate with the Government and for acting in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the working class. He appealed to workers of all sections to unite and resist the capitalist offensive.

Delhi

In Delhi, the CITU in association with the UTUC, led a massive procession from the Triangular Park to the ramparts of the Red Fort

where a May Day meeting was held. Md. Ismail, M.P. and Vice-President of the CITU, was the main speaker.

Referring to the large-scale terrorisation of trade union workers in West Bengal, Ismail wondered whether this was the sort of democracy Mrs. Gandhi aimed at. At least 20,000 workers had been evicted from their home and living. Ismail called upon the workers of Delhi to stand by their Fraternity in West Bengal.

Kanpur

May Day was jointly observed by the CITU, AITUC and HMS at a rally on the Parade Grounds. The meeting was addressed by Ravi Sinha (CITU), Vimal Mehrotra (HMS), S. S. Yusuf (AITUC) and others.

Speakers congratulated the textile and jute workers for the unity they had forged in recent months. A pledge was also taken to carry forward the struggle along the lines prescribed by the May 1971 Joint Declaration of the Central Trade Union Organisations and the National Federations.



of the May Day Rally in Calcutta

At a largely-attended May Day rally held at Vasco under the auspices of the Goa State Trade Unions' Council (CITU), the working class was called upon to stand united in the face of the offensive launched by the employers.

The rally in which S.V. Rao presided adopted resolutions demanding introduction of the Minimum Wages Act in Goa, and condemning the semi-fascist terror let loose in West Bengal.

Kotah

A number of meetings were held at different factories at Kotah in the morning of May Day. Wreaths were laid at the spot where 13 workers were killed in police firing in 1971.

In the evening, a 4000-strong procession organised by CITU unions of Kotah went round the town.

The city of Ajmer witnessed for the first time a red-flag May Day rally in which a large number of workers took part. The rally was organised by 21 organisations of workers and employees. Leaflets pointing out the significance of the occasion were distributed.

Ranchi

Ranchi's Fire Bricks Sramik Kamgar Union celebrated May Day by holding a rally which was addressed by, among others, Bhola Prasad, Vice-President of the Union, and Chandi Prasad, General Secretary, Bihar State Committee of the CITU.

The Hatia Mazdoor Union brought out a torchlight procession in the evening, culminating in a meeting at the Bhurwa bus stand. The rally was addressed by A. K. Dey and Abdul Rauf of the CITU's Bihar State Committee.

Reign of Terror in Hindusthan Cables

A reign of terror has been let loose by miscreants belonging to Ruling Congress Action Group on the members of Hindusthan Cables Sramik Union, Rupnarayanpur, West Bengal and residents of the township of HCL. On many occasions, the members of the Shramik Union and their dependants have been fatally assaulted on their way to respective place of work and also outside. After the recent Assembly election, many members have been kidnapped at the point of gum.

On April 14 an employee of ITS was kidnapped on his way to duty by the miscreants. He was untraced till next day when he was placed under custoday of Salanpur P.S. in a precarious condition. On April 15 another employee was severely assaulted on his way back from the duty. On different dates, a College student, and, a school student and an employee of HCL were severely assaulted.

Complaints to the management of HCL and to the police have so far been of no use. Assaults and kidnapping continue. Attention of the Chief Minister, West Bengal has also been drawn to such state of affairs. The Shramik Union has also written to the Managing Director, HCL, demanding a total stop to such assaults and lawlessness.

Postal Employees To Fight Against Ban On New Posts

The Post and Telegraph Administrative Staff is faced with attacks by P & T Board in the shape of ban on creation of posts of clerical and allied cadres and class IV posts though work has increased enormously, retrograde standard for

lower selection grade, supervisory posts, down grading Upper Division Clerical Leave Reserve Posts to LDC Cadre and staff standard for postal life insurance work etc. While the posts of officers have increased enormously in recent times, the Subordinate staff strength has been reduced. A special meeting of the employees of Post Master General's Office Madras was held on 2nd May where strong protests were raised against the retrograde stop of the P & T Board. Speakers stressed that the phase of representation was over and the programme of agitation should be undertaken. Speakers also demanded linking up of pay-structure to minimum wage formula.

S.E. Railmen to Take Strike Ballot

The S. E. Railwaymen's Union has decided in its Working Committee meeting held on May 8, 1972 to take a strike ballot on 12th July for demands which include publication of the Third Pay Commission Report with need-based minimum wages, bonus to Railwaymen, Decasualisation, Abolition of the Contract system, full T. U. rights and reinstatement of victimised workers, withdrawal of black acts banning strikes etc. The AIRF has also been requested to convene an emergent meeting of the General Council for declaring a strike in the railways.

A few days back, on April 24-26, the Working Committee of AIRF met at Allahabad and decided to observe an 'All India Day' on June 6, 1972 demanding immediate publication of the report of the Third Pay Commission. It was also decided to hold the annual convention of the AIRF at Calcutta in August '72.

The S. E. Railwaymen's Union, has also decided to go on strike from some time in August 1972,

IN DEFENCE OF BIG BUSINESS

The decision to appoint a Banking Commission was announced on December 14, 1967 by the then Finance Minister, Morarji Desai, at the time of piloting the Social Control Bill in the Lok Sabha. He admitted in his announcement, "Although in recent years the Indian Banking System has made rapid strides.....a good deal of concern has been expressed from the point of view of their role in furthering the basic, economic and social objectives of our national policy.....The bulk of bank advances tend to be directed to the large and medium scale industries, big and established business houses while agriculture, small scale industries and export.... have not been receiving adequate attention..."

Accordingly the Banking Commission was set up on February 3, 1969 with B. G. Saraiya as Chairman. The terms of reference included the examination of the cost, manpower planning, improvement and modernisation of the operating methods and procedures of banks. But the terms significantly excluded recommending radical change in the direction of banks' lending policy giving priority to agriculture, cottage and small scale industries commensurate with their proportion in the Gross National Product.

Why the Commission was set up had been subsequently explained by R. B. Shah, Chairman of the Indian Banks' Association during his address to the Share-holders of the United Commercial Bank Ltd. (Statesman dated 7.4.69). "To my mind the specific issue in particular which the Commission has

to come to a finding about is on the role of automation in Banking operations.....It seems to me that continued efficient operation dictates the necessity for an increasing use of machines". He also said, "An incidental benefit may be that with the improvement in productivity banks' profitability would take a turn for the better."

In 1969, 14 Big Indian Banks were nationalised, bringing thereby 83% of the deposits and 80% of the total number of Commercial Bank offices under public sector. Those who expected that to public sector banking with such a position of eminence, furtherance of "basic economic and social objectives of our national policy" would be "paramount and not the rate of profit or profitability were soon disillusioned.

It is not surprising that the Banking Commission has recommended—"The structure of Banking Institutions in the rural sector should be improved by strengthening the primary (Co-op.) credit societies in such a way that they can provide adequate credit and develop the Banking habit in this sector by providing a wide range of services"—(Para 8). Such primary societies "can be converted into rural banks provided they can get technical assistance from the Central or State Co-operative banks" and whenever needed "commercial banks may have to provide such assistance" (para 8 & 19).

The Banking Commission has further recommended that where Co-operative structure is weak, a rural bank may be established by making a good primary Co-opera-

tive Society—"to work as a subsidiary of a commercial Bank" or "by the commercial bank setting up its own subsidiary" (para 8) and offering to the local residents "49% share-capital of the rural bank" to ensure local participation. But who controls the Co-operative societies and grabs the benefits from these societies and whose participation is being ensured in the B. C. recommendation? This will be amply clear from the following observation of Shri C. Subramaniam (now minister for Planning), "As long as one goes by the available assets of the farmer there is no doubt that the bulk of the credit will continue to be appropriated, as has been happening in the Co-operative Sector, by the more well-to-do and bigger farmers" (Journal of I. J. B N. 2 vol. 42).

Now, as R. K. Talwar said in February 1970, it becomes clear that to overcome bank employees' unions' resistance to the introduction of separate rural pay structure according to classification of areas which even the G. O. I or L. I. C has not introduced the B. C. has recommended setting up subsidiary rural banks co-operative or independent, with lower-salary scales.

The only redeeming feature is that the Banking Commission wants to bring co-operatives under Union or concurrent list to standardise its uneven development and functioning, under central control. The co-operative employees were long agitating for such a change as it would help them to unite the employees of all the states for realising rational terms of service from a single central authority.

The Banking Commission has, for some inexplicable reasons, advised against nationalisation of foreign banks, better known as Exchange banks, mostly from U. K. and

U.S.A and Japan and the remaining Indian Commercial Banks also dominated by Indian monopolists like the Singhania, Bangurs, Thapars and Jalans. Besides not utilising several hundred crores of Indian deposits of these Indian & foreign banks and not curbing foreign domination in banking the recommendation would leave ample room for various malpractices including over-invoicing and under-invoicing, through the foreign banks.

The Prime Minister has approvingly referred to the useful role played by the foreign banks in India while she refused to accept the democratic and anti-imperialist demand of the bank employees and the people in general for nationalisation of foreign banks. Therefore, the Commission cannot but oblige the monopolists by recommending no more nationalisation. Apart from retaining the private sector, banks foreign and Indian, as they are; the Commission recommends setting up 3 all-India banks including S.B.I. and 6 Regional banks, each covering 2 or more contiguous states to ensure competition at all levels. This arrangement, it hopes, will offer unfettered right of shifting account from one bank to another to the customers out of 2 or 3 competing banks, no matter however high the overhead charges for maintaining needlessly so many separate banks with different head offices. The Commission retains both private Sector Banks and several public sector banks throwing overboard the trade unions' demand for nationalising all banks and for forming one single public sector banking corporation as has been done in L. I. C.

While the Commission treats contemptuously the experiences of foreign countries in nationalisation and in reorganising the structure of

banking, it jumps upon the operating methods of developed Foreign Countries where unemployment problem is not so formidable an impediment in the way of economic progress. The Banking Commission says, "Banks in several developed countries have replaced manual accounting systems by mechanised system and this has resulted in quicker and better service to customers" and it also advises introduction of electronic computers, saying, "Although it is costly, banks can hire it on time or job basis. Alternatively several banks can purchase it jointly for use amongst themselves on a time-sharing basis" (Para 11). The commission advises adoption of a 'phased programme' in this regard apparently to modify staff-resistance, and asks the Government, "to take positive steps to help the banks in getting over opposition, if any, of the staff" (Para 12). Yet the commission could not but admit that the Banking Industry differs from others as "It is extremely labour-intensive". "Human labour, which can not be standardised is decisive in attaining efficiency" (Para 12)...'. "Only 7 percent of the depositors had any complaint in respect of one or another of the banks' services" (para 11). So the mechanisation and computerisation is ostensibly for better customer services but in reality it is for better "profitability" of Mr. Shah and Mr. Talwar and of those interests they stand for. Now one may ask why this huge waste of public funds on a Commission? Was it not better for the Government to enact right away what the bankers wanted or was the camouflage indispensable "in public interest"? Whatever the Government does, at least the bank employees' past T.U.

tradition will not allow the monopolists' dreams to materialise. The organised bank employees led by the All India Bank Employees' Association resisted the Nehru Government's attempt to exclude the rural areas from the L.A.T. Award, have abolished in principle, through recent Bipartite agreement, classification of pay-scales according to classification of areas. We have no doubt that they will definitely foil the sinister move again. They have also pledged to fight machinisation, automation etc. upto the last and they would not let the banking monopolists have their way in this respect too, by uniting all bank employees' organisations and Trade Unions who are similarly determined to resist the onslaught.

Railwaymen's Struggle At Kotah

At Kotah, a railwayman was recently injured while on duty. He was removed to hospital, but as treatment was delayed he died soon afterwards. Later, when the Railway doctor wanted to send the dead body for post mortem examinations, the angry workers, in a spontaneous outburst, stopped all work, as a result of which the Frontier Mail was detained at Kotah on April 15, 1972 for about 10 hours. The authorities bid to cow down the workers by sending for the police and setting off the passengers of the train against the workers failed chiefly due to the unity of railwayman in a worthy cause. The Administration was forced to come to a settlement and undertaking that no worker would be victimised.

Consumers' Price Index Numbers

(Base : 1960—100)

States/Centres	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Andhra Pradesh			
Gudur	205	199	207
Guntur	201	199	204
Hyderabad	200	197	197
Assam			
Digboi	191	190	190
Doom Dooma	176	172	168
Labac	180	177	176
Mariani	176	173	170
Rangapara	190	183	184
Bihar			
Jamshedpur	192	186	187
Jharia	193	189	187
Kodarma	214	211	212
Monghyr	209	202	201
Noamandi	195	192	198
Gujrat			
Ahmedabad	186	184	185
Bhavnagar	195	199	199
Haryana			
Yamunanagar	204	204	203
Jammu & Kashmir			
Srinagar	180	178	178
Kerala			
Alleppy	199	204	206
Alwaye	206	210	205
Mindakayam	204	206	202
Madhya Pradesh			
Balaghat	200	199	198
Bhopal	203	200	193
Gwalior	200	198	199
Indore	209	203	202
Maharashtra			
Bombay	194	191	190
Nagpur	196	197	196
Sholapur	201	207	205
Mysore			
Ammathi	206	200	211
Bangalore	199	197	197
Chikmagalur	203	198	196
Kolar Gold Field	189	189	191

Orissa			
Barbil	184	186	192
Sambalpur	199	200	202
Punjab			
Amritsar	204	205	203
Rajasthan			
Ajmer	193	192	198
Jaipur	195	193	200
Tamilnadu			
Coimbatore	180	184	185
Coonor	193	197	193
Madras	187	188	194
Madurai	197	196	200
Uttar Pradesh			
Kanpur	202	197	199
Saharanpur	198	200	203
Varanasi	216	210	214
West Bengal			
Asansol	199	195	195
Calcutta	200	193	187
Darjeeling	182	176	172
Howrah	201	196	191
Jalpaiguri	185	174	171
Raniganj	195	190	196
Delhi	218	211	213

Rajasthan	140,241
Tamilnadu	457,727
Uttar Pradesh	547,368
West Bengal	875,874
Chandigarh	20,086
Delhi	143,346
Goa	10,600
Laccadive Island	1,344
Manipur	37,665
Pondicherry	9,627
Tripura	29,989
	<hr/>
	5,155,870

Employment Exchange Statistics

(All India)

Year	No. of Applicants on live Register,
1967	2,740,435
1968	3,011,642
1969	3,423,885
1970	4,069,000
1971	5,099,919
1972 January	5,155,870

Man-Days Lost In Strikes And Lockouts

1971

(Provisional Figures)

(In lakhs)

1. Central Sphere	11.3
2. Andhra Pradesh	1.2
3. Bihar	0.5
4. Gujrat	1.3
5. Haryana	8.9
6. Kerala	20.1
7. Madhya Pradesh	0.5
8. Maharashtra	16.7
9. Mysore	6.5
10. Punjab	1.6
11. Rajasthan	0.7
12. Tamilnadu	9.8
13. Uttar Pradesh	5.2
14. West Bengal	49.3
15. Orissa	—
16. Delhi	1.3
17. Tripura	0.4
18. Pandichery	—
Total	135.5
(including others)	

Registered Unemployed During January 1972

State	No. of applicants on the live register at the end of the month
Andhra Pradesh	331,740
Assam	79,641
Bihar	432,250
Gujrat	173,625
Haryana	100,534
Himachal Pradesh	44,685
Jammu & Kashmir	26,272
Kerala	364,063
Madhya Pradesh	311,291
Maharashtra	434,581
Mysore	271,944
Orissa	190,365
Punjab	121,012

Reports from Unions

Bihar Potteries Workers Threatened

The members of the 250 strong Bihar Potteries Refractory and Ceramic Shramik Union, Hindusthan Cables, West Bengal, have been threatened with dire consequences by the Youth Congress gangsters if they do not quit the recognised Shramik Union and join the new union being organised by the Congress. The Union in its letter to the Labour Minister, West Bengal has demanded an end to this terrorism and restoration of normal T.U. activity.

Union Executives Reinstated at Kanpur

With the reinstatement of 18 union activists at the J. K. Rayons Factory, Kanpur, the ends of justice have at last been served and the bitter, year-long struggle of the workers' union (CITU) crowned with success.

Among the dismissed workers were the General Secretary and two Vice-Presidents of the Union. The Union which will be duly recognised after a period of 3 months has been permitted to hold meetings and carry on its usual activities.

The management agreed to pay 10% bonus for 1970 to the workers. A bipartite machinery for the settlement of disputes has also been set up.

SER Ministerial Staff Conference

At the initiative of the Ministerial Staff Action Committee, S.E. Railway, a Conference was held on May 14 and 15 at Bilaspur. About 350 delegates participated from all over S. E. Railway. Ram Gopal Tiwari, M.P. inaugurated the Conference.

Bengal Colliery Workers To Strike

Over one lakh colliery workers of Raniganj-Asansol coal belt will go on a strike from June 12 for the fulfilment to their demands like Nationalisation of all Coal Mines, full implementation of Wage Board recommendations, D.A. at the rate of Rs.2.13 per day. The strike call was given by CITU, HMS INTUC, AITUC affiliated unions. Robin Chatterjee, General Secretary, Colliery Mazdoor Sabha has appealed to all unions and workers to form broad-based Committees to organise and conduct the strike unitedly.

Maharashtra CITU Collects Money for W. Bengal

The Maharashtra State Committee of the CITU collected Rs.12,500 for relief to evicted workers in West Bengal and handed over the amount to Jyoti Basu, Member, Working Committee, CITU, in a mass meeting held in Bombay on May 13,

On May 15, Md. Ismail M. P, presided over the well-attended open session.

The meeting adopted resolutions on improvement in the wage structure of Railwayman, delay in publication of the Report of the Third Pay Commission, Payment of bonus to Railwaymen, against Automation greeting the valiant fighters of Vietnam and others.

P.F. Arrears With Employees Reach Rs. 18.61 Crores

The ever mounting of Provident Fund dues with the employers has reached a record figure of Rs.18.61 crores. Despite talk of the spokesman of the Government that the defaulting employers will be detained under P. D. Act or MISA, no action has been taken against any employers.

The Union Minister for Labour, R. K. Khadilkar, has recently reiterated in the Parliament the Government's intention to take legal action against defaulting employers one knows, however from experience that this is just an idle threat.

The following table gives the Statewise break-up arrears of P.F. contributions with the employers by end of 1971.

Arrears as on the 31st December, 1971

Region	Total (In lakhs of Rupees)
Andhra Pradesh	59.45
Assam	10.17
Bihar	51.87
Delhi	13.97
Gujrat	59.61
Kerala	51.63
Madhya Pradesh	224.78
Maharashtra	634.66
Mysore	25.95
Orissa	21.45
Punjab & Haryana	26.70
Rajasthan	48.55
Tamilnadu (Including pondicherry)	168.46
Uttar Pradesh	192.93
West Bengal	270.50
	1860.67

newsletters

TAMILNADU

Government's New Anti-T.U. Bill

The Tamilnadu Government is seemingly unwilling to learn from experience. If it had drawn the proper lessons from the Simpsons events, it would certainly not have shown the temerity of drafting the thoroughly anti-working class bill, "Legislation on Recognition of Representative Union and Unfair Labour Practice."

The bill seeks to put the entire responsibility of according recognition to, or withdrawing it from, unions in the hands of an "Industrial Court", which, in its turn will leave to its own set of investigating officers the duty of verification of membership. Thus the principle of recognition through secret ballot—a principle for which militant trade unions have consistently fought—has been thrown to the winds.

Let us take a close look at the other provisions of the Bill. It has laid down a whole series of severe penal provisions against what it elaborately defines under the heading "unfair labour practice." It gives the Labour and Industrial Courts the power to declare a strike illegal and to refuse recognition to a union which may have within a period of six months prior to that, aided or abetted the commencement or continuation of an "illegal" strike. Arbitration can also be forced on recognised unions, thus seeking to take away from the workers their right to strike.

The Working Committee of the CITU in its recent meeting at Delhi has passed a resolution pro-

testing against this Bill. V. P. Chintan, Assistant Secretary of the Tamilnadu Committee of the CITU has addressed a memorandum to the Labour Minister, Government of Tamilnadu, in which he has criticised the Bill. He has also resigned in protest from the Subcommittee appointed to study and report on the draft bill.

Simpsons Elections

Our readers will be pleased to know that in the elections to the Workers' Union of the Simpsons Group of Companies, held recently, R. Kuchelar has been elected President and V. P. Chintan (CIU) the General Secretary.

This is a fitting reply by the general body of workers to the DMK Government's earlier effort to foist a leader on them and to a sinister, subsequent move to disregard the workers' mandate by dissolving the Six-man Committee. This is also a vindication of the stand taken by the CITU all along that free and fair election to the union would be the first step towards restoration of normality in the plants.

Avadi Again

The 6,000 workers of the Heavy Vehicles Factory, Avadi, whose contribution during the recent Indo-Pak war was appreciated by the Government have been rewarded with a lock-out again early this month.

The workers withdrew the earlier strike only last February on being assured by the Union Labour Minister, R. K. Khadilkar—that their demands would be given due consideration. But since nothing was done in the following two months,

the workers had to begin stay-in-strike and bring it home to the authorities that their patience was not inexhaustible. The lock-out came soon afterwards.

Leyland Closure

Ashok Leyland, one of the leading truck manufacturing units in India, has been closed down since May 14. The Management has stated that the closure would not be lifted until it was assured of the safety of 'loyal' workers and of normal production

The workers' union, led by Kuchelar who had earlier taken over from a DMK nominee, has been agitating for sometime past for higher bonus. The closure came with the workers resorting to go-slow methods. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of the CITU, recently called on Tamilnadu's Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi, and demanded immediate Government intervention in the Leyland dispute.

Cuddalore Detenus

Ramamurti's meeting with the Chief Minister was part of an elaborate campaign chalked out by the Tamilnadu Committee of the CITU for, among other things, better deal for West Bengal detenus now at Cuddalore. On May 14, its South Arcot District Committee held a rally in the town of Cuddalore and demanded the immediate repatriation of the detenus. Ramamurti addressed this meeting also.

In his talks with the Chief Minister, he has demanded, in the meanwhile, that better food and more newspapers be supplied to the prisoners who are out of touch with their friends and relatives.

Plantation Strike

Led by the CITU and some other organisations, workers of the tea estates of Valparai, which employ about 30,000 workers, have launched

an indefinite strike from May 11. They are demanding a minimum daily wage of Rs. 5 and six month's wages as bonus.

The strike was a repudiation of an agreement which the management had earlier arrived at with the INTUC, AITUC and DMK unions awarding 10.5 per cent of the total earnings as bonus. The strike should give one an idea of the militancy sweeping working class movements in this State.

KERALA

General Strike In Kerala

At the call of the Kerala Committee of the CITU, five lakh workers struck work on May 16 in protest against the attacks of the Indira Government and ruling classes on the trade union rights of workers in West Bengal and other parts of the Country.

The Police resorted to brutal lathi-charges against the striking workers in Trivandrum and Ponkunnam. Many workers were arrested in Kozhikode, Trichur, Palai and other places.

The agricultural labourers also took part in the strike at the call of the agricultural Labourers' Association. Plantations, cashew, coir and handloom industries were completely paralysed due to the strike. State private transport, however, was partially affected:

The organised working class through this mighty strike action declared its unambiguous opposition to the attacks on the trade union rights by the Indira Government. Other demands on which this general strike was organised included withdrawal of the ban on strikes in Iddiki Project and Electricity

Board, declaration of the right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution, withdrawal of the anti-people taxes, provision of unemployment relief, etc.

15,000 workers joined the strike in Ernakulam district. Besides this, agricultural workers in this district also struck work. Among the others who took part in this strike in this district were toddy tappers.

State Transport Workers and ministerial staff of the State Transport organised under the CITU, also took part in the strike in Alwaye and Private transport workers throughout the district joined the strike, paralysing bus transport completely.

25,000 workers in Trichur district struck work on the 16th May, paralysing life in Trichur City. Not a single private bus plied in the city, 26 workers were arrested by the police. Besides, 20,000 agricultural workers in the district also participated in the strike.

In Kottayam, 11,000 workers organised under the CITU took part in the strike, and 25,000 organised agricultural workers joined them. The workers who struck part included Estate workers, Toddy tappers and industrial workers. Out of the 150 buses usually plying in Kottayam only 16 or 17 were brought out, the owners themselves being at the wheels, with police escort.

Magnificent Response

In Alleppey district, the response to the strike call was magnificent. One lakh workers took part in the general strike on 16th. 20,090 coir factory workers and 30,000 coir spinning workers also took part in the strike.

Out of the 2½ lakh agricultural workers in the District, 50,000 workers who are at present in employment struck work.

1½ lakhs workers of Trivandrum District also struck work on the 16th in response to the call of the Kerala State CITU.

State Transport workers under the leadership of the CITU took part in the strike in their entirety. As a result of the strike, buses did not ply at all.

The Government tried to break the strike by the use of police. About 300 workers have been arrested. Police resorted to lathi-charge three times in the night. Protesting against the lathi-charge and lock-up tortures, shops in some of the markets in Trivandrum and the shops in the main road observed hartal.

The workers who resorted to strike in Quilon district included 20,000 cashew workers resulting in the complete paralysis of work in 25 factories. In Kozhikode city, 10,000 workers joined the strike.

E. Balanandan, Secretary of the Kerala State Committee of the CITU, congratulated the industrial and agricultural workers for participating in the strike, thus expressing their strong protest against the attacks of the ruling classes on the T.U. rights, despite the threats of the Government.

10,000 workers in the Idikki district took part in the strike. Workers in the area under ban struck work in defiance of the strike ban. As a result of the strike, work in the Underground Powerhouse in Moolamattam, Fresher Shaft, Power Tunnel, was completely paralysed.

Kerala's Cashew Workers who have been waging relentless struggles in recent months are on the warpath again. Led by the CITU, AITUC and UTUC, about a lakh and a half of them went on an indefinite strike from May 10 on demands which include the strict implementation of minimum wages.

The Union and the State Governments are, as usual, maintaining a complete silence over the issue.

Employees of the Accountant General's Office in Trivandrum have resorted to 'Work to rule' from 17th May. This will continue till the 23rd.

It will be recalled that two employees of the Accountant General's Office were dismissed by the President of India without showing any cause. One of those dismissed is the General Secretary of the Employees' Association. The employees have been carrying on demonstrations and meetings in protest against this dismissal. Later, they resorted to satyagraha and now they have switched to 'Work to Rule'.

Jyoti Basu, during his recent visit to Trivandrum, visited the employees on satyagraha and expressed solidarity with their just struggle. He recalled how in W. Bengal, leaders of the State Government employees and leaders of the Defence workers were dismissed by the President in order to break the organisations of the employees and workers.

MAHARASHTRA

Preparing For Movements

A meeting of the Maharashtra State Committee of the CITU held in Bombay on May 7 strongly condemned the suppression of trade union and democratic rights in West Bengal and called upon the workers of Maharashtra to contribute for the relief of thousands of evicted workers in West Bengal.

S. Y. Kolhatkar, President Maharashtra State Committee of CITU presided over the meeting. B. T. Ranadive President CITU participated in the meeting and guided its deliberations.

By a resolution the meeting condemned the disruptive and anti-working class step of the Maharashtra Government of granting two increments to the State Government employees who acted as strike breakers during the 11 day strike in 1970.

By another resolution the meeting criticised the new rural employment guarantee scheme of Maharashtra Government which though claims to grant right to work from May 1 in practice it makes a mockery of the concept. The resolution demanded Rs. 6 as daily wages for agricultural workers employed on irrigated land and Rs. 4 on unirrigated land.

The meeting condemned the police firing at Ambarnath. It expressed its solidarity with the struggle of two and a half lakhs powerloom workers who have been fighting for implementation of minimum wage recommendations, and with workers in silver manufacturing units for higher wages.

Conference Deplores cut in ESI Benefits

More than 1,000 delegates who participated in a Conference convened by the Maharashtra State Committee of CITU in Bombay on April 9 strongly protested against new restrictions and cuts imposed on the ESI benefits. S. Y. Kolhatkar presided over the Conference. P. K. Kurane, K. L. Bajaj and several representatives of panel doctors took part in the deliberations.

Madan Phandnis moved a resolution criticising the working of the scheme resulting in non-supply of medicines to the workers. It pointed out that formerly 56 days leave with half wages every year was given to the workers by the ESI Corporation which has now been brought down to 8 days. The Conference called upon all the Central trade union organisations and unions to come

together for joint actions on this pressing issue.

Md. Ismail, Vice President CITU toured some industrial centres and explained the situation in West Bengal. On April 20 he visited Kolhapur where he held a press Conference in which he explained the reign of terror let loose on the T. U. and democratic movement in West Bengal. He attended a meeting of Bidi workers and called upon them to launch struggles to win their demands.

He addressed a mass meeting of powerloom workers on the same day which was attended by about 3000 workers.

On April 21 he addressed a well attended meeting of workers in Andheri, a suburb of Bombay where workers came in several processions. He appealed to the workers of Bombay to rally behind the working class of West Bengal.

Ambarnath Firing

The firing on innocent workers of the K. T. Steel Factory, Ambarnath on April 25, which reminds one of Jalianwalabag has shocked the people of all shades of political opinion.

The workers who were to have been paid their wages—as per a ruling of the Labour Court by April 22, were still waiting to get them on the day of the incident. They were peacefully staging a sit on the factory compound blocking the exit. Their only slogan was—pay our dues.

Truckloads of Police were called in by the management. They closed the gates and then suddenly, without any provocation started the shooting. Nine Workers killed—six on the spot—and fourteen injured. Next morning Ambarnath observed a bundh and paid its homage to the deceased in a meeting attended by 15,000 workers representing all trade unions.

RAJASTHAN

Workers Fight Repression

The thumping majority in the last Assembly Elections seems to have emboldened the Barkatulla Ministry to come out with a labour policy openly favouring the employers.

In Jaipur Spinning & Weaving Mills, the Suti Mill Mazdoor Ekta Samiti (CITU) had placed a charter of demands, and the workers of CITU & INTUC unions were uniting to fight for it. The management brought anti-social elements and mounted an attack on the workers inside the Mills. The Reeling Department workers were brutally beaten up by these goondas on the night of April 26 in protest against which the workers observed a 24-hour protest strike. When the management failed to stop such goonda attacks and guarantee security to workers, the workers were compelled to continue the strike indefinitely and it is still going on.

On May 11 more than 13 thousand workers of 24 big and small factories struck work at the call of the CITU and took out a huge joint procession and demonstrated in front of the Vidhan Sabha. Several MLAs addressed the gathering, accusing the Indira Government of having rigged the Elections in West Bengal. At this stage, the Police swung into action. On May 13 the General Secretary of the CITU union and some other activists were arrested. Later, the Police entered the labour colony, fired more than 200 teargas shells and demolished about 25 hutments. Even women and children were assaulted. In all more

DISRUPTIVE TACTICS IN AIDEF FOILED

A couple of days after the elections of Ordnance Factory Mazdoor Union, Ichapore, West Bengal, pro-AITUC elements inside the Union led by Umalal Sinha taking advantage of the situation in West Bengal forcibly occupied the Union with the help of goondas. On April 7 a bogus union Conference was held in the Office under the protection of CRP and notorious goondas which "dissolved" the elected leadership.

Since the Union has been affiliated to the All India Defence Employees Federation the pro-AITUC leadership did its best to use their position to keep the genuine leadership of the Union outside the Federation. Both S.M. Banerjee, President, AIDEF and K.G. Sriwastave, Jt. Secretary even went to the extent of using disruptive tactics but they failed in their game.

Earlier the pro-AITUC leaders tried to bring in all the 16 delegates allotted to the Ordnance Factories Mazdoor Union, Ichapore, which the

than 50 workers were injured and more than 35 from among them were arrested.

The Rajasthan Workers' & Employees' Organisation Coordination Committee, consisting of Central & State Employees, LIC, Banks, and all the Trade Union Bodies, the CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, has taken up the matter and come out in support of the striking workers. It has sent a deputation to the Labour Minister, and demanded immediate withdrawal of all cases,

genuine leadership of the Union strongly objected to.

The Working Committee of the Federation considered this question thrice and ultimately the matter was entrusted to S.M. Banerjee, President and S.M. Joshi, Vice-President, AIDEF. After listening to both sides S.M. Joshi gave his opinion that the new Committee set up by Umalal Sinha was completely illegal and hence the so-called delegate could not be recognised by the Conference. He also felt that the delegates of the Union could not be recognised as they were not elected in a formal Working Committee as the Union Office was under lock and key.

K.M. Mathew, General Secretary, AIDEF, suggested a compromise proposal for adhoc settlement which the genuine leadership accepted in the interest of Union. The pro-AITUC leadership in the first instance opposed to proposal but had to give up in view of the strong feelings expressed by various sections in the AIDEF.

West Bengal Cotton Textile Workers to Strike on June 29

Over 50 thousand Cotton Textile Workers in West Bengal will down their tools on June 29 in protest against the non-settlement of their longstanding dispute following the 1969 agreement,

The call of the strike has been given in a statement issued by Hrishikesh Banerjee, General Secretary, Cotton Textile Workers, Federation. Similar call has been given by INTUC, AITUC and HMS unions. The Federation has appealed to all unions to conduct the struggle under joint leadership so that the employers are forced to concede their just demands.