

THE WORKING CLASS

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VOTE FOR

LEFT & DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES

Except Kerala, Tamilnadu, U. P. and Orissa the entire country is preparing for Assembly elections. The Prime Minister is every day throwing promises at the people and painting a rosy picture of future stability to hoodwink them and make them vote for her party and allies.

The working class of India as vanguard of the democratic movement has to cast its vote consciously so that forces who stand by the working class and the people are elected to fight for their rights inside the legislatures.

The ruling Congress is exploiting the victory in Bangladesh for selfish Party purposes during elections by propagating that the victory was due to the policies pursued by Smt. Indira Gandhi. The Congress Government which was doggedly opposing holding of elections in West Bengal only some days ago decided to hold them only with the fond hope of cashing on the Bangladesh issue.

The people of India are increasingly realising the hollowness of the claims of Smt. Gandhi and the ruling Congress that India is marching fast towards Socialism. The slogan of "Garibi Hatao" has been systematically used to cheat the people. Instead of eradicating the poverty the Congress policies have resulted in actually increasing the poverty of the masses.

The big business have amassed huge profits despite so-called anti-monopoly laws and other restrictive trade practices. According to the study of balance sheet of 201 companies, it is seen that during 1970-71 their total assets increased by Rs. 280 crores. This wealth could not have been garnered by the big business without the direct support of the Government. This is the period during which Smt. Gandhi was speaking so loudly about smashing the citadels of monopoly. This has also happened after the much advertised nationalisation of 14 leading commercial banks.

The crushing burdens on the people imposed through increase in indirect taxation, the reckless resort to deficit financing, sky-rocketing prices of essential commodities and alarming unemployment have all combined to impose appalling conditions on the people of the country.

The blatant refusal of the Government to introduce genuine land

Editorial Board

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Ghosh

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reforms have created a serious situation in the rural areas. The hoax of green revolution is now being understood by the rural people who have seen that it only benefitted the upper strata of the landed interests.

When people rise against their deteriorating conditions they are being suppressed mercilessly. The use of DIR, MISA, P.D. and ESM Acts all over India and PVA Act in West Bengal has become a common occurrence in every Trade Union and democratic struggle.

The leaders of AITUC, HMS as well as Right Communist Party and PSP have given up all shame and joined the camp of the ruling party and helped the Government in carrying out merciless attacks on the people. These parties have virtually become appendages of the ruling Congress.

The people in West Bengal are facing semi-fascist reign of terror of Congress goondas backed by the police, CRP and the authorities. Normal trade union activity has become almost impossible. Arrests of thousands of activists, their transfer to jails in other states far away from West Bengal, combing operations have become the order of the day. Even during elections campaigning has become extremely difficult for left and democratic candidates.

As we go to the press the reports from Asansol have reached our office which highlight the desperate attempt of the Congress gangsters to intimidate the voters. It is reported that on February 22 Sunil Ghosh, Member of the Executive Committee of Sen Raleigh Employees' Union, Kanyapur was shot dead by goondas in his quarters. Goondas in broad day light paraded the streets with arms and knocked

every door beating men and women. They attacked the union office and beat every one who was there. Instead of punishing the culprits the police falsely spread reports that bombs and pipe-guns were found in the union office. In a similar manner a jeep belonging to Chittaranjan Locomotive Works Labour Union was falsely reported to be carrying arms and ammunitions. On the other hand well known goondas are given free reign to intimidate the voters.

In Sonarpur CITU activist Nirmal Chatterjee was forcibly taken away from his residence on February 11 at night by Congress goondas. After killing him the leaders of the gang raped his wife in presence of his children. Giving up all shame the Congress party later on claimed that Nirmal

Chatterjee was their activist! This is just the type of democracy that is prevailing in West Bengal and this is how "free and fair elections" are being held under Presidential Rule.

Despite such terrorism working class and people of West Bengal are heroically resisting these anti-social elements. A strong left united front has been formed in West Bengal to defeat Congress and her allies.

It is the prime duty of the working class to vote for candidates belonging to left and democratic parties and give a fitting reply to the anti-people policies pursued by the Congress Government. A defeat of these policies is the only guarantee for building of an independent and self reliant economy and for democratic advance.

Forum of Progressive Doctors to Fight for Better Health Service

The forum of progressive Doctors formed in July last in Calcutta has published a Manifesto appealing the medical profession to be partisan in the fight for fulfilling the aspirations of the masses.

The Forum will not be a parallel organisation to the Indian Medical Association but proposes to bring together all others connected with medical profession for implementation of truly people-oriented health services and for fighting for improvement of the service conditions through collective bargaining.

While criticising the present health service the Forum pledges to fight for a national service scheme and for better medical facilities to the mass of people.

While criticising the corruption

prevailing in the Medical profession the Manifesto says :

"In the context of widespread corruption within the social fabric, it is not surprising that such evil practices have permeated into the medical profession. The Forum pledges vigilance and constant effort to root out pockets of unethical and other malpractices in medical profession. The Forum also pledged to launch a drive against adulteration of food and drugs."

The Forum condemns the obstructions caused by armed forces and anti-social elements when the doctors and para-medical staff attend victims of assault from the reactionary classes. It calls for a better medical education and improvement

★ On Last Page

INDIAN WORKERS OBSERVE Anti-Repression Day

The semi-fascist terror let loose by the ruling classes in West Bengal has roused the working class into vigorous, organised protests all over the country. In response to a call given by the CITU, unions affiliated to it observed Anti-Repression Day between January 31 and February 6; reports are pouring in of meetings which, apart from expressing solidarity with the workers of West Bengal, condemned the savage repression they were being subjected to.

Memorandum to the President

In New Delhi, a memorandum from the CITU was submitted to the President, Mr. V. V. Giri, on February 5, drawing his attention to the grave situation in West Bengal. The memorandum, while condemning the Government's offensive launched against CITU-led Unions in the State, cites instances in which about 500 trade union, peasant and student leaders were killed and many others assaulted. It points out how anti-social elements are being inducted in large numbers and trained to take forcible possession of union offices.

The memorandum seeks to bring to the President's notice the conspicuous role of the Police and the CRP in West Bengal, which is, apparently, to aid and abet the anti-socials. There have been numerous incidents of death in Police custody, but no judicial enquiry has been asked for to look into them. The memorandum states how the MISA and the PVA Act are being used indiscriminately against trade union activists and a complete mockery made of democratic rights.

The memorandum calls for an immediate end to these atrocities.

It quotes newspaper reports of how gestapo stormtrooper methods are re-enacted in the State without any protest or apparent concern, and warns that to allow this dangerous game to continue would be to betray Indian democracy and its avowed principles.

The CITU deputation which waited on the President included P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, Md. Ismil, S. Y. Kolhatkar and E. Balanandan, Vice Presidents, and M. K. Pandhe, Secretary. Later, at a crowded press conference, Ramamurti explained the CITU stand.

Delhi

The Delhi Unit of the CITU observed an Anti-Repression week from January 31 during which all its affiliates held separate meetings. A number of processions on February 5 came as a climax to the campaign followed by a largely-attended meeting at the Nagia Park. The meeting which was addressed by P. Ramamurti, Md. Ismail, S. Y. Kolhatkar and others denounced the persecution of trade union activists in West Bengal.

West Bengal

A new chapter was added to the history of the working class struggle in West Bengal when, on January 25, Anti-Repression Day was observed by well over five lakh workers all over the State. A significant feature was the urge for unity among the working class borne by the fact that a large number of workers following other Central Trade Unions spontaneously participated. Workers in all factories and offices, coal mines, tea plantations and other establishments observed the Day by organising deputations

and submitting memoranda to their respective managements.

The growing urge for united action among the working class and other democratic masses received a tremendous boost when, on January 29, a Convention of Trade Unions, Peasants' Organisations, Students and Teachers Associations and other mass organisations was held in Calcutta under the joint auspices of the State Committees of three Central T. U. organisations—CITU, UTUC and UTUC (Lenin Sarani). Attended by a large number of delegates, the Convention adopted a unanimous resolution demanding an end to all terror and repression, withdrawal of MISA, PVA and other repressive laws, release of all political prisoners, re-opening of all closed factories, reduction in tax-burden on the common people and restoration of peaceful conditions so that free and fair elections may be held in the State. The Convention also decided to hold a massive joint rally and demonstration on February 12.

Kerala

All over Kerala, meetings were held and resolutions passed by trade unions. In a wire addressed to the President, the Akhila Vypeen Chethu Thozhilali Union, Nayarambalam, demanded an immediate stop to the move to crush and destroy the T.U. movement and the democratic forces in West Bengal. Anti-repression Day was observed and resolutions passed also by the Indian Transformers Employees' Association, Alwaye; K. S. R. T. U. Ministerial Staff Federation, Alwaye Unit; Alwaye Hotel and Bakery Workers' Union, Thodupuzha; Thodupuzha Taluk Toddy Shop Workers' Union; Trivandrum District Engineering Employees' Union, Ernakulam District Coconut and Rice Research Station Workers and the Corporation Thozhilali Union, Ernakulam.

Mysore

Unions in Mysore, while denouncing the systematic attacks on trade union workers in West Bengal, called for the repatriation of West Bengal detenus now lodged in jails outside the State. Resolutions to this effect were passed by the Cashewnut and Allied Workers' Union, Mangalore, in its two meetings at Jeppu and Kulshékara as well as by the Mangalore Workers' Union, in its two meetings at Kulshékara and Urva. Among other unions which observed the Day were the Mangalore Beedi Kelasegarara Sangha; Coondapoor Kelasegarara Sangha; the S. K. Press Workers' Union, Mangalore; the Electro Metallurgical Employees' Union and the West Coast Paper Mills Employees' Union, both of Dandeli.

Tamilnadu

The CITU and the Joint Council of Trade Unions of Madras and Chingleput held a public meeting at Ambattur Kamaraj Park on February 5 to condemn the terrorisation of trade union workers in West Bengal and called for the vacation of the 21 union offices now forcibly occupied by Congress gangsters.

Punjab

The CITU of Punjab organised a meeting at Jullundur on January 31 to observe Anti-Repression Day. The meeting presided over by Des Raj was attended by leading affiliates like the Metal Mazdoor Union, the Rubber Mazdoor Union and the Bhatha Mazdoor Union. It was unanimously decided to rally the workers' support through more meetings and demonstrations. Anti-Repression Day was also observed at Pathankot by the Hydrel Workers Union on February 3. At a meeting, the union passed resolutions protesting against the attacks on West

Bengal workers. It denounced, among other things, the administration's attempt to rig elections in the State and demanded the lifting of the State of Emergency.

A general meeting of the Industrial Workers' Union, Panipat (Haryana), on January 23, warned that the semi-fascist methods adopted by the ruling classes in West Bengal were a step towards dictatorship.

Maharashtra

In Bombay, employees of the Times of India Group of papers, led by the Times of India & Allied Publications Employees' Union, observed an Anti-Repression week from January 31. As a part of the campaign, a memorandum deploring the attacks directed against the trade union movement in West Bengal was signed by 450 workers and mailed to the President.

Bhilai Steel Construction Workers Fight for Job Security

Over eight thousand workers employed in construction work in Bhilai Steel Plant faced a serious threat of retrenchment when the Management unilaterally announced that a newly formed Hindusthan Steelworks Construction would be given construction jobs of the Steel Plant. The authorities refused to give any guarantee that all the workers would be absorbed in the new company without affecting their continuity of service and terms of service conditions though majority of the workers had worked for 10-15 years.

Despite formal assurances by the management that there would be no retrenchment the workers apprehended large scale retrenchment. The mounting discontent brought workers of all affiliations together and a Trade Union Action committee comprising of CITU, INTUC and AITUC unions was formed to conduct the struggle unitedly.

A big demonstration was organised by the Action Committee on February 11 when Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister P. C. Sethi visited Bhilai for election propaganda. A memorandum was handed over to

him demanding job security for all the workers.

When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Bhilai on February 14 all construction workers applied for casual leave and demonstrated at the airport and presented her a memorandum of their demands. This demonstration was also unitedly organised by the Action Committee. The Prime Minister, however, refused to give any commitment about their job security.

A meeting of the workers was held at Lal Maidan on February 18 to express the determination of the construction workers to fight till their demands are accepted. The meeting was presided over by G. P. Singh (AITUC) and addressed by representatives of all the trade unions.

Monoranjan Roy, M.P., Secretary CITU, congratulated the workers for their united struggle and called upon them to strengthen their unity for further struggles. He demanded that all the construction workers must be taken on duties with the same terms and service conditions and without any break in service.

Jute Workers' United Struggle

For Higher Wages And Against Cut In D.A.

The jute workers all over West Bengal are greatly agitated and preparing themselves for united struggle against the arbitrary and illegal decision of the IJMA to effect cut in D.A. According to the calculation of IJMA itself, the present consumer price index is 817, which is 70 point higher than the previous consumer price index of 747. So, the D.A. should rise by Rs. 14 per month. But the IJMA has decided that out of Rs. 14 rise in D. A., Rs. 9.20 should be deducted in adjustment of the D. A. cut restored earlier; and the balance of Rs. 4.80 only to be given as rise in D. A.

It is well known that the issue of earlier reduction for alleged decrease in Consumer Price Index was finally settled in August 1971. In the face of united protest by the workers against D. A. cut at that time, the Union Labour Minister intervened and the IJMA agreed to restore the cut of Rs. 9.20 and there was no question of future adjustment. The workers were further assured that unless and until wages and other demands are settled, there can be no question of cut in D. A. but now taking advantage of disunity in the ranks of trade union and prevailing political atmosphere, the IJMA effected this adjustment in violation of its own agreement and refused to pay the full rise in D. A. i. e. Rs.14 legally due to the workers.

The workers under the leadership of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU) organised massive protest against this decision and on 11th February last, more than two lakh workers of 65 mills belonging to

different shifts signed a memorandum and submitted this to the respective managements demanding full payment of the rise in D. A. BCMU took initiative in raising the voice of protest, which was joined by all other Central Trade Unions also. But surprisingly enough Sisir Ganguly, General Secretary of West Bengal INTUC came out with a public statement supporting the stand of the IJMA. Kamal Sarkar, General Secretary of BCMU wrote a letter to all Central Trade Unions proposing one day's token strike immediately and urging upon all Central Trade Unions to sit-together immediately to decide about a continuous industry-wise united strike for realisation of the long standing demands for wage rise etc. While the two UTUCs in their reply supported these proposals, the AITUC gave a half-hearted approval of the proposal and the HMS and the INTUC gave no reply.

It may be recalled that after two general strikes of jute workers in 1929 and in 1937, there was no industry-wise strike in jute for 31 years due to split in the trade unions. It was only during U.F. regime when again total unity was achieved, there were two successful industry-wise strikes of the jute workers in August 1969 and in December 1970. Workers realised Rs.30 interim increment in wage, bonus and gratuity—all other matters were referred to Wage Fixation Committee. INTUC under Kali Mukherjee's leadership joined the united battle. Now, with the change in leadership of the West Bengal INTUC, it is opposing

the joint action demanded by the workers for the inordinate delay by the Wage Committee which has been in existence for 14 months. There can be no justification for the West Bengal INTUC opposing joint action here, when it is participating in strike actions in Tamilnadu and Maharashtra.

The jute industry not only in West Bengal but in the whole of India has made enormous gains. The Foreign Exchange earning annually through jute export was Rs. 250 crores in 1965. It fell to Rs. 130 crores in 1968 but again it has risen and reached Rs. 300 crores. L. N Mishra, Minister for Foreign Trade recently admitted that jute mill-owners and their agents are selling jute goods at an exorbitant price in foreign countries—the price per ton being 4 times higher than what is fixed by the India Government. Even Economic Times and Statesman considered the price too high for the good of jute goods trade. The workers' representatives in the Wage Committee also warned the IJMA about this with no result. In 1971 four hundred crores of rupees have been earned by the industrialists and traders—the rate of profit earned by them is even higher than that of East India Company in its days of plunder. A dozen of jute owners is looting the entire profits depriving the workers and the people. The jute mill owners are not worried in the least about the future of jute. They are making hay while the going is good.

After the emergence of Bangladesh, the position of jute industry has undergone a radical change. Now, India and Bangladesh together would dominate the world market. But in Bangladesh, the industry is controlled by the State though not yet nationalised whereas, despite repeated demands by the workers, no step for nationa-

lisation or control has yet been taken by the Government of India which has allowed the Jute Barons a free hand to garner enormous profit and amass huge black money in foreign countries.

So, the moment is opportune for the workers to launch a united battle and realise their demands. The workers unanimously demanded Rs. 300 as minimum and fixation of other wages accordingly. The IJMA's offer of Rs. 195 a month back was unanimously rejected by the workers. The ridiculousness of IJMA's offer is also revealed through the fact that if Rs. 14 D.A. rise is added to the present wage of Rs. 184.60, the total comes to Rs. 198.60. The workers are in no mood to take it lying down. They are preparing themselves for entering

united battle. Already on 11th February last, a massive protest was organised. The BCMU has decided to explore all possibilities for an industry-wise united strike not later than 31st March. It is having discussions with the INTUC to bring it back into the united battle. The jute workers are determined to give a fitting reply to the challenge thrown by the jute owners.

The Central Executive Committee meeting of the BCMU held on February 16, called upon all the unions in jute industry in West Bengal to prepare for an indefinite General Strike in March. The BCMU also addressed letters to unions in Jute industry all over India to join this united struggle to realise their longstanding demands.

TOKEN STRIKE BY N.C.A.E.R. STAFF IN DELHI

Employees of the National Council of Applied Economic Research, led by the N. C. A. E. R. Employees' Union, went on a day's token strike on February 2, demanding the reinstatement of 70 victimised employees and the acceptance of the Charter of Demands. The strike was a total success.

Former Planning Minister, Asoke Mehta, is the Chairman of the Council and S. Bhoothalingam, former Secretary of the Union Government, is its Director General.

The Employees are preparing to step up their agitation if the Council fails to concede the demands of the workers.

DELHI CAR PARK ATTENDANTS SERVE CHARTER

Car Park attendants of Delhi, have served a notice on the Automobile Association of Upper India of which President Giris the patron-in-Chief, demanding the payment of minimum wages fixed under the Minimum Wages Act.

At present the car park attendants are paid a paltry Rs. 2 a month and the Association expects them to live on the tips of car owners.

The Car Park Attendants' Union is preparing to launch an agitation for the payment of minimum wages.

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Massive Rally In Calcutta Against Repression and Terror In West Bengal

The working class and democratic people of West Bengal have once again expressed their firm determination to fight and defeat the brutal repression and semi-fascist terror mounted on the people of the State by the Congress (R) Government. As decided by the Joint Convention of workers and employees held in Calcutta on January 29 (reported on page 3 of this issue), a massive protest rally was held at Subodh Mullick Square in Calcutta on February 12 under the joint auspices of the West Bengal State Committees of CITU, UTUC and UTUC (Lenin Sarani). Supported by the Rashtriya Sangram Samity, 12th July Committee and the Federation of Mercantile Employees, the rally was joined by more than 30,000 workers, employees and others belonging to about 300 mass organisations. After the rally a mammoth procession, carrying festoons and banners and cheered by thousands of people on the way,

went round the main streets and ended near the Rajbhavan where a memorandum, addressed to the Governor of West Bengal, was handed over by the leaders.

Md. Ismail M. P., President of the West Bengal Committee of CITU presided over the rally. Moved by Jatin Chakravarty (UTUC), and supported by Monoranjan Roy, M.P. (CITU) and Fatik Ghosh (UTUC-Lenin Sarani), a resolution was unanimously adopted by the rally condemning the semi-fascist terror and repression in West Bengal and demanding immediate end to this repression so that free and fair election may be held in the State. The resolution also demanded, among other things, immediate re-opening of more than 500 closed factories and other establishments, jobs or unemployment benefits for all the unemployed and reduction of tax-burden and prices of essential commodities.

A Recent Case On Industrial Disputes Act

A. P. Chatterjee

In a case between Delhi Cloth and General Mills Co. vs Ludh Budh Singh decided by the Supreme Court on January 11, 1972 in Civil Appeal no. 984 of 1967, an elaborate discussion was made by the Supreme Court on the scope of the enquiry by the Tribunal to which a permission is applied for by the employer for punishing a workman by dismissal or otherwise under section 33 (1) (b) of the Industrial Disputes Act. Needless to say, the same principles would apply also to an application for approval of action taken by the employer under section 33(2) (b) of the Act.

In that case, the Company declared bonus at the rate of 6% for the year ending June 30, 1965 after negotiations between them and the workmen failed. The workmen being dissatisfied with the quantum of bonus went on strike in the afternoon of February 23, 1966. According to the management, the strike took a violent turn resulting in the workmen indulging in "wanton acts of destruction". The management declared a lock-out after the incident.

The entire question regarding the bonus as well as the legality of the strike and lock-out was referred to the Tribunal under reference no. 53 of 1966.

During the pendency of the reference, a chargesheet was given against several workmen including the said Ludh Budh Singh alleging that he was guilty of misconduct because he, along with his companions, had obstructed the mill

workers of the in-coming shift from proceeding to their place of work and that he and other workers had destroyed the property of the mill enumerated in the chargesheet.

A domestic enquiry was held by the management and in that enquiry the said Ludh Budh Singh was held guilty of mis-conduct and thereafter the instant application under section 33 (1) (b) of the Act was made to the Tribunal before whom the reference was pending for permission to punish him.

The Tribunal did not grant the permission and rejected the application for such permission. In rejecting the application for the permi-

LEGAL NOTES

ssion, the Tribunal held, by its order dated March 22, 1967, that the enquiry proceedings had not been conducted against the workman in accordance with the principles of natural justice and that the findings recorded by the enquiry officer were not in accordance with the evidence adduced before him.

The Supreme Court affirmed these findings of the Tribunal but an elaborate argument was advanced before the Court on behalf of the management on another issue, namely, that the Tribunal had not allowed the Company to adduce independent evidence to prove that the workman had in fact committed misconduct.

What transpired was that on March 21, 1967 after the Tribunal by its order no. 5 had concluded

the hearing and reserved judgement, the employer filed an application seeking permission to adduce evidence to prove the misconduct of the workman and the fact of the filing of that application was recorded by the Tribunal against order no. 6 of that date.

In view of the earlier decisions of the Supreme Court that the employer could adduce such evidence where the Tribunal held that the domestic enquiry had not been held properly or where no such enquiry was at all held, the Company argued in this case that the Tribunal was under an obligation to allow the Company to adduce the evidence that it wanted to.

The Supreme Court reviewed the previous cases and re-affirmed its stand that the management should be allowed to adduce independent evidence, if it wanted to, to justify its action against the workman. It quoted with approval its own observations in the previous case of State Bank of India vs. R. K. Jain and others decided in Civil Appeal 992 of 1967 and reported in 1972 Labour and Industrial Cases at page 13 :

"If the management defends its action solely on the basis that the domestic enquiry held by it is proper and valid and if the Tribunal holds against the management on that point, the management will fail. On the other hand, if the management relies not only on the validity of the domestic enquiry, but also adduces evidence before the Tribunal justifying its action, it is open to the Tribunal to accept the evidence adduced by the management and hold in its favour even if its finding is against the management regarding the validity of the domestic enquiry."

But, in the present case, the

Struggles Of South Vietnam Workers

Vidopin Workers continue their struggle

According to South Vietnam Liberation Press Agency the strike staged by 700 workers of the 'Eagle' (Vidopin) Battery Firm for the reinstatement of 17 sacked workers, an increase of 30 per cent of their wages, the supply of gas masks to the workers and scholarships to their children went on for two months.

The employers in collusion with the Nguyen Van Thieu ruling clique stubbornly refused to meet the workers' demands; instead they tried by all means to suppress the strikers.

After the bloody cracking down on the strikers on October 18, 1971 which was followed up by the arrest of many workers, the puppet authorities ordered other barbarous repressive measures.

Earlier on October 26, they brutally manhandled the striking women workers, heavily injuring two of them.

On November 8, Nguyen Van Thieu ordered combat police to support the employers' agents to break into the factory, beat the strikers and occupy the establishment.

On the morning of November 11, the puppet administration again sent combat police to brutally crack down on the strikers and arrest many of them, including Phan Van Chi and Hoang Lien, Chairman and Secretary of the General Confederation of Christian Workers in Saigon, and three chaplains of the "Christian Working Youth" who had called at the Vidopin factory and expressed their support to the strikers.

But the Vidopin workers were

not intimidated by these repressive acts. Closely united and enjoying the active support of workers at many other factories and enterprises, as well as the sympathy of all strata of the people, the 700 workers at the "Eagle" (Vidopin) Battery Firm persistently carried on their struggle. A representative of the strikers declared: "All the workers at this battery firm will spare no efforts in their struggle against the capitalist."

A solidarity campaign for the Vidopin workers rapidly developed among the workers and other strata of the urban people in South Vietnam. Many trade unions sent their delegations to visit the strikers, while many political and mass organisations issued statements expressing their sympathy and support for the Vidopin workers in their struggle and condemning the employers' and the puppet administration's barbarous repression of the strikers. The people living in the vicinity of the firm took part in the hunger strike launched by the workers of this firm on November 5 to demand the employers and the Thieu administration to meet the Vidopin workers' legitimate demands; on October 26, students and youths in Saigon burned a truck of the firm in Hau-Giang street and declared that students and youths would take stronger actions if the Thieu clique and the employers stubbornly repressed the strikers.

Workers at Caltex, Shell and Esso Oil firms Strike

Workers at the Caltex, Shell and Esso oil firms in Saigon on November 2 staged a strike for higher discount on sale and in protest

question that arose was as to the time when the Management could make its prayer for permission to adduce further evidence. That is a new point raised and decided in the case under consideration. And the Supreme Court decided that the Management could not fall back upon its undoubted right to adduce independent evidence after the hearing had concluded and judgement had been reserved even though the application for such permission was filed immediately after the hearing was concluded and judgement reserved, as in the instant case. The Supreme Court held,

"Therefore, if the management wants to avail itself of the right, that it has in law, of adducing further evidence, it has either to adduce evidence simultaneously with its reliance on the domestic enquiry or should ask the Tribunal to consider the validity of the domestic enquiry as a preliminary issue with a request to grant permission to adduce evidence, if the decision of preliminary issue is against the management,"

In the instant case, in as much as the company "did not ask for an opportunity to adduce evidence when the proceedings were pending" and because the Company "had moved the Tribunal in that regard only after the proceedings had come to an end" the Company had forfeited its right to adduce independent evidence and the Tribunal had rightly declined to receive such evidence.

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against the employers' ill treatment of the workers.

Successful struggle of workers in My Tho and Tay Ninh

In the last few months, workers of the sanitary service and communication in My Tho provincial capital waged a relentless struggle against the puppet administration and the contractors for higher wages and better working conditions. Faced with the persistent actions taken by the workers, the My Tho provincial administration had to meet the workers' demands by increasing their wages from September 1971.

In Tay Ninh province, workers at the Cau Khoi rubber plantation on September 27, demanded the plantation owners to increase the pay of their rubber output by 7 dong (Saigon currency) to 9 dong a litre; so far the plantation owners accepted to increase up to 8 dong. The workers are going on with their struggle till their demand is fully met.

Struggle of 500 Workers at the US Logistic base in Phu Tho (Gia Dinh province)

On November 6, all the 500 workers at the US logistic base in Phu Tho (Gia Dinh province) slowed down to protest against the US managers' brazen plunder of the workers' interests. They resolutely demanded the US managers to provide the workers with transport means to go to their work place in Long Binh, fully pay, retrenchment compensations and long service pensions to the workers who refuse to accept their terms and stop working.

US scheme of massive dismissal denounced

According to reports from Saigon a representative of the workers at US firms recently denounced that the US is cunningly planning to carry out massive dismissal of workers at US firms even without compensations as required by labour law.

To lay off the workers, the US employers have compelled the workers to go to work far from their living places without providing them with transport means, so as to have pretexts to sack the workers who fail to go to work.

The worker representative sternly condemned the said schemes of massive dismissal of workers and demanded the US employers to give up their inhuman acts.

Truck drivers of RMK-BRJ firm demand Higher wages

In face of the resolute struggle of the workers of RMK-BRJ firm in March 1971, the US managers accepted to meet the workers' demand of wage increase, but later they refused to apply this promise for the truck drivers of the firm as they did for the other workers. The workers at the firm took action to support the truck drivers' struggle and on July 21 they forced the US employers and the puppet administration to officially promise to increase the wages of the truck drivers.

But in the past four months the US employers remained silent on their promise.

Recently, the trade union of workers at the RMK-BRJ firm held a meeting and decided on actions to be taken to force the US employers to implement their promise made on July 21, 1971.

CITU Expresses Solidarity With British Miners

The CITU has sent its wholehearted support to the 280,000 mine workers of United Kingdom who have been on strike for more than five weeks demanding a 12% wage rise. In a letter, dated February 16, to the General Secretary of Britain's National Union of Mine Workers, P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU, expressed solidarity, on behalf of the CITU, with the British miners in their just and legitimate struggle. He said "The Indian workers are proud that the British Miners are heroically conducting this strike and we request you to convey the feelings of Indian workers to the striking miners in U. K..."

In another letter addressed to the British Prime Minister on the same day, Ramamurti condemned the Government's assumption of emergency powers and the brutal repression of striking workers. He further called for immediate acceptance of the mine workers' demands.

The six-week old strike, which has crippled power supply and laid off 1.5 million workers in Britain, was settled on February 19, after agreement was reached between the National Union of Mine Workers and the Coal Board on the basis of the recommendations of the Wilberforce court of enquiry set up by the British Government. The actual calling off of the strike will take another week as opinion ballots will have to be taken from individual miners. The settlement gives the workers 11 to 23% wage rise, besides several important fringe benefits like bonus shift payments and extra holidays.

The growing unity for trade union action is leading to redoubled efforts on the part of the Government and the reformist trade union leaders to disrupt it. The reformist leaders of three central organisations are joining hands with the Government and the employers to impose fresh fetters on the workers and trade unions when the latter are engaged in united battles against the employers.

Urge for united action among mass of workers

The struggle of one lakh coir workers of Kerala unitedly led by the CITU, AITUC, INTUC, UTUC constitutes an outstanding evidence of the urge for unity in the mass of the workers who realise that they can advance only by a solid consolidation of their mass strength. In the wake of this big struggle, comes the news of the strike of sixty thousand textile workers of Coimbatore once again unitedly led by the CITU, INTUC, AITUC and the DMK unions.

That in Kerala despite the existence of a Congress-Right CPI ministry, the INTUC and AITUC leaders have to support the strike underlines the tremendous mass urge for unity and action. The political leaders of the INTUC and the AITUC run the ministry, but the trade union leaders have to join to endorse the strike. In Tamilnadu, in spite of the existence of the DMK ministry and in spite of the appeal of the Chief Minister, the DMK trade unions have to fall in line.

The same unity, spirit of class solidarity was witnessed in connection with the strike of the Simpson workers in Madras where workers belonging to all affiliates fought the attempt of the DMK Government to foist its own nominee on the union and sell the interests of the workers.

To carry forward the unity, to develop a broad-based front of all militant organisations for action, this is the duty of all those who stand for the defence of the interests of the working class. The fighting workers who follow the INTUC or the AITUC or the HMS or the CITU expect their organisations and leaders to develop united struggles and lead the workers' battles in the present difficult days.

These united struggles in which the CITU is playing an important role, are causing deep concern to the Government and the employers who are out to curb the growing strength of the workers. But the reformist leaders of the INTUC, the AITUC and HMS are giving up the

path of unity and entering into agreements with each other to restrain working class action and curb the militancy of the growing movement.

Why are the reformists giving up the path of unity?

It seems that the three organisations have agreed to form a joint council for consultations and common decision. This has made the Labour Minister as well as the employers happy. Can the workers be happy about it? On what principle, on what basis, are these organisations coming together? For joint action for democratic rights of the workers, for defending the workers against retrenchment, unemployment? If it were so the working class would have welcomed the move. But they would not have ignored and by-

A NEW BLUEPRINT FOR

B. T. Ranadive,

passed the CITU which has been consistently leading the struggles and which is playing a role in every united struggle. They would not have ignored the other central organisations which stand for militant action.

But they have precisely ignored the CITU because their unity is not for action, but for delaying and restraining them. Otherwise, the leaders of the AITUC and HMS, who participated in the unity conference last May, unitedly attacked Government's labour policy and who along with the CITU formed a Convenors' Committee to carry forward that unity, would not have deserted the other militant organisations to join hands with the INTUC

Class Collaboration

leaders. Shri Ramanujam has openly announced that the INTUC will be directly working under the dictates of the Indira Congress. It means it will be subservient to the Government. The HMS leaders, though often critical of the Congress, basically possess the same class outlook as the Congress. In recent times, their political leaders have often to depend on the Congress to get into Parliament. N. G. Gore crept into the Rajya Sabha on the strength of the Congress vote. Recently, the ruling Congress and the Government started lifting important leaders of the HMS in a big way. Shanti Patel, one-time president walked into the Congress to become the Mayor of Bombay. A Secretary of the HMS, Bagaram Tulpule was made the Manager of Durgapur Steel Plant. Another

President, C. I. T. U.

luminary of the Socialist Party S.M. Joshi is made a Director of the Reserve Bank. Another Secretary of the HMS is offered a similar post. And one of the important leaders—Monohar Kotwal, a fortnight back entered the Congress declaring his full faith in "Indira Gandhi's socialism."

The political leadership of the AITUC is represented by the Right CPI which is a dependent of the ruling party. In the last parliament elections, the party won most of its seats with the support of the Congress.

The Government wants all its supporters to come together, endorse its policy and counter the influence of united struggles of the CITU and

other militant organisations. All these years the INTUC leaders could fulfil this role. But now with the growing disillusionment about the INTUC, additional help from other organisations with a militant past is required. It is therefore not surprising that the leaders of the three organisations have not a word to say against the ghastly repression against the CITU in West Bengal, against the murders of trade union leaders and workers. On the other hand, they offer an alibi to the Government and do their best to conceal its crimes.

This is a united front that is going to hamper the growing struggles, and the unity that was being forged at the May Conference from which the INTUC alone stood aloof. What do the opponents of genuine trade union unity seek to achieve

through it? They seek to create a facade of labour support for Government's anti-labour policies. They seek to stifle the voice of the CITU and the militant trade union movement by preventing them access to conferences and meetings where labour policies are discussed. They thus want to create an impression that Government's policies have general support among labour and barter away working class rights.

Sell-out of workers interests by the Reformists

Their very first act after their proclaimed decision is to let down the workers on the question of trade union recognition. The workers have the right to demand that the emp-

loyers deal with them through the union assured of maximum of working class support. This is their minimum democratic right which every civilised Government and employer has to accept. But not so, in Indira Gandhi's India.

In the last May Conference, the demand was put in the following words by the CITU. "...The CITU stands for recognition on the basis of secret ballot of workers and it also demands that all agreements entered with the union leadership should be endorsed by the mass of workers. This will leave hardly any scope for the so-called inter-union rivalry because then the mass of workers through their ballot would have participated in choosing their union and will have continuous voice in its activity whenever major agreement has to be endorsed by them.

It should be remembered that the second U. F. Government in West Bengal passed a bill granting recognition on the basis of workers' ballot but the President, under the advice of the Central Ministry, refused to sign it and the bill failed to become law. All T. Us irrespective of their political affiliations should support the stand that recognition should be decided on the basis of workers' secret ballot and thus restore to the workers the democratic right to choose their own union, and take the wind out of Government's hypocritical talk about difficulties in choosing the negotiating agent etc. If this principle is endorsed by the T. U. movement, there is no doubt that it will serve to unify our ranks and enable us to move in the direction of one common union in one industry." It was fully endorsed by all the other organisations including the AITUC and the HMS. Now without the least sense of scruples leaders of both these organisations have joined the INTUC leadership in repudiating the principle of ballot and accepted Government's recognition proposal where the final decision will not be with the workers but with a bureaucratic judge.

The CITU denounces this sell-out and further states that the leaders of the three organisations have no authority or mandate to commit the trade union movement to this anti-working class proposal.

The CITU warns that denial of recognition on the basis of ballot will add to exacerbation of industrial relations by handing over the initiative to leaders and unions who do not represent the mass of workers. The agreements entered into by such organisations cannot be implemented. The recent case of the Simpson's strike in Madras when defence production was dislocated because an unwanted leader was foisted on the

workers by the DMK Government is a case in point. In fact, many industrial disputes have their origin in the agreements made by stooze unions and the Government misrepresents these disputes as due to inter-union rivalries. The political preference of the Government and the employers for certain leaders and unions, irrespective of the following they command, intensifies a situation rendered acute by worsening economic conditions.

The agreement among these leaders that ballot will be taken where rival unions have a membership of less than fifty percent is only intended to mislead the workers. Unions favoured by management often claim more than fifty percent membership. Moreover, the so called tentative proposal provides that ballot will be taken only after verification and that too if the difference of two unions is only marginal. So there will be no question of ballot in the vast majority of cases.

All this shows that there is no genuine effort to tackle the question of recognition so as to create direct channels of negotiations between the employers and the genuine representatives of the workers. There is an obvious effort to protect the vested interests of certain organisations which are acceptable to the employers. This is no remedy for maintaining industrial peace.

Having given up the ballot the organisations have accepted verification with the help of a judge whose verdict will be final. It is the judge and not the workers who are to determine who should represent the workers and have the power to determine their wages, living conditions, etc. The employers do not want a strong union to represent the workers. The Government also does not want it. The reformist and revisionist

leaders are also afraid that ballot will mean their monopoly to represent will go.

The leaders of the three organisations in their opportunism go further. They do not want to shed the privileges which some of them enjoy at present. Therefore they agree wherever the INTUC has the privilege under present acts, it should not be disturbed. Also they accept the present anti-working class legislation in a number of States and do not propose to challenge the reactionary provisions regarding recognition contained in them. So acceptance of the anti-working class legislation like that of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra, etc, retention of the privileged position of the INTUC and the giving up of ballot—these are the fruits of the united front of the three organisations.

No wonder the employers are happy. No wonder the Government is happy. All these forces are preparing a new offensive against the workers with the screen provided by the leaders of the three organisations. Having let down the workers, on the question of recognition, the leaders are having talks with the Government for imposing a moratorium on strikes. There is every danger that they will agree to barter away the workers' right to strike under one pretext or another.

Working class must raise its united voice against this surrender

The working class which is fighting its battles unitedly—the working masses belonging to the three organisations should unite with the CITU and others to defeat this anti-working class and anti unity trend. They must bring pressure on their leaders

★ On Page Fourteen

Bombay Workers Condemn US Role

In the wake of the Bangla Desh events, there appears to have come a general disillusionment with U.S. policies in this subcontinent and, more significantly, a very welcome awareness of the subversive role it has been playing in India's economy. In condemnation of the American role, democratic people all over the country are rallying to raise their voices—to which workers of Maharashtra added theirs through a massive demonstration held in Bombay on January 25.

The demonstration came as a climax to a week of campaigns launched by the Maharashtra State Committee of the CITU. The response from the workers was excellent; numerous meetings were held at factory gates, posters written out on walls, and signatures for a memorandum condemning U.S. role collected. As many as 7,000 copies of a pamphlet, written by Madan Phadnis, Joint Secretary of the State Committee of the CITU, were sold during the week.

The memorandum, signed by a total of 57,000 workers—a third of these from the textile industry—was handed over by a delegation after the demonstration on January 25 to Maharashtra's Labour Minister to be forwarded to the Prime Minister. This was one of the biggest anti-U.S. demonstrations in recent times.

The 5,000 strong morcha started from Bombay's Azad Maidan and was led by Comrades Kolhatkar, Kurane and others. As it wended its way to the Oval Maidan, processions from far-flung working class areas converged on to it. Slogans demanding nationalisation of all U.S. concerns in India and a moratorium on repayment of U.S. loans were raised before a delegation from the assembly went up to present the memorandum to the Minister.

TEA PLANTATION WORKERS IN WEST BENGAL WIN WAGE RISE

The workers of Tea Plantation Industry in West Bengal have won an important victory in their struggle for wage increase. The Wage Fixing Committee for the Tea Plantation Industry in West Bengal reached a settlement on February 9, whereby the wages of all daily rated workers and other categories of staff employed in the tea plantations in the Dooars, Terai and Darjeeling areas of West Bengal have been increased with effect from April 1, 1971. The Committee was set up by the Government of West Bengal in October 1970, in pursuance of a Tripartite Agreement signed in September 1969 with representatives of Employers and Employees with Justice P.C. Mullick as Chairman. The agreement was signed in the wake of 16 days united general strike of all plantation workers during the second UF Government.

According to the settlement, which is for a period of 27 months effective from April 1, 1971, wages of all adult Daily Rated male and female workers will be increased by 46 paise per day in two stages—23 P. per day in the first stage of 14 months beginning April 1, 1971 and further 23 P. per day in the second stage of 13 months from June 1, 1972. Wages of children will go up by half the rate of adult workers.

The subordinate and monthly rated staff will also get a flat rate increase of Rs. 18 in the existing scale and the Clerical and Medical staff and Technicians (Grade A and B) will get Rs. 37 in the existing scales, while Technicians (Grade C) will get a flat rate increase of Rs. 28. All the increases will become effective from April 1, 1971. Payment of wages at the agreed higher rates

will commence from February 1972 and all arrears of wages will be paid before February 29/March 31 at the latest.

The tea plantation workers in West Bengal won this victory after a long and sustained struggle. Before the appointment of the Central Wage Board for Tea Plantation Industry in 1960, the wage of an adult male worker in West Bengal, in spite of two interim increases, ranged between Rs. 1.60 and Rs. 1.98 per day only. As a result of the recommendations of the Wage Board these were increased by a paltry 15 paise for male workers and 12 to 8 paise for female and child workers. Moreover, the increase became effective in two stages—January 1 and April 1 of 1966.

The high rise in prices and cost of living compelled the workers to take to the path of struggle once again for wage increase and against reduction in employment. The stiff attitude of the employers precipitated matters and ultimately in August, 1969 a strike notice was given by four unions in plantation industry affiliated to four Central T.Us. This forced the employers to come down and sign a Tripartite Agreement on which they agreed to create 10,000 new employment and give an interim wage increase of 20 paise per day. With another interim increase, the wage of the highest paid adult male worker was increased from Rs 2.13 to Rs 2.54 per day. After the wage increase under the settlement of the Wage Fixing Committee, this will rise to Rs. 2.77 from April 1, 1971 and to Rs. 3.00 from June 1, 1972 onwards.

The tea plantation workers of West Bengal could have wrested a higher increase in wages but for the

disruptive steps of the INTUC leadership in Assam. In a bid to forestall the negotiations going on in West Bengal, they hurriedly signed a four-year Agreement with the tea plantation owners in Assam agreeing to lower wage increases for tea plantation workers there than that they could otherwise have got. A comparison of the wage increases resulting from the two agreements will make the point clear. Whereas an adult male worker in Dooars (West Bengal) will get the increase in two stages of 23 paise each and reach Rs. 3.00 per day on June 1, 1972, an adult male worker of a comparable garden in Dibrugarh Sub-division (Assam) will get the increase in four stages and reach Rs. 3.00 per day on January 1, 1973.

The wage level of Dibrugarh plantation workers was always higher than Dooars and Tea Plantation Wage Board recommended a daily wage of 13 paise higher than Dooars. The present agreement in West Bengal has now altered the position. Again, while the wages of a Assam workers will remain static at Rs. 3.00 up to December 31, 1973, a Dooars worker will be free to press for a further increase after June 30, 1973 when the settlement by the Wage Fixing Committee expires. This deliberate disruption has not only harmed the interests of the Assam Plantation workers, it has also prejudiced the case of the West Bengal workers as well.

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Working Class/General Index

The Average All-India Consumer Price Index Number for Industrial Workers for the months of November and December, 1971 were as follows.

	Base 1949	Base 1960
Nov. 71	239	197
Dec. 71	237	195

Consumer Price Index Numbers

★ From Page Twelve

Centres/ (1960 = 100)	Aug.	Sept.	Oct. 71
Andhra :			
Gudur	193	197	200
Guntur	206	214	208
Hyderabad	195	199	200
Assam :			
Digboi	191	192	191
Doom Dooma	172	175	179
Rangapara	186	186	192
Bihar :			
Jamshedpur	191	191	191
Jharia	194	197	196
Kodarma	226	229	222
Monghyr	211	211	213
Noamundi	202	202	204
Gujarat :			
Ahmedabad	181	183	182
Bhavanagar	193	195	196
Haryana :			
Yamunanagar	203	203	200
Kerala :			
Alleppey	222	221	200
Alwaye	203	204	204
Mundakayam	202	204	200
M.P. :			
Bhopal	198	200	198
Gwalior	200	201	201
Indore	207	207	207
Maharashtra			
Bombay	190	192	193
Nagpur	193	194	194
Sholapur	203	206	204
Mysore :			
Ammathi	205	204	207
Bangalore	193	197	197
Chikmagalur	199	202	203
Kolar Gold Field	186	188	188
Orissa :			
Barbil	184	184	183
Sambalpur	196	202	200
Punjab :			
Amritsar	200	203	201
Rajasthan :			
Ajmer	191	193	192
Jaipur	194	195	194

Tamilnadu :			
Coimbatore	178	178	177
Coonor	190	196	197
Madras	182	183	185
Madurai	193	200	194
U. P.			
Kanpur	200	201	201
Saharanpur	193	195	194
Varanasi	210	214	214
W. Bengal :			
Asansol	196	198	199
Calcutta	189	194	198
Darjeeling	177	181	184
Howrah	189	194	200
Jalpaiguri	187	192	190
Raniganj	192	194	195
Delhi :			
	216	215	213

to desist from this reactionary course and prevail on them to assert the principle of ballot for recognition, and repudiate all moves for a moratorium on strikes without any guarantee of living conditions. All workers must unitedly raise their voice saying that they will not surrender the right to determine their living conditions to people certified by the bureaucrats. Only the workers through the ballot will decide who will represent them. And the workers will not surrender their right to direct action in face of the continuing offensive of high prices, unemployment and increased workload against them.

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Sd. Monoranjan Roy
Signature of Publisher.

Dated 29th February, 1972.

Workers & Employees Intensify Struggles

As was reported in our last issue, a rising wave of struggles has lashed Kerala's economic, political and social life.

Demanding that the Government owned Hydrogenation factory in Kozhikode be run effectively, the workers of the factory offered satyagraha in front of the Collectorate. The satyagraha was conducted under the auspices of the Joint Action Committee of the workers.

As a result of the fake nationalisation of private forests by the Kerala Government more than 1,000 workers of the Gwalior Rayons of Nilambur, Malappuram District found themselves out of work. These workers, led by the INTUC, conducted satyagraha in front of the Kozhikode Collectorate, demanding jobs. It may be mentioned here that when the CITU had warned that the so-called nationalisation would lead to unemployment on a large scale, it was accused of being opposed to nationalisation. Now the Congress leader, Aryadan Mohammed, has been forced to start a hunger-strike in support of the demand of these workers.

The State Government employees observed a Demands Day by holding demonstrations and meetings in Trivandrum, Ernakulam, Kozhikode and other places. A joint meeting of the employees, decided to launch a struggle to force the Kerala State Government to implement the increased D. A. allowed to Central Government employees. This meeting of the organisations of State Government and Quasi-Government employees condemned

the Kerala Government's decision to implement only partly the increased D. A. in Kerala and also its decision to deposit compulsorily 50 per cent of this partial increase in P.F. An Ad Hoc Committee consisting of representatives of the NGO Co-ordination Committee, KGPT Union, DGTA, Municipal and Corporation Staff Federation and Village Staff Association had been formed with authority to nominate two nominees of the Joint Council of the State Government employees.

The Ministerial Staff of the Transport Corporation have star-

KERALA

ted satyagraha before the Chief Office of the Transport Corporation. Their demand is that the discrimination shown by the authorities in fixing junior grades for the conductors, cleaners and clerks of the corporation should be withdrawn.

In protest against the transfer of Assistant Post Master of Tirur (Malappuram District) Head Post Office, workers took casual leave en masse. The Youth Congress workers tried to assault the workers, but these attempts were foiled by the joint resistance of the postal workers. Work in the post offices in Kozhikode City came to a standstill and the movement later spread to Kottakkal, Thaur, Valancherry and Cuttipuram.

Under the auspices of the Kerala Cashew Workers' Centre, picketing was resorted to by the Cashew workers before the Quilon Collectorate

demanding the re-opening of the cashew factories, implementation of the demands contained in the resolution passed by the Kerala Assembly, and calling for a thorough revision of policy by the STC in respect of distribution of raw nuts. The Karunagapalli Taluk Office was also picketed by the workers

The Scooter Factory run by the Engineers' Co-operative Society has been locked out. The lock-out has been declared following a gherao of the Board Members by the workers demanding wage increases. The Chairman of the Board, P. Balachandra Menon, one of the Vice-Presidents of the AITUC, went on a day's hunger strike and then, curiously, left the town. 54 workers of the factory were subsequently put under arrest.

125,000 coir workers in the Anjuthengu Mooppiri coir zone struck work on January 24, demanding implementation of the minimum wages announced by the Government. The striking workers later held a huge demonstration before the Secretariat in Trivandrum led by the Anjuthengu Coir Joint Struggle Committee, comprising the CITU, the INTUC and the AITUC.

As a part of their struggle the workers started satyagraha before Government Offices and in front of husking mills from February 1, and then, from February 8, went on an indefinite strike. A joint statement by the CITU, the INTUC, the AITUC, the UTUC has been issued asking other sections of the workers and people to lend their support to this cause.

Police resorted to lathi charge and firing on people demonstrating in support of the striking workers at the Leena Estate in Malappuram District.

Workers of Premier Tyres in Kalamassery went on a 24 hours token strike in support of their demands for production bonus, maintenance set up, etc. About 750 workers took part in the strike.

The Kerala NGO General Meeting held at Trivandrum on February 3, condemned the summary dismissal in West Bengal of 13 State and 32 Central Government employees.

In another resolution, the Association strongly deplored the attack on the residence of K.G Bose, President, NFPTE and called upon trade unions and all democratic forces to unite and resist the offensive launched by enemies of the working class.

Different unions in Idikki project, under the leadership of CITU and other central T.U. organisations, have come together to organise a united struggle against the Government order under MISA banning strikes in the Idikki area. The ban was intended to suppress the workers' struggle against the contractors and the authorities of the Electricity Board who are violating the agreements entered into with the workers earlier. Twelve unions, affiliated to CITU and AITUC, have issued a joint statement calling upon the workers to organise protest demonstrations and meetings in the Idikki project area on February 13. In response to this call, meetings and demonstrations were organised in Idikki, Kulamavu, Mulamattam and other project areas.

5000 Toddy tappers in Palghat District went on an indefinite strike from January 24 in protest against the failure of the Toddy shop contractors to deposit the P.F. money deducted from the workers' wages and to implement the high level decisions taken at Ernakulam. Out of a total of 277 shops in the district, 250 were strike-bound. The

toddy tappers in Quilon district also completely struck work to compel the contractors to deposit Toddy Tappers' Welfare Fund, Gratuity, etc.

The Coir-Coordination Committee of the CITU has decided to orga-

nise a convention of all unions under CITU on March 12 in order to form a federation of these unions. It has also decided to conduct struggles of the coir workers in Quilon, Alleppey and Ernakulam districts.

A New Upsurge In Militant United Struggles

Tamilnadu is currently in the grip of a massive, militant trade union movement. Workers appear to have suddenly woken up to the grim situation and reports from all over the State speak of surging struggles. No doubt, the success of the historic movement by the Simpson workers has acted as a fillip, but there can be no mistaking the remarkable change trade union movement has recently undergone here.

Workers of the Coimbatore Textile Mills, led by a Joint Action

TAMILNADU

Committee of 14 unions, have been going on, since February 12, a complete strike. The Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi, came forward with one of his now customary sops, offering to re-open the Somasundara Mills. But the workers turned down the offer, refusing to give up the struggle until all the closed units were opened again. The strike has now entered the second week.

The strike is in support of the demand for wage increase, higher bonus and gratuity, permanency, etc. The workers have been agitating for several days but the DMK Government refused to intervene in the matter which only emboldened the millowners.

The Second Textile Wage Board awarded only rupee one increment every year which was outright rejected by the workers. While denying

a decent wage rise the employers went on increasing the workload and the AITUC and INTUC unions signed some anti-working class agreements with the management on this question. The gradually accumulating discontent brought the workers together which gave rise to the Joint Action Committee of all the unions. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU in a statement congratulated the workers for their magnificent unity and called upon the textile workers of the entire Tamilnadu to unitedly fight out the demands. He further condemned the DMK Government for its pro-employer policies and demanded immediate settlement of the workers' grievances.

Repression has, of course, been as bitter as ever, but it no longer seems to affect the workers' morale. The movement at the HVF, Avadi, is a pointer. Workers of the factory held a stay in strike demanding, apart from bonus payments, the reinstatement of a suspended fellow worker. The management reacted quickly, dismissing summarily the Secretary of the Workers' Union, Natarajan. When 2000 workers struck work in protest on January 27 and staged a demonstration, the Police stepped in and made a brutal lathi-charge in which several persons including three prominent leaders, Chintan, Kuchelar and Sundaram, were injured. They were sent to hospital, and on the following day, put under arrest.

General Strike

Although the leaders were subsequently released on bail, the incident sparked off widespread demonstration, cut across political lines, and ultimately led to a general strike in Madras on January 29. The DMK's Police once again went on a lathi-charging spree on that day, injuring C. P. Damodaran, Secretary of the Guindy Industrial Estate General Workers' Union, and later arresting 100 workers of the Hindusthan Teleprinters, and as if this was not enough, beating them black and blue in the lock-up. R. Umanath, General Secretary of the Tamilnadu State Committee of the CITU issued a statement on February 2 and condemned the police excesses.

40,000 beedi workers of North Arcot District are all set to go on a strike from February 25 on a 4-point charter of demands. These men have never been given a fair deal by the Government, and the question of poor pay apart, they had been denied full pay on national holidays like August 15. They can no longer be taken in by a Minister's assurances; they have chosen the path of struggle.

Yet another strike—this one by the Tamilnadu Sugar Mill workers—began on February 16. Negotiations between the mill-owners and workers' representatives who included S. G. Krishnan and R. Umanath, had earlier broken down. Workers are demanding the implementation of minimum wages as per Wage Board recommendations and retaining allowance.

A welcoming feature of the Tamilnadu struggles is a broad-based unity which is building up among workers. At Erode, where the factory of the Anjaneya Motors has been locked out from January 5,

almost all political and trade union organisations—the DMK excepted—came together and issued a joint statement demanding the immediate lifting of the lock-out and urging the take-over of the factory by the Government.

The Tamilnadu Building Workers' Union is holding a meeting at Coimbatore on March 11 and 12 to decide upon the future course of action. They have a 6-point charter of demands which includes an 8-hour day, abolition of intermediaries and full pay on Sundays.

8,000 hosiery workers employed by about 600 factories in Tirupur and led by a 9-man Strike Committee comprising the CITU, the AITUC and the DMK, have been on strike since February 7. They are demanding the implementation of the Factory Act provisions and the recommendations of the Wage Board.

Workers are now becoming more vocal in their protests. 20,000 foundry workers held a massive demonstration protesting against the shooting of a CITU activist by a foundry owner and Mettur Beardsel Workers staged a stay-in strike on January 26 in protest against the violation of the existing agreement between the Management and the union. 50,000 plantation workers who struck work on January 11 in support of the Simpson Workers' struggle—the news of the withdrawal of the strike call had not reached them in time—are now threatened by Plantation owners with a cut of 8 days' pay. R. Umanath has warned, on behalf of the CITU, that the workers would not accept this victimisation lying down.

For the CITU, it has been a season of tremendous progress. Under its leadership, the movements of the Hotel Ashoka Workers' Union and

the Omega Insulated Cables Employees' Union have been crowned with success, and it is obviously coming to play a major role in the working class movements in the State. Disenchantment with other trade union bodies has been a marked phenomenon; DMK stalwarts Manoharan and Doraimurugan were recently unseated from the Royal Enfield Union and 400 workers in Trichy switched their allegiance from the AITUC to CITU. It is being realised that the CITU is prepared to go the whole hog. At the Seshayee Paper Mills, for example, the INTUC and HMS backed out of a united strike call, but the CITU has not budged and is now preparing to continue the struggle.

Read

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(Memorandum submitted to Government West Bengal by the West Bengal State Committee of CITU—With forward by Com. B. T. Ranadive)

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REPORTS FROM UNIONS

Management Mount Attacks on wages and T. U. Rights of Adityapur Workers

Helped and encouraged by the anti-working class attitude of the State Labour Department, the management of several industries in the Adityapur area in Bihar are merrily pursuing their policy of victimisation, reduction of wages and denial of trade union rights of workers.

The management of Tata Iron & Steel Co. Ltd. is paying only Rs. 160 p. m. to its workers as against Rs 240 to which they are entitled according to a decision of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Steel wages. The workers of Hindustan Tools & Dies are getting a paltry wage of Rs. 85 to Rs. 100 p. m. against Rs. 165 granted by the Tripartite Committee appointed by the Bihar Government.

The management of J. D. Stone & Co. (Bihar) Ltd. has not only resorted to all sorts of repressive measures, it is even forcing the workers to join the stooge union affiliated to INTUC. The workers submitted a Charter of Demands, including the demand for immediate recognition of their union, in August 1971. Instead of entering into negotiations, the management suspended four leaders of the workers' union and resorted to a lock-out. Ultimately the workers were forced to go on a strike from November 8 which was withdrawn unconditionally after the declaration of National Emergency. The management is still bent on creating a deadlock. It has discharged sixteen workers and is refusing to negotiate with the majority union. The General Secretary of the Adityapur Industrial Majdoor

Union (CITU) has drawn the attention of the Union Labour Minister to all these illegal acts of the management.

State Transport Workers Demonstrate in Calcutta

Resentment among Calcutta State Transport workers is growing with the continuing silence of the authorities over their Charter of Demands. The Charter, submitted sometime back, call for—among others—the implementation of a pay-scale from April, 1970, with a boost of Rs. 6, job security and medical benefits.

On January 28, the workers, led by the Calcutta State Transport Employees' Union (CITU), held a massive protest demonstration in front of the Transport Department's Central Office. Later, a delegation of the Union, led by Narayan Saha, General Secretary, Sujit Das and others, called on the General Manager and submitted a memorandum demanding immediate settlement of their Charter of Demands. The General Manager agreed to convene a meeting to discuss the demands.

Victorious Struggles of U. P. Sugar Mill Workers

Since its formation only a few months back, Kundan Sugar Mill Majdoor Sabha (CITU) of Amroha (U. P.) has given leadership in a number of victorious struggle of workers. Thoroughly exposing the pro-employer, anti-worker and corrupt activities of the old union leadership, the Majdoor Sabha is building up the fighting unity of the workers for greater struggles. Under its leadership, the workers

have already gained victories in their struggle for the arrear Provident Fund and Bonus for 1969-70 amounting to about rupees four lakhs and for better maintenance of workers' quarters. Struggles are now on for the realisation of Bonus for 1970-71, arrear dues of temporary staff under the Second Wage Board award, over-time wages for November and December, 1971, minimum wages for daily labour as per Second Wage Board and Minimum Wages Act, etc.

The new office of the Union was inaugurated on January 26 by K.N. Bhatt, a leader of Sugar Mill workers of Western U.P. and Vice-president of U.P. State Committee of CITU.

In the name of Mechanisation Shipping Companies Curbing Employment of Seamen

Taking advantage of the Government's failure to introduce Manning Scale rules for ships, Indian Shipping Companies are boldly continuing their anti-seamen policies. A few months back, M/s Indian Steamship Co. Ltd arbitrarily recruited lesser number of crew, such as F.R. Rating, Seamen, General Stewards, etc. for their vessel "Indian Valour" on the plea that after the so-called 'modernisation' the vessel would not require as many crew as before. Moreover, the recruitment was done through the office of the Director, Seamen's Employment Office, Calcutta according to the Company's own whims and not on the date of "Called-up Selection." On the one hand this has seriously curbed job opportunities of unemployed seamen, on the other the crews of the undermanned ships are being oppressed with vastly increased work-load and consequent hazard to their health and well-being.

Now the same Shipping Company is planning to adopt similar tactics for another vessel "Indian Venture". Strongly protesting against this deliberate anti-seamen policy of the Company, the Forward Seamen's Union (CITU) has demanded immediate end to this practice and recruitment of all existing number and categories of crew for the vessel "Indian Venture" on the date of "Called-up Selection". It has also demanded of the Government of India to take immediate steps to lay down Manning Scale Rules for ships of different types and tonnages in keeping with the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation.

Eastern Railwaymen Struggle Against Repression

The success of the Ranaghat Convention held on September 5 and the massive demonstration before the General Manager which followed on September 14 have come as a shot in the arm for Eastern Railway workers. They have been, in recent weeks, fighting all kinds of repression unitedly, and repression has been bitter. A large number of Railwaymen have been arrested, suspended, transferred or chargesheeted; railway colonies have been attacked by anti-social elements. Sunil Bhattacharya and 10 others of the Asansol division have been detained under PVA and MISA. Organisations which had participated in the Ranaghat Convention met on February 11 to review the situation and decided, as the first step towards building up a sustained struggle, to hold another demonstration before the General Manager on February 24.

S. E. Railway Workers To Observe Protest-Day

On the South Eastern Railway resentment has been growing over the delay in the publication of the Pay Commission's Report and March 3 is being observed as a Protest Day all over its area. At Santragachi, protesting against the reversion of 5 loco shunters, workers resorted to a hunger-strike which was later withdrawn when the 5 workers were accepted as Diesel Assistants. At Bhajudih, the Loco Running Staff started a 100 hour hunger-strike from February 18 demanding favourable consideration of a memorandum submitted as far back as September last year. There is report of another hunger-strike by railwaymen in Waltair.

Calcutta Corporation Workers' United Struggle win Demands

Calcutta Corporation workers and employees numbering more than 30 thousand under the leadership of Jukta Sangram Committee won some important concessions after struggles. The Corporation trade union movement is divided into a large number of unions but all of them representing CITU, AITUC, HMS, INTUC—united under the leadership of the Jukta Sangram Committee and served a strike notice. Strike was scheduled to begin from February 18. After protracted negotiations, grade revision after merging of existing D. A., uniform for all workers skilled and unskilled, D. A. at the West Bengal Government rate, permanency of temporary workers and some other demands were satisfactorily settled.

Encouraged by the success of the united struggle in Corporation, the Howrah Municipal workers also

have begun a strike under the leadership of the Joint Action Committee for fulfilment of similar demands.

Insurance Employees For One Day Strike In April

The Working Committee of the All India Insurance Employees Association held in Calcutta on February 7 and 8, decided to observe one day's token strike in the fourth week of April if the LIC management fails to accept their demands such as the months bonus, exclusive recognition, to AIIEA, uniform duty hours, in holidays for building and maintenance staff, payment of city compensatory allowance to employees in the upgraded cities as per 1972 census and reduction to 2.5 percent interest on loan for constructing houses.

Chandra Shekhar Bose, Vice-President presided over the meeting in the absence of the President.

Saroj Chowdhury, General Secretary AIIEA explained the background of the agreement on promotion for class III and class IV employees, which was ratified by the meeting. The meeting expressed its sense of indignation at the non-implementation of the earlier declaration of the Chairman that no recruitment to officers cadres would be made from outside.

The meeting recorded its protest at the unilateral action of the LIC management in introducing Councils in Central office of LIC without prior consultation with AIIEA and without even supplying full details of the scheme.

The Committee decided to hold the Conference of AIIEA in May next in Madras.

Rajasthan State Government Employees Strike For Interim Relief

The entire administration of the Government of Rajasthan came to a standstill when over two lakh State Government employees struck work on February 16, to press their demand for interim relief at par with the Central Government employees. The strike was scheduled to begin on February 23. However in view of the brutal lathi charge on the employees' procession on February 16, the All Rajasthan Rajya Samachari Samyukta Mahasangh called upon the employees to begin strike from February 16 itself.

The Barkatullah Khan Government instead of conceding the just demand came out with a vindictive statement that participation of employees in demonstrations, public meetings, strike and other agitational activities would be considered as misconduct under the service rules.

The police teargassed and lathi charged thousands of demonstrators near the Secretariat on February 17 in which more than 29 employees received injuries. Stories of alleged violence by the State Government employees were promptly circulated to the press.

The Government then arbitrarily announced compulsory retirement of 41 employees who had completed 25 years of service and were actively participating in the strike. Nineteen employees were also reverted as a punishment. The total number of arrests under the Essential Services Maintenance Act exceeded 125. The Government also

issued appointment letters to 100 temporary employees to intimidate the strikers. Over and above that the Government threatened to recommend postponement of the Assembly elections.

After these repressive measures the Rajasthan Government came forward with a show of generosity on February 18 by offering to condone the three day absence of the employees if they resume work immediately.

Chief Minister Barkatullah Khan announced that he would talk to the employees leaders only on issues which did not involve any financial commitment to the State Government.

The State Government employees spurned the "offer" with contempt and continued their struggle unitedly.

Mohan Punamia, President Rajasthan State Committee of CITU in a statement called upon the workers of Jaipur to observe one day's strike on February 21, in support of the State Government employees. The initiative taken by the CITU in this regard later on brought all the trade unions together and a joint call for strike on February 25, was given throughout Rajasthan by the trade unions.

The strike was called off on February 22 following a settlement between the Government and leaders of the employees. The Government conceded the demand partially by granting relief of Rs.5 and Rs.7

depending on salary range while the Third Pay Commission recommended interim relief from Rs.7 to Rs.15.

The Government however had to withdraw all the victimisation measures and release all the arrested State Government employees.

Mazdoor Rajniti

J. K. Rayon Workers Union (CITU), Kanpur has brought out a fortnightly journal in Hindi. It is edited by Ram Asrey and 10 issues have been published so far. The journal is priced 20 paise per copy.

The journal gives report of struggles of Kanpur workers and articles concerning the all-India working class movement. Extracts from writings of Marx and Engles are also given occasionally for education of workers. The circulation of the journal is about 1200.

Health Service

★ From Page Two
in the conditions of the nurses and para-medical staff.

The Forum also demands nationalisation of drug industries in the interest of bringing drugs within the reach of common people.

Dr. H. K. Sen and Dr. Naresh Banerjee have been elected as Joint Convenors of the Forum. It is planning to bring out a quarterly journal 'Medicine and Society' as early as possible.

British Miners Call Off Strike

On February 25, British miners decided by overwhelming votes to call off their seven-week old strike.