



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

On Other Pages

- *The Glorious Railway Strike And After Repression Continues Even After Withdrawal.*
- *The AITUC Leadership And The Railway Strike*
- *Amendments To The Constitution Of The CITU*
- *Who Scuttled Central T.U.'s Solidarity With Railwaymen ?*
- *Who Are Patronising Gangsters In Durgapur ?*
- *CITU Union's Open Letter To Steel Minister*
- *Closure Of Plantations Lead To Large Scale Unemployment.*
- *Law For Victimised Railway Employees/ Legal Notes*
- *Delhi 'Statesman' Workers Face Management & Goonda Attacks*
- *Newsletters | Kerala | Tamilnadu | Goa | Maharashtra*
- *CITU Demands Recognition Of PRG Of South Vietnam*
- *Rising Working Class Struggles In Great Britain*
- *Other Regular Features*

Editorial Board

B. T. Ranadive (Chairman)
 P. Ramamurti Monoranjan Ray
 Niren Ghosh Sudhin Kumar

Fight Out The Victimisation Of Railwaymen With All Our Might

FOR twenty days the railwaymen fought heroically braving unheard of police repression, gangsterism and disruption. The Congress Government almost declared a Civil War against the striking railwaymen—a Civil War in which one side was fighting with arms and the repressive State apparatus while the other side was fighting with united strength of railwaymen and relying on the solidarity of the other sections of the trade union movement. The doggedness with which the railway workers fought was unprecedented. The railway colonies became the battlefields with family members of workers showing exemplary courage in resisting police brutalities.

It was but natural that when the NCCRS decided by majority to withdraw the strike unconditionally there was dismay among the workers. The CITU representative Samar Mukherjee and AIRF General Secretary Priya Gupta expressed the feelings of the overwhelming majority of the striking workers when they expressed their strong opposition to the unconditional withdrawal of the railway strike. The AITUC leadership, as expected, was treacherously working for the withdrawal of the strike and was misusing the platform of NCCRS for its class collaborationist policies.

Yet when the strike was withdrawn on May 28 the railwaymen joined their duties with pride in their strength. In several centres workers entered railway stations and workshops in processions shouting slogans in support of their demands and against victimisation and arrest of their leaders. They were also angry about the disruptors and the strike-breakers and there was universal condemnation of the treachery from within.

The remarkable solidarity shown by the trade union movement for the cause of railwaymen had no parallel in the annals of the

**Contribute To Railwaymen's
Defence Fund**

T. U. movement. The successful Bharat Bundh on May 15 was an expression of fraternal support of the working class of India to the railwaymen in their need of the hour. The solidarity support of a section of the Central Government employees movement was also similarly action of great importance. Even the staff of All India Radio expressed their strong resentment at the false propaganda of the AIR during the railway strike.

The bureaucrats of the Railway Board are conspiring to resort to vindictive measures against the railway workers. Even though one month has passed since the withdrawal of the strike thousands are behind bars under DIR and MISA. Though the officials say that two and a half lakh workers would suffer break-in-service and another 9000 suspension, the actual number is much more. Penal transfer of workers to far away places are in galore. The number of workers summarily dismissed run in thousands.

The task of defending these workers is indeed stupendous. Apart from legal aid that will be necessary to defend them, these workers also will need most pressing relief since their families are literally starving. The Railway Board's game of imposing starvation on them with a view to break their morale must be defeated.

All India Road Transport Workers Convention

The All India Road Transport Workers' Convention which had to be postponed due to the railway strike will now be held on July 28-30 at Calcutta.

Therefore the T.U. movement should take up this challenge of the Government and rise to the occasion so that railwaymen are given full protection in every possible way.

The CITU has therefore called upon all its unions to collect maximum possible funds in support of victimised railway workers and form legal aid committees to defend their cases in the Courts of Law.

At the initiative of the CITU Centre a Committee of leading lawyers of Calcutta has already been formed to give necessary assistance to railwaymen and Central Government employees. The West Bengal State Committee of CITU has taken up the task of collection of funds in right earnest. Similar Committees are being formed in other States with a view to extend legal aid and relief to these railwaymen.

In their anxiety to penalise the leading workers the railway authorities have violated several rules and regulations they had drafted themselves. As in the case of Chittaranjan Locomotive such orders could not be justified in the Courts and the authorities were directed to allow the workers to resume duties. Many such cases are there but they should be properly pursued.

In the name of leniency or screening of cases, the railway authorities are planning to isolate the militant sections and their defence will be a complicated problem. But the organised trade union movement will have to do its utmost to defend them.

The task of mobilising the other sections of working class

2.7 Lakh Laid off in W. Bengal due to power Crisis

According to the Labour Ministry, Govt. of West Bengal, during the five month period—January to May 1974—2 lakh 70 thousand workers were laid off in West Bengal as a result of the power crisis. In 52 large industrial establishments, lay-off has become a regular feature. According to official sources, 770 workers were retrenched during the same period.

However, according to unofficial estimates the number of workers laid off due to power crisis will come to at least 3.5 lakhs. The two worst affected industries are Jute Mill and Engineering.

and people in support of railwaymen also assumes paramount importance. The trade union movement should see that continuous agitation is built up in order to bring sufficient pressure on the railway bosses so that they are forced to withdraw all the vindictive measures.

Let the entire T.U. movement come forward in defence of railway employees which will usher in a powerful movement all over the country that will strengthen the unity of the T.U. movement itself.

The Government should not be allowed to treat the railwaymen as slaves. They have stood up for twenty days with glory. They will continue to do so with the solidarity support of the organised T.U. movement.

The AITUC Leadership And The Railway Strike

THE glorious all-India strike of railway workers which continued for 20 days was withdrawn on May 28 unconditionally and the railway workers are drawing lessons from their experiences during the strike period.

The role played by the AITUC leadership in the strike is one of the most important aspects being discussed by the railwaymen to-day. A strong resentment is prevailing among vast sections of railwaymen against the AITUC leadership whose double faced character was clear even to an ordinary worker.

The CITU refrained from any criticism of the AITUC leadership during the strike in the interest of preserving the fighting unity of railway workers. Though the AITUC leadership used every occasion to attack the CITU publicly even during the strike we did not enter into controversy with them. Now that the strike is over we can express our view on the role of the AITUC leadership in this period so that T. U. workers can draw appropriate lessons.

The AITUC did everything to bring pressure on the NCCRS to withdraw the strike. Though its leadership was advocating that NCCRS could alone withdraw the strike they used to go to the press openly pleading for withdrawal of the strike and create confusion among the railway workers.

When the struggle was going on unitedly and there was no

sign of breaking it out the Secretariat of the AITUC on May 25 issued a statement in which it openly opposed the CITU's proposals of intensifying the solidarity for railway workers by other sections of the working class and instead called upon the workers to "take their collective decision group by group or zone by zone" regarding the withdrawal of the strike. It was a clear cut call to sabotage the strike by groups or by zones. There is no wonder that the All India Radio showed special enthusiasm in announcing the statement.

This preposterous stand of the AITUC leadership was not an accidental phenomenon. Since the beginning of the preparations for strike the AITUC played its disruptive role.

Within 3 weeks of the formation of the NCCRS the AITUC formed Indian Railway Workers' Federation. This action of the AITUC leadership, when a magnificent unity of railway movement was brought about in the Convention of over 110 unions in railways on February 27, was meant to sow disruption in the T. U. movement of railway workers. Government's reaction to the formation of the Federation was not unsympathetic.

When the negotiations started Dange brought forward some proposals for settlement which virtually amounted to giving up struggle. The NCCRS was right in rejecting these proposals.

When the Government was using negotiations to gain some time, Dange was busy in giving a rosy picture of the negotiations. His press statement of May 2 gives some of his ideas.

"During these negotiations agreement on certain important points have already been arrived at. The question of victimisation was more or less resolved..."

"Agreement of an important character i. e., on the question of decasualisation of over 3 lakh workers had also been arrived at after a long and serious discussion."

In the statement Dange also found Government's attitude on the question of industrial wage system and working hours to be satisfactory, while regarding grain shop the statement noted "optimistic atmosphere". Only according to Dange "what finally remained was the crucial question of bonus."

Thus the statement clearly explains the attitude of the AITUC leadership during negotiations. The Government however came out in its true colours and pounced upon the railway leaders and the workers. The railway workers however reacted heroically and the strike began even before May 8 in several places.

When George Fernandes was in jail, in an open letter to Madhu, Limaye, Dange said, "In my opinion George need not have substituted "p a r i t y" by demanding 75 per cent wage increase" and he further said, "That played into the hands of the Government"! This is just one of the formulations made by

Dange and the AITUC leaders with the deliberate intention of demoralising the railway workers.

The position of Dange and the AITUC leaders became so ridiculous before the eyes of the workers that even persons like S. M. Banerjee found it difficult to justify it before the public.

Mahesh Desai, General Secretary HMS, an associate of the AITUC in the National Council of Trade Unions, condemned the AITUC's "Mean Betrayal" in the railway strike in the Editorial of Hind Mazdoor, official organ of HMS (May 1974). He painfully noted ".....it was cheap and presumptuous for the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) to make an assurance of "no victimisation" from the Government an excuse to part company with other constituents of the National Co-ordination Committee and its Action Committee."

Mahesh Desai further explained his sad experience of united front with AITUC during the recent past. He observed, "presumption, opportunism and unabated repudiation of commitment to policies and principles agreed to bilaterally and multilaterally have been evident in the actions and utterances of the AITUC since the beginning of 1973."

Pointing out the disruptive role of the AITUC to suit its pro-Governments policy the HMS leader noted, "Incredible as it seems AITUC after joining the National Co-ordination Committee of Railwaymen's Struggle on February 27, floated a fiction of

Indian Railway Workers' Federation. Soon after Shri Reddy obligingly arranged a series of "informal discussion" meetings early in April so that fake AITUC Railway Federation could be brought within the overall framework of the impending negotiations between the Railway Ministry and the Railwaymen. For such out-of-turn services rendered and received the AITUC, with purely notional stake in the railwaymen's trade union organisation and struggle, could feel little compunction and less hesitation in dealing a mortal blow to their unity at a critical moment in their historical struggle."

The stand taken by the AITUC leadership has angered the railway workers so much that in Bombay they refused to allow the AITUC leader B. S. Dhume to speak in the rally in Bombay on May 31 after the strike. The AITUC leadership is further finding it extremely difficult to explain their position to the mass of workers. In Kharagpur and other places they had to go under police escort to visit railway colonies. Never before the AITUC leadership found itself in such a ridiculous position!

However they refuse to learn from their debacle. They resorted to blame the CITU for the expression of strong resentment of workers. B. S. Dhume in his press statement blamed the CITU and HMP elements for the Bombay incident. Such tactics however failed to cut much ice among the workers.

The outwardly protest of the AITUC leadership against the arrest of railwaymen became clear to the workers after seeing discreet silence of the AITUC leaderships when Achutha Menon Government in Kerala resorted to brutal repressive measures against railwaymen. Dange said, "It was the use of the violence of the State power let loose on the workers that forced them to retreat". He conveniently forgot to mention that in Kerala also the railway workers had to encounter the same repressive apparatus.

Dange went further when he said, "The railway workers' strike and the behaviour of the Government has brought home to the worker, his own experience, the eternal truth of Marxism-Leninism as nothing else would have—that bourgeois democracy is democracy for the bourgeoisie and dictatorship for the working class".

Strange logic! This "dictatorship for the working class" was brought about in the country with the support of his own party in the last general elections. In several States his party is co-operating fully with this "dictatorship for the working class". It appears that Dange and the AITUC leaders have poor opinion about the intelligence of the working class. Perhaps because of some crumbs of seats thrown at them during the recent elections they have become blind to reality.

Secondly, the railway workers have not retreated due to repressive measures. They and

(On Page Five)

Who Are Patronising Gangsters In Durgapur ? CITU Union's Open Letter To Steel Minister

IN a Press Statement on Durgapur Steel Plant issued on June 8, 1974, the Union Minister of Steel and Mines K.D. Malaviya said that, Durgapur Steel belt has, of late, become a den of gangsters, and as a result of this production in the Steel Plant suffers. He threatened lock-out in the Plant for a long period unless these attacks are stopped.

In an open letter addressed to the Union Steel Minister, A.

The AITUC Leadership

(From Page Four)

their family members have shown that despite ferocious repression the railway workers could continue the struggle heroically. What the Government could not achieve by repression was done by the AITUC leadership by their pre-planned betrayal. They thus have done an immense service to the Government—a fact which cannot be concealed by tall talks against the Government.

However, the rank and file workers of the AITUC remained with the mass of workers in the strike and faced police repression in some places. They should ponder over the treacherous policies pursued by their leaders and understand the great harm done by their leaders to the cause of the railway T.U. movement. They should also ensure that the leadership is not allowed to betray the cause of the working class movement to suit their class collaborationist policies.

Dakshi, Joint Secretary, Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union (CITU) has candidly exposed the true face of the goonda-raj in Durgapur since the General Election of 1972 and has asked the Steel minister to spell out who are these gangsters and who are patronising them.

After the General Election of 1972, eight leaders and activists of CITU have been murdered by gangsters in the Steel Township ; DSP and ASP unions (CITU) cannot open their offices due to goonda terror ; CITU processions have been attacked, workers assaulted and even military grenades have been thrown to kill CITU union leaders. Recounting these incidents, the letter asks the Steel Minister, "Can you name a single person who has been punished for committing these murders? ...The Chief Minister, Shri Siddhartha Roy wrote that he would take all steps against the miscreants. Will you please ask him what action has been taken against them?" It goes on to add, "Malavyaji, kindly verify whether some of the known anti-social elements were not garlanded on Republic Day for exemplary service to the Plant" "Those gangsters", it said "are all in all in the plant, they are the leaders, they dictate the administration".

It further point out that in the last two years it is the goondas who are getting employment in the two plants by arrangement with the authorities, and not those who were waiting for years

after registering their names in the local employment exchanges.

Referring to a booklet printed by the CITU Union in DSP "Diagnosis of Sick Child—Durgapur", the letter added, "To-dasy's Durgapur is a night-mare to you. That is why you are so keen to suppress those hooligans whom you have provided shelter, patronage and subsistence.

So far they have remained engaged in rampage on CITU Unions, to break strikes and bundhs. In exchange, they demand illegal premium. The carrot has started growing bigger and bigger to an alarming stage ...But the climax is yet to come."

It went on to add, "There are four groups in your party here, each fighting the other to eliminate them and snatch away the honey of employment. Factional fights have taken toll the other day when one was Murdered and others were injured...The workers are terrorised, the officers too. There was supply of knives, bombs and pistols in abundance to eliminate CITU, but now those weapons have brought the administration and production to a stand still."

Describing how this has affected production, the letter adds, "The production which these two plants achieved within the days of so-called "anarchy" during the regime of U.F. in 1969 are far above the present production level in these days of "Law and Order". But why? Have you given a thought to it?"

It concludes by saying, "We hear from you that you will suppress goondas irrespective of their party affiliations. We wish you all success but are yet to see such actions."

Who Scuttled Central T.U.'s Solidarity With Railwaymen ?

IN a Press Statement issued on May 28, Comrade P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU refuted as utter false the stand, attributed by AITUC and S.A. Dange, to the CITU in the meeting of Central Trade Union Organisations held on May 24 to discuss the Railway strike situation.

Explaining why he did not join issue with the AITUC on this question on May 25, P. Ramamurti said, that it was "because maintaining the unity of the railway workers who were fighting a grim battle was my paramount consideration. Because of the same consideration I expressed my opinion to certain members of the NCCRS that it would not be advisable to state

that the AITUC had virtually withdrawn from the strike, in their statement of 26th May."

Referring to what actually took place in the Central Trade Unions' Meeting on May 24, he pointed out that after Comrade S.M. Joshi of Defence Employees Federation had suggested work to rule movement by Central Govt. employees and in other industries to put pressure on the Government and some others had spoken, he had stated that it was difficult because of the split in the Confederation and the NFPTE. But he had added, "However; if the Central Trade Unions, organisations, particularly the CITU and AITUC, make sincere efforts and appeal to them to keep aside their differences and give a call for such action either jointly or separately effective solidarity action would be possible."

P. Ramamurti, in his statement, adds "I particularly appealed to Shri S.A. Dange to rise to the occasion. But Shri Dange refused to do it, not on the ground that it was wrong, but that would not move the Government, and put forward a different line of calling off the strike on getting assurances of no victimisation. Since this was not accepted by others, I said it is useless to continue the discussion of solidarity action as suggested by Comrade Joshi, I proposed the minimum solidarity action. It was accepted and I myself drafted the Resolution.

That was unanimously accepted by the meeting. No one in the meeting proposed strike by the Central Govt. employees or in coal and steel units."

He further added, "I must also mention that Shri Dange at the end of the meeting stated that the AITUC, on its own, will strive to secure assurances of no victimisation for withdrawal of the strike."

While exposing the real intention of the AITUC, Ramamurti goes on to add "that the AITUC having accepted the unanimous Resolution of the 24th May, should come out with its own line the very next day speaks volumes of its real intention. Even without getting that assurance of victimisation which Dange said he would try to secure, it has called on the workers to decide to call off or not to call off the strike statewide or zonal wise and it would support both the decisions, i.e. it would support those who withdraw and those who do not withdraw! It only means bypass the NCCRS and somehow get the strike withdrawn."

Referring to the pitiable predicament of the AITUC, because of the CPI's coalition in the Kerala Govt. and its alliance with Congress in West Bengal and other States, he concludes by saying, "I leave it to the working class from all the attendant circumstances to draw their own conclusions and decide at whose bidding the AITUC leaders had at last resorted to this line of naked disruption."

Anti-Repression Day Observed in Bihar

Under the auspices of Bihar State Committee of UCTU, Anti-Repression Day was observed in Patna on June 18 through a mass rally. A resolution adopted at the rally protested against the continuing victimisation against the striking railway employees and warned the Government that it will not lead to smooth working of the railways.

The rally was presided over by Shri Yogeshwar Gope, General Secretary Bihar State Non-gazetted Employees' Federation and addressed by Hari Krishna, Convener Bihar UCTU, Jivesh Prasad (ERMU), G. P. Verma (AIIEA) etc.

Law For Victimised Railway Employees

THE "progressive" government of Mrs Indira Gandhi have unleashed a pogrom of savage reprisals against the Railway employees who had gone on strike. Thousands of employees have been dismissed from service, thousands others are either detained under MISA or facing criminal prosecution on phoney charges.

In the present note I shall deal with the orders of dismissal which have been passed against the employees with a stereotyped formula under Rule 14(ii) of the Discipline and Appeal Rules and sometimes also under Article 311 (2)(b) of the Constitution. The purport of both these provisions is that no enquiry shall be held if "the disciplinary authority is satisfied, for reasons to be recorded by it in writing, that it is not reasonably practicable to hold an enquiry in the manner provided in the rules".

What has been done is simply to quote those words of the rule (which are substantially similar to the words used in Article 311 (2) of the Constitution) in the order of dismissal and no reason has been given why it is not practicable to hold an enquiry. Perhaps the nabobs of the Railways thought that subjective opinion is equivalent to reason and repetition of a question is equivalent to its answer.

In the Ancient Mariner of Coleridge when the ghost ship sped on, it was asked how it is that the ship drove on so fast without wave or wind and a ghost voice gave the answer, "The air is cut away from before

and closes from behind". But that was just the question.

When it is asked why it is impracticable to hold an enquiry prior to dismissal, the spirits of Railway Ministry reply, "because it is impracticable".

The legal position which still now holds the field has too well been formulated by the Supreme Court and admits of no doubt, however.

In the case of Messrs Mahabir Prasad Santosh Kumar v. State of Uttar Pradesh (1), the appellants held a licence under the U. P. Sugar Dealers' Licensing Order as well as the U. P. Foodgrains Dealers' Licensing Order, 1964. By a letter they were directed to explain certain irregularities on 24 April 1967 and on the following day they were directed to hand over all their stocks of sugar and flour to a specified Co-operative Society. Representations against the order made to the District Magistrate were not even attended to and by letter, dated 28 June 1967 the licence of the appellants was cancelled. Copy of the order cancelling the licence was not supplied to the appellants and their appeal to the Government was also rejected and the reasons for rejection were not also communicated to the appellants.

Mr Justice Shah of the Supreme Court, who delivered the judgement observed that "the case discloses a disturbing state of affairs. The authorities have disclosed by their conduct a reckless disregard of the rights of the appellants". Mr Justice

Shah held that, where the rights of citizens are affected by any administrative order, that must necessarily be quasi-judicial, particularly when an appeal is provided against that order. The order which can be appealed from must give reasons or otherwise the right of appeal is rendered nugatory. "If the aggrieved party is not supplied the reason, the right to appeal is an empty formality".

It was further held in that case that the appellate authority must give reasons for the rejection of the appeal. "The practice of the executive authority dismissing statutory appeals against orders which prima facie seriously prejudice the rights of the aggrieved party without giving reasons is a negation of the rule of law".

Mr Justice Shah has held that "it must appear not merely that the authority entrusted with quasi-judicial authority has reached a conclusion on the problem before him; it must appear that he has reached a conclusion which is according to law and just, and for ensuring that end he must record the ultimate mental process leading from the dispute to its solution". Again, "recording of reasons in support of a decision on a disputed claim by a quasi-judicial authority ensures that the decision is reached according to law and is not the result of caprice, whim or fancy or reached on grounds of policy or expediency (emphasis mine).

In the case of A.K. Kraipak v. Union of India (2), the Supreme Court emphasised that administrative authorities must discharge their functions in a quasi-judicial manner, parti-

cularly where the rights of citizens are affected. According to him, "the concept of rule of law would lose its validity if the instrumentalities of the State are not charged with the duty of discharging their functions in a fair and just manner. The requirement of acting judicially in essence is nothing but a requirement to act justly and fairly and not arbitrarily or capriciously. Mr Justice Hegde, who delivered judgement in this case, adverted, in course of his judgement, to the increasing power of administrative bodies and emphasised the need "to prevent the abuse of that power and to see that it does not become a new despotism".

In the cases of the Railway employees, the dismissing authority has clearly acted in a capricious manner. The statutory right of the employee to be heard before any order is passed against him affecting his rights is taken away from him on the flimsy ground that it is not practicable to hold any enquiry, without recording any reasons why it is not so practicable, though the rule 14 (ii) of the D. & A. Rules and proviso (b) to Article 311 (2) makes the recording of such reasons mandatory. We have seen that the Supreme Court has made the recording of reasons mandatory in cases where the statute does not make such recording compulsory. Here on the other hand, statute itself made it compulsory to record the reasons. Here, moreover, the statute provides for an appeal but, where the disciplinary authority does not record the

reasons, the right of appeal is reduced to an empty formality.

All the orders passed against the Railway employees under Rule 14 (ii) of the D. & A. Rules read with Articles 311 (2), proviso (b) are, therefore, on their face, illegal. According to the Constitution, the law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all and the Railway authorities must be presumed to have knowledge of that law. Yet it is astonishing that orders of dismissal could have been passed on such a large scale in the face of the law of the land. What is expected of the ministers of "the biggest democracy" is that they must withdraw these orders without any further delay.

It will not do to say that the reasons why it is not practicable to hold an enquiry are merely a question of the mental process of the punishing authority. As the Privy Council said in the case of Nakkuda Ali vs. Jayaratne (3) wherever it is provided that the administrative authority must do certain things only on reasonable grounds, it must be intended to serve in some sense as a condition limiting the exercise of an otherwise arbitrary power. But if the question whether the condition has been satisfied is to be conclusively decided by the man who wields the power the value of the intended restraint is in effect nothing".

More emphatically Lord Reid said in the case of Ridge vs. Baldwin (4). "...although an enactment expressly required an official to have reasonable grounds for his decision", the law

Number of Registered Unemployed

State	Number of applicants on the live register of employment Exchanges at the end of	
	Jan. '73	Jan. '74
Andhra Pradesh	373,314	481,000
Assam	82,022	105,000
Bihar	751,103	11,40,000
Gujarat	204,064	237,000
Haryana	125,029	132,000
H.P.	55,781	66,000
J & K	38,984	30,000
Karnataka	295,646	309,000
Kerala	454,531	538,000
M. P.	398,466	422,000
Maharashtra	619,113	706,000
Manipur	51,814	31,000
Meghalaya	6,628	7,000
Mizoram	3,752	1,000
Orissa	255,229	341,000
Punjab	162,834	211,000
Rajasthan	171,945	176,000
Tamilnadu	487,783	591,000
Tripura	37,627	43,000
U. P.	832,858	839,000
W. Bengal	1402,334	1,574,000
Chandigarh	21,583	25,000
Delhi	185,654	176,000
Goa	14,031	19,000
Laccadive	1,453	2,000
Pondicherry	13,934	19,000
Total	70,47,512	82,21,000

(Indian Labour Journal)

should not be so defective "that a subject cannot bring up such a decision for review however seriously he may be affected and however obvious it may be that the official acted in breach of his statutory obligation".

Arun Prokas Chatterjee

1. AIR 1970 SC 1302
2. AIR 1970 SC 150
3. 1951 AC 65
4. 1963(2) ALL. E. R. 66

Delhi 'Statesman' Workers Face Management & Goonda Attacks

FOR the last three years or more, ever since the management was forced to sign the Wage Settlement in January 1971, the workers of "The Statesman" in Delhi, led by the Statesman Employees Union have been fighting incessant attacks by the Tata management and its paid goondas. The management adopted every dirty trick—from suspensions and fanning of communal and regional feelings to attacks and assaults by paid goondas—to disrupt the unity of the workers. But all their attempts failed before the determination and united strength of workers. (See December 1973 issue of *The Working Class*).

Failing in all its attempts to cow down the workers, the management ultimately stopped publication of the Delhi edition of the newspaper from May 6 last. It has also started Civil Court proceedings against the workers and their Union. And all these with the sole object of denying the workers their legitimate demands and of disrupting their unity.

The only crime of the workers is that they have been peacefully struggling so long for their legitimate demands, viz. Linkage D. A. for 121 points, rectification of the violations of 1971 Wage Settlement, interim relief of Rs. 100 and payment of increments and relief to those who did not benefit from the 1971 settlement.

The brazenly anti-labour and vindictive attitude adopted by the management will be clear

from the fact that all newspapers, big and small, pay linkage D. A. to their workers at 121 points whereas the Statesman management still pays linkage D. A. at 110 points depriving the workers of Rs. 6.05 as additional D. A. Secondly, although the 1971 settlement was a registered one, they have implemented it in a faulty and wrong way depriving many workers of their service increments.

Regarding the other two demands also, the management have gone back on their earlier assurances. They even refused to talk on these issues.

The workers, led by the Employees' Union and the Action Committee, have displayed exemplary patience in the face of

gross provocations and unsympathetic attitude of management. In their quest for a negotiated settlement, they repeatedly held talks with the management, made representations to the Union Labour Minister, Labour Commissioner, Executive Councillor of Delhi etc. and even agreed to refer the issues to arbitration by the Union Labour Minister. Their attempts merely evoked blunt refusals from the management and helpless silence of the officials who dare not incur the displeasure of the Tatas and Mafatlals.

The Statesman Employees Union, New Delhi and the Action Committee for The Statesman Employees have appealed for help from all Trade Unions, Members of Parliament and the public in general, in their determined and peaceful struggle.

West Bengal Forest Workers Realise Demands Through Struggle

LED by the Forest Mazdoor Union (GITU), forest workers of Darjeeling and Jalpigi districts in West Bengal have recently realised some of their demands through united struggle.

As elsewhere in India, the working condition of these forest workers is miserable to say the least. Although 90 p. c. of the forests are State-owned, the workers have to work under contractors. They have to work for very low wages—75 paise to Rs. 1.50 per day; there is no job security; no housing, medical or drinking water facilities; and no school for their children. Moreover, until recently, they were subjected to the "Begari" system under which they were forced to work for 90 days in the year without remuneration.

After the formation of the Mazdoor Union in 1964, the forest workers started united struggle on the basis of a Charter of Demands including minimum wages, D. A., Provident Fund, Gratuity, Bonus, concessional ration, permanency of all workers etc.

The workers carried on struggles through mass meetings, signature campaigns, demonstrations, dharnas etc. which ultimately forced the employers to concede the following demands of the workers:

(a) abolition of "Begari" system; (b) rise in wages to Rs. 3 per day; (c) enhancement of wages of some piece rated workers; and (d) provision for drinking water and primary schools for workers' children.

The Glorious Railway Strike And After Repression Continues Even After Withdrawal

THE HISTORIC RAILWAY strike, which started on May 8, was withdrawn from the morning of May 28. By carrying on the strike for three long weeks in the face of the most brutal repression ever launched against a working class action, the railway workers have made history.

During the strike the Government used every single weapon of repression in its armoury to crush the resistance of the workers and bring them under the heel—mass arrests, mass dismissals, mass evictions from colonies and brutal terror against workers and their families. None, not even the women and children, were spared.

Up till the end the workers were in a fighting mood, determined to continue the strike till victory. Had the strike been continued for some more days, the shattering impact of the strike on the country's economy would have brought the Government down to its knees and led to a negotiated settlement. The workers were deprived of this by a precipitate withdrawal of the strike.

How the forces of compromise and the role played by the AITUC leadership ultimately overwhelmed the NCCRS and led to precipitate withdrawal can be seen from the day to day account of the last few days of the strike given below. (For a diary of the strike from April 23 to May 23 see the June, 1974 issue of *The Working Class*).

May 24: Seventeenth day of strike. "Solidarity Day" in support of the Railway strike observed throughout West Bengal at the call of seven Left

Trade Union—Central rally and public meeting in Calcutta in the afternoon. Leaders of Central Trade Unions, meeting in New Delhi, call for country wide observance of "Solidarity Day" on May 31. Leaders of Left political parties visiting railway colonies in Calcutta arrested. Sripal Divedi, ailing railway leader arrested on May 20 from Loco hospital, dies in Police hospital under police custody. Railway leaders in various part of India arrested.

S. A. Dange (AITUC), in a statement said that if the strike is withdrawn unconditionally he will see that there is no victimisation.

May 25: Eighteenth day of strike. NCCRS leaders call railwaymen to continue strike unitedly. 50,000 railway workers arrested and over 20,000 dismissed so far. Police lathi-charge women inside Diesel Colony in Siliguri, while the women were resisting police attack on their quarters—four women injured. Huge student demonstration in Calcutta in support of railway strike.

NCCRS turns down Dange's suggestion for withdrawal of strike and P. Ramamurti (CITU) questions Dange's authority to make such suggestion.

S. A. Dange (AITUC) suggests 'group-wise' and 'zone-wise' decision on strike by railwaymen.

May 26: Nineteenth day of strike. N. S. Bhangoo, member Action Committee, arrested. NCCRS condemns arrest calls upon railwaymen to continue struggle with greater determination. Six out of thirteen Action Committee members in jail. Police prevents entry of Comrade A. K. Gopalan and 500 volunteers into Trichur station. Wives of railway employees in Tambaram, Ayanavaram and Perambur set up organisation for resisting police intimidation, eviction from quarters etc.

NCCRS condemns AITUC's suggestion for 'group-wise' and 'zone-wise' decisions as unfortunate and detrimental to unity of railwaymen.

May 27: Twentieth day of strike. Huge rally and demonstration in Calcutta in support of railway strike. Mass organisations express support for railway strike through meetings, demonstrations etc.

George Fernandes, Convener and five other Action Committee members write from Tihar jail advising withdrawal of strike from the morning of May 28. Four Action Committee members outside jail and three other NCCRS members at a meeting, decide to withdraw the strike from May 28. Samar Mukherjee M.P. (CITU) and Priya Gupta (AIRF) object to the unilateral withdrawal of strike, but ulti-

mately agree to the decision for the sake of unity of railwaymen.

The resolution for withdrawal demands immediate release of arrested railwaymen, reinstatement of dismissed workers, withdrawal of other penal measures, guarantee of security for those living in railway quarters and immediate resumption of negotiation.

The resolution also condemned the unprecedented repression launched by the Government to suppress the strike and declared that the NCCRS is united to lead the railwaymen in further struggles to win their demands and only the enemy within can defeat them.

May 28: Railway strike withdrawn after 20 days. As per decision of NCCRS, railwaymen all over India report for duty. In many places they went in processions shouting militant slogans. Railway leaders released from jail given rousing reception by workers in Bombay, Katihar, Quilon and many other places.

B.T. Ranadive, President and P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of CITU in separate statements, express difference with the assessment of strike situation by some NCCRS leaders and state that the Govt. could have been forced to accept the demands if the strike had been continued.

In a press Conference held in New Delhi, P. Ramamurti, Gene-

ral Secretary, CITU and Samar Mukherjee, Treasurer CITU and member NCCRS said that the statement made by S.A. Dange of AITUC on May 25 was designed to create dissention among railwaymen. They demanded immediate stoppage of attack on railwaymen and their forcible prevention from joining duty.

Repression Continues

The unilateral and precipitate withdrawal of the strike did bring to an end the massive repression by the Government; rather it has thrown the workers on the mercy of a ruthless administration which is now wrecking vengeance on the workers to teach them a lesson.

Even after the withdrawal of the strike, on May 28 itself, goondas and police attacked workers in many places when they went to report for duty. Many workers were forcibly prevented from joining by the Congress hoodlums many others assaulted and humiliated before allowing to join. At Kharagpur railway workshop, police fired upon and lathi-charged workers injuring over 100 workers. Many workers were arrested. In Shalimar Yard (S.E. Rly.), armed goondas backed by police created a reign of terror. Many workers were attacked with guns and knives while reporting for duty. In some places workers

were asked to sign bonds before they were allowed to join. And despite the assurances of the Prime Minister and the Railway Minister, thousands of workers were served with dismissal or suspension orders as they went to report for duty.

Workers are not taking this lying down. In many places they resisted the attacks and protested against victimisations through demonstrations and work stoppages. In the Kural Carshed (C. Rly.) in Bombay, the workers went on a sit-in strike on June 1 to protest against the dismissal of some of their colleagues and demanding their reinstatement. The sit-in was withdrawn on June 3. In the Mahalakshmi Carshed and Bandra Locoshed (W. Rly.), the workers went on a 4-hour tool-down strike demanding reinstatement of railwaymen.

Victimisation and other repressive measures is still continuing. According to the Action Committee of the NCCRS up to June 8, 20,000 permanent employees have been dismissed, 75,000 casual workers have not been allowed to join and 10,000 were still in jail. Break-in-service has been imposed on over 12 lakh workers.

In the Katihar division of N. R. Rly., none of the 1700 retrenched employeed have been allowed to join. In Chittaranjan Locomotive Works a number of wokers have been arrested since the end of the strike.

Solidarity Actions

At the call of the CITU, HMP, HMS, and AITUC a massive rally was held in Bombay on May 31 which was attended by

workers in thousands displaying a militant mood. On June 9, a rally was organised by CITU in Calcutta which was addressed by P. Ramamurti, Monoranjan Roy and Sudhin Kumar. A resolution adopted at the rally also decided to observe a "Solidarity Week" from June 10 to 16. A massive demonstration was organised by the 12th July Committee on June 14 in support of railway workers. On the same day, the Ganatantrik Mahila Samity organised a big rally and mass deputation to the General Manager of Eastern Rly. The CITU has appealed to the entire working class to organise rallies and demonstrations unitedly in all factories and establishments and to raise funds for the suffering railwaymen and their families.

Anti-Victimisation Day Observed

At the call of the Action Committee of the NCCRS, 'Anti-Victimisation Day' was observed on June 18, by railway workers throughout the country. Thousands of railway workers observed the day in different centres through processions and rallies. In Calcutta, Processions and rallies were organised by the NCCRS units of Eastern and S. E. Railways when memorandums were submitted to the Governor. Demonstrations were also held in Siliguri and other places.

Relief Fund and Legal Aid

In a statement issued on June 6, Com. B. T. Ranadive, President and Com. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU called upon all CITU

State Committees to collect funds from the working class and constitute legal aid Committees to fight the illegal dismissal orders on railway workers. They also called upon all affiliated unions to immediately launch this collection drive with utmost vigour.

On behalf of the CITU, they have also appealed to the working class to contribute their utmost to the legal aid fund.

Calls for raising funds in aid of the victimised railway workers have also been given by S.F.I., and other mass organisations of students, youth, women, employees etc.

Transport workers of Japan have contributed one thousand dollars in aid of the striking railway workers. This was announced by the leader of the delegation of Japanese National Railway Workers' Federation at a meeting of railwaymen held in New Delhi on June 3.

In response to the appeal of the CITU, contributions have been pouring in for the CITU fund for railwaymen from numerous unions and individuals. The Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union has contributed Rs. 500 to the fund and has decided to organise a collection drive. The Calcutta State Transport Employees' Union has contributed Rs. 300, the Hooghly Dist. Co-ordination Committee of Central Govt. Employees Rs. 250 and the Jay Engineering Workers' Union Rs. 100 (A list of donors to the Fund up to June 20, is given elsewhere in this issue).

In Nagpur, the Rail Kamgar Sangharsha Sahayog is distri-

buting cash and wheat to victimised railwaymen.

Legal Aid Committee

At a meeting of over 20 leading lawyers of Calcutta, held in the CITU Central Office on June 4 under the presidentship of Com. B. T. Ranadive, it was decided to constitute a Legal Aid Committee in defence of the Victimised Railwaymen and Central Govt. employees. Com. A. P. Chatterjee, member General Council of CITU is the Convener.

The Committee has already started functioning and through the legal actions instituted by it, injunction orders have already been issued by the Calcutta High Court in the case of 42 dismissed employees of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works and 17 dismissed employees of Shalimar Yard (S. E. Rly.). Hundreds of other cases have been taken up and MISA cases are also being pursued.

In Bombay, the Joint Action Committee of six Central Trade Unions (CITU, HMP, HMS, AITUC, SMS and BMS) have decided to raise a relief fund in support of the railwaymen in court cases. It has also set up a lawyers' panel to give legal aid to the railwaymen.

NCCRS to Meet on June 25

During the strike, the callous indifference of the administration and forcible running of trains with novices led to incalculable damage to tracks, rolling stock and other vital equipments. Instead of restoring normalcy in the railways so that the damages may be repaired and efficient

Rising Working Class Struggles In Great Britain

ABOUT 1000 workers under the Port of London Authority went on strike on June 13 on their demand for extra pay for handling dirty cargo. As a result no work was done on nine ships in London's West India and Milwal docks.

Workers of the Excavator Manufacturers factory at Rochester went on strike since first week of June to realise wage rise of 10 pence an hour.

More than 2000 nurses of 300 hospitals in U.K. marched to 10, Downing Street (official residence of the Prime Minister) to hand over a petition signed by 2 lakh nurses. The petition included their charter of demands including free meals for staff on duty, pay rise of at least 5 pound sterling a week etc.

Members of the Civil and Public Service Association, Post and Telecommunication group are on strike for five weeks on their demand for pay review to bring parity of pay between post office staff and other workers.

operation of railways may be restored, the administration is continuing its ruthless victimisation measures. The railway administration should take note of the warning that, restoring normal conditions in the railways will remain a far cry unless it ends its policy of victimisation.

To discuss this and to chalk out the future course of action, the NCCRS will meet in New Delhi on June 25.

In a recently held ballot 30000 members of the Association turned down the suggestion to end the strike.

Supervisors of Hoover factory at Cambuslang are on strike for two weeks for higher remuneration. 50 storemen of the factory also went on strike from June 12 for payment of Bonus. Till June 12, 1000 workers of the factory have been laid off.

About 100 workers in the

Kerala Newsletter

About 20,000 workers of the Alwaye-Ernakulam industrial area went on a one-day strike on June 6 last, paralysing industrial activity in the entire area. The strike was in support of the struggle of the workers of Toshiba-Anand factory. This struggle in the Toshiba-Anand factory was in protest against the breach of an agreement arrived at between the workers and the management in the presence of the State Labour Minister, in which act the management was incited by the Kerala Government. The strike ultimately ended in a victory for the workers.

Three lakh plantation workers of Kerala observed a one-day strike on June 14. This strike was in protest against the writ petitions submitted by the plantation owners in the Court against the minimum wage

Paint Shop of the Dagenham Plant of Ford Motors observed a two-day strike over a grading issue. They are demanding upgrading which will give them an extra 3 pence an hour. The Company not only refused to meet their demand, but also laid off 4000 workers on June 6.

Lock out was declared recently at the Pamplona subsidiary of British Laylands when its workers went on a 24-hour sit-in strike demanding 42 pound sterling a month wage rise, reinstatement of workers discharged at the end of last year and security of jobs.

ordinance. The strike was conducted under the joint leadership of CITU, AITUC, INTUC and UTUC.

The entire workers of the Matting departments of coir factories in Ambalapuzha Taluk of Alleppey district went on strike from June 19 under the joint leadership of the CITU, AITUC and INTUC. The strike is in protest against the action of the owners in denying the rightful demands of the workers, taking advantages of the decentralisation of industries. The demands include higher wages, D.A. etc.

About 10,000 coir factory workers of Shertallai Taluk of Alleppey district observed a one-day strike on June 19 under the joint auspices of CITU, AITUC, and INTUC. The strike was in support of the demand that exporters of coir products should themselves set up factories to give employment to workers.

NEWSLETTERS

Tamil Nadu

Led jointly by the CITU and other Unions, workers of New Harrison Sugar Mills went on strike from May 24 on their demands. The strike was called off after an agreement was reached with the management on May 26 which conceded the workers' demands for increased house rent allowance, travelling allowance, 8 hours duty, non-victimisation etc.

12,000 handloom workers of Madurai are on strike from 27th May demanding 50% increase in wages. The Loom barons are willing to pay only 20 to 22%. Regular meetings, demonstrations and deputations to Collectors are being conducted by the action committee consisting of CITU and others. The Government, as in other cases, is adopting all strike breaking methods including Police repression and attacks by goonda and anti-socials in their employ. Comrade A. Balakrishnan and Krishnamurthy, CITU leaders, were beaten, lathi-charged and maltreated by the Police and were later arrested. They have been admitted in Police hospital in precarious condition. Protests by all section of working class are mounting against these atrocities.

Handloom and Power loom workers in Thalavaipuram, led by CITU and others, will get additional wage rise, leave, festival allowance and other

benefits as per agreement arrived at on 24th May.

The representatives of all unions connected with the State Electricity Board met on 2nd June last in Madras and decided to fight unitedly for achieving their demands for pay rise, allowance, house rent, bonus etc.

Churutu workers in Tamil Nadu will get 25% increase in their wages as per agreement arrived on 4th June. Comrade S. A. Thangaraj and Comrade Varatharajan (both CITU) negotiated on behalf of the workers.

4000 workers of Sesasai Paper Mills in Salem Dist. led by CITU are on strike from 24th April demanding interim benefits, seniority benefits, production bonus, abolition of contract labour and incentives.

Leather Tannery workers in Tamil Nadu who were on strike from May 26, will get Rs. 1.60 per day more as per Settlement arrived at in June. Comrade Thangarajan (CITU) represented the workers. The strike was called off.

The entire 3000 plantation workers in Kanyakumari are on strike from 30th May in support of the striking GANDHIMATHI plantation workers.

Goa

CITU Condemns Victimisation of Coca-Cola Workers

For the last six months or more, the workers of Fabril Gasosa (owners of Coca-Cola) and Agencia Sequeira (distribu-

tors) in Goa are continuing their united struggle against large-scale victimisation and illegal lock-out by their managements. (See March 1974 issue of The Working Class).

Before declaring the lock-out on November 23, the management of Sequeira enterprises had dismissed 3 leading workers. Subsequently, 39 more workers were dismissed. Although the Coca-Cola dispute is now under the consideration of an Industrial Tribunal, the managements of these enterprises have recently dismissed 46 more workers illegally.

Gerald Pereira, General Secretary of Goa State Committee of CITU has protested against this and has demanded withdrawal of the dismissal orders.

Successfull Strike by Marmagoa Port Trust Workers.

About 3500 workers of the Marmagoa Port Trust went on an indefinite strike from June 3 last demanding cancellation of the nomination of Sri Mohan Nair on the Port Trust Board, who does not represent more than 25 workers out of 3500, through fraudulent means. Their other demands are revision of pay scales and minimum 10 per cent Bonus. The work of the Port Trust came to a stand still as even the clerical staff joined the strike.

The CITU-led Marmagoa Waterfront Workers' Union has given wholehearted support to the strike. Meanwhile, 5000 Dock workers are getting ready to go on strike in support of the MPT workers.

Amendments To The Constitution Of The CITU

[Adopted at the General Council meeting held at Visakha-patnam, April 7-10, 1974.]

Amendment 1. From Section 9A ii—Delete the word 'five'

Amendment 2. From Section 9A v—Delete the word 'three'

Explanation: The number of Vice-Presidents and Secretaries will be decided by the Conference each session.

Amendment 3. Section 20—add (e) to the section: "The General Council shall have the power to decide by a two-third majority to dissolve or reorganise a State Committee or State Council if it is functioning against the policies of the CITU or is unable to discharge its responsibilities because of inactivity or any other cause. Before taking such action, the General Council shall convene a meeting of the State Committee or State Council to give a hearing to its members. Within six months of taking such action, General Council shall convene a Conference of the unions of the State to elect a State Committee and/or State Council."

Amendment 4. Section 16 (i)—After the first sentence ending with 'each year', add "However, if the session is held before June 30th, the affiliation fee for the year shall be paid before the session. If in the case of any union there is difficulty in ascertaining the full membership for

the year, because of earlier payment, the previous year's membership may be accepted as the membership for the Session."

Amendment 5. Section 15—After Section (a) add "(b) The annual subscription of the

journal, The Working Class". Sub-clause. (b) and (c) shall be considered as (c) and (d) respectively.

Explanation: By this amendment, payment of annual subscription of The Working Class journal made compulsory for unions.

Amendment 6. Section 8 (d)—after 'of Rs. 2 per delegate' add 'or an amount fixed by the Working Committee'.

Karnataka Textile Workers Get Wage Rise

THE Tripartite Committee constituted by the Karnataka Government has submitted its report regarding interim relief which has been accepted by the Government. As per notification of the Government the following rise has been awarded to the textile workers in the State.

1) Mills paying a minimum wage of less than Rs. 500/- per month should pay an interim relief of Rs. 40/- per month to all categories of employees. With the addition of interim relief of Rs. 40/- per month, if the minimum wage falls short of Rs. 200/- the difference should be made up before 1-10-1974 by making payment in two equal instalments—first on 1-7-1974 and the second on 1-10-1974. However, in the case of Co-operative Textile Mills started after 1-1-1971, the difference should be made up before 1-1-1975 in 3 equal instalments payable on 1-7-1974, 1-10-1974 and 1-1-1975.

- 2) Mills paying a minimum wage ranging from Rs. 201/- to Rs. 250/- should pay an interim relief of Rs. 30/- per month to all categories of employees. With the addition of interim relief of Rs. 30/- per month, if the minimum wage falls short of Rs. 250/-, the difference should be paid before 1-10-1974.
- 3) Mills paying a minimum wage of Rs. 251/- and above should pay an interim relief of Rs. 30/- per month to all categories of employees.

These recommendations will be applicable to all the textile workers coming within the definition of the term "Workmen" under the Industrial disputes Act. The interim relief will be accounted for PF, ESI, Gratuity and bonus.

G. Namjoshi, General Secretary, M. S. K. Mill Workers' Union, Gulbarga represented CITU on the Committee.

Union Reports

CITU Workers murdered

Ajit Dey, an employee of Alloy Steel Plant, Durgapur and an active worker of the Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union (CITU), was dragged out of his quarter and brutally murdered by INTUC goondas on May 6.

Milan Mukherjee, an employee of the Bengal Paper Mill, Ranigunge and an active worker of the CITU Union, was stabbed to death and seven other workers were seriously injured when armed Congress goondas attacked them at the time of going to duty on May 24. Robin Sen, M.P. has complained of Police inaction and has demanded arrest of the culprits.

Worker of Transport Firm beaten to death

Goondas employed by the proprietor of the Calcutta-Bombay Roadways Transport in Calcutta, attacked some workers of the Transport Company with deadly weapons inside the proprietor's chamber at midnight of June 10 last. As a result of brutal torture and assault one worker died on the spot and several others were seriously injured.

Robin Chakrabarty General Secretary, Carrier Transport Employees' Union (CITU) condemned this incident and demanded immediate arrest of the proprietor and his hired goondas.

Delhi factory workers fight dismissals and goonda attacks

The management of Kaur & Singh, a factory situated in the New Industrial Area, Delhi,

dismissed 18 workers on May 18 last without giving prior notice. In protest, the dismissed workers began demonstration at the factory gates from May 19, and the rest of the workers started a sit-in-strike in support of the dismissed workers.

On May 28, the owners of the factory, in collusion with the police and accompanied by goondas, attacked the dismissed workers on demonstration, beat them severely and snatched away their cycles. The police not only refused to register the complaint of the workers, but arrested Sri Ram, Secretary of the Workers' Union who had gone to investigate and manhandled the union lawyer. Later, the police arrested five workers and instituted false cases against them.

Employees of Mercury Travels face closure

About 100 employees of Mercury Travels (India) Ltd., a travel agency in Calcutta, have been carrying on united struggle against the anti-labour practices of the management and in support of their demands for need based wage, Bonus, D.A. etc. Unable to break the unity of the employees, the management have given notice of closure of its Calcutta office from 9th July next. The Employees' Union has strongly protested against this and has decided to resist the closure unitedly with the support of other sections of workers.

A. I. Coca Cola Employees' Convention

The first All India Convention of Coca Cola Employees was held

in New Delhi on April 17-18 last. The Convention was attended by 27 delegates from Coca Cola unions in Kanpur, New Delhi, Meerut, Jaipur, Secunderabad, Cuttack, Jamshedpur, Nagpur, Agra and Goa. Some unions, including those in Madurai and Calcutta, could not send delegates but have agreed to abide by the decisions of the convention.

Com. Samar Mukherjee M.P. inaugurated the Convention and Com. Gerald Pereira, as Chairman of the Convention, welcomed the delegates.

The Convention was addressed among others, by Ghanasyam Saran Sinha (CITU), V. N. Awasthi, and H. P. N. Singh (UTUC), Tulsi Sing Moria (INT-UC) and Srinivas Misra (HMS). A number of delegates placed their reports and took part in the discussions.

Resolutions were adopted on the charter of demands, on firing on Coca Cola employees in Goa, struggles of and repression on Coca Cola employees, in support of railway workers' demand etc.

The Convention decided to form an All India Coca Cola Co ordination Committee with Com. Ghanasyam Saran Sinha as Convener.

The Convention ended in a mass rally before the main gate of the New Delhi Coca Cola factory which was addressed by Mohan Singh, Tulsi Singh Moria, B. P. Kashyap, Gerald Pereira and Ghanasyam Saran Sinha.

Later, a delegation on behalf of the Convention met the Union Labour Minister and submitted a memorandum.

Big Strike by M. P. State Transport Workers

FOR more than one and a half months, operation of road transport buses in Madhya Pradesh remained almost paralysed as workers of M. P. State Road Transport Corporation went on strike in support of their demands and protesting against victimisation of some leaders and workers. The strike resulted in the loss of 3,30,000 man-days and Rs. 1.8 crores in revenue to the corporation.

Although the road transport in Madhya Pradesh was nationalised in 1965-66, wages and service conditions of workers have not improved much. For some time past, the workers have been agitating on three main demands (a) implementation of the Pandey Pay Commission Report from January 1, 1973 ; (b) D.A. linked with Consumer Price Index ; and (c) mileage and night-halt allowances for drivers and their assistants.

When all other forms of struggles failed, the workers irrespective of party affiliations started preparing for a united strike. The strike started on April 7 last and was, at first, limited to some centres. But the arrest of 31 employees of Raipur division, who staged a demonstration before the State Assembly in Bhopal, triggered off a spontaneous reaction from the workers and by April 13 the strike spread to whole of Madhya Pradesh.

The success of the strike forced the management to start negotiations, but the Chairman of the Corporation insisted on the inclusion of some anti-worker clauses in the agreement which the workers rejected outright and the negotiations failed on April 25.

Thereafter the management launched a ruthless repression on the workers. On April 26, three top leaders of the workers were arrested and the management gave an ultimatum of 48 hours to the workers. When this also failed to cow down the workers, the management suspended all casual and temporary workers and attempted to recruit new hands in their place. This

was followed by mass arrests of workers—80 in Bilaspur, 100 in Jabalpur, 155 in Bhopal, 200 in Indore and 116 in Gwalior up to May 3. The management also tried to put the blame on the workers for several fires which broke out in the depots at Bhopal, Raipur, Indore and Jabalpur on May 7 with a view to intensify repression. But these repressions merely strengthened the determination of the workers to continue the strike.

Although the strike, one of the biggest in the State, has since been withdrawn unconditionally, this has given the road transport workers valuable experience which will be of immense help in building up future struggles. It has also set a magnificent example of united struggle before other sections of workers in the State.

CITU Fund For Railwaymen

(Contributions received up to 20. 6. 74)

1. Kolay Properties (Pvt.) Ltd. [including Bazar Section] Employees Union	Rs. 50.00
2. A. Friend.	Rs. 140.00
3. NCCRS—Santra Gachi	Rs. 500.00
4. United Committee of Rly. men—N. F. Rly. Jalpaiguri	Rs. 500.00
5. Workshop Staff Committee of Kharagpur, S.E. Railway	Rs. 500.00
6. United Committee of Railwaymen, Gauhati	Rs. 200.00
7. S. E. Rly. Loco Running Staff Association	Rs. 500.00
8. A Friend	Rs. 10.00
9. Collection through West Bengal State Committee of CITU	Rs. 5000.00
10. Donation from friends	Rs. 9.00

Total : Rs. 7409.00

(N. B. Total collections upto 25.6.74 amounts to Rs. 12,409.)

Closure of Plantations Lead to Large Scale Unemployment

IN spite of repeated statements made by the Commerce Ministry, Government of India of taking over the closed gardens, nothing has been done so far. According to the latest report received from Assam, Tripura, West Bengal and Kerala the situation is getting worse, rendering thousands of Plantation workers unemployed. 28 tea gardens in Sibsagar in Assam are on the verge of closure which would render 4000 workers jobless besides affecting at least 40,000 dependents of workers. In South wynad in Kerala, about 50 coffee plantations had been suddenly closed down, rendering 5000 workers jobless, but these have recently reopened. In Tripura 20 tea gardens out of 46 have been closed without giving any notice affecting about 10000 workers. More than 18 tea gardens have been closed in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, in West Bengal. Already more than 200 deaths have taken place in Jalpaiguri due to starvation.

Over and above, the employers in many tea gardens in North Bengal have issued notices to the workers intimating their inability to supply cheap grain henceforth. This has created a serious situation in North Bengal and the workers are demanding taking over of the gardens and their nationalisation by the Govt. in the interest of the workers.

Consumer Price Index Numbers (Industrial Workers/ Base 1960-100)

State/Centre	1974				1974		
	Feb.	March	April		Feb.	March	April
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa			
Gudur	260	264	269	Barbil	248	252	280
Guntur	274	284	286	Sambalpur	263	263	276
Hyderabad	263	271	273	Punjab			
Assam				Amritsar	269	278	292
Digboi	255	256	260	Rajasthan			
Doom Dooma	234	248	265	Ajmer	280	286	289
Labac	229	237	260	Jaipur	284	286	297
Mariani	221	226	245	Tamilnadu			
Rangapara	228	248	265	Coimbatore	236	246	258
Bihar				Coonoor	254	263	276
Jamshedpur	275	278	293	Madras	241	248	261
Jharia	286	294	308	Madurai	251	257	266
Kodarma	347	358	362	U. P.			
Monghyr	343	347	344	Kanpur	272	281	287
Noamundi	277	286	304	Saharanpur	280	290	294
Gujarat				Varanasi	307	316	320
Ahmedabad	260	264	272	West Bengal			
Bhavnagar	289	285	297	Asansol	263	274	286
Haryana				Calcutta	241	255	264
Yamunanagar	275	286	297	Darjeeling	247	261	266
J & K				Howrah	255	270	274
Srinagar	218	227	231	Jalpaiguri	232	264	271
Karnataka				Raniganj	295	301	306
Ammathi	282	287	295	Delhi	280	296	309
Bangalore	284	286	286	Other Centres			
Chikmagalur	283	285	290	Berhampur ('49)	353	362	358
Kolar G. F.	289	287	292	Cuttack (1949)	307	308	317
Kerala				Jabalpur (1949)	342	356	362
Alleppey	297	314	337	Beawar ('51-'52)	312	321	313
Alwaye	273	288	298	Tripura (1961)	232	243	250
Mundakayam	272	286	291	H. P. (1965)	199	202	208
M. P.				Goa (1966)	177	177	185
Balaghat	270	277	286	Bhilai (1966)	—	170	178
Bhopal	277	278	281	Kothagudam('66)—	—	169	173
Gwalior	299	312	316	All India ('60)	267	275	283
Indore	298	309	316	do ('49)	325	334	344
Maharashtra							
Bombay	243	249	259				
Nagpur	275	277	277				
Sholapur	282	279	288				

* Figures in bracket indicate base year.
(Labour Bureau, Simla)

Maharashtra Newsletter

Big 'Anti-victimisation' Day Morcha In Bombay

At the call of the Action Committee of the NCCRS, Anti-victimisation Day was observed on June 18 in Bombay through a huge procession. Joined by railway and industrial workers, employees of commercial establishments and women, the morcha started from the Azad Maidan and went to the offices of the General Managers of Central and Western Railways to demonstrate against the victimisation and other repressive measures against the railway workers.

Later, a deputation consisting of P.K. Kurane (CITU), Jagdish Jadhav (HMP), B. S. Dhume (AITUC) and others met the Maharashtra Chief Minister to submit a memorandum.

A public rally held at the Oval maidan in the afternoon was addressed by Ahilya Rangnekar (CITU), G. V. Chitnis (AITUC), P. More (HMP), Yeshwant Chavan (Sarva Shramik Sangh) and others. They warned the Government that if they want normalcy restored in the Railways they must end their vindictive attitude towards the railwaymen.

Morcha in Poona

Led by the Railway Kamgar Sangharsha Samiti, a large procession of railwaymen marched from the Poona station to the Collectorate maidan on June 18, where a public meeting was held to observe Anti-victimisation Day. The meeting was addressed

by leaders of political parties who demanded end of victimisation of railway workers for participation in the strike.

Mammoth meeting to welcome released Railway leaders.

Earlier, on May 31, a mammoth meeting was held on the Azad Maidan to welcome the Railway leaders released from jail after the withdrawal of the heroic 20-day strike. More than a lakh workers attended the meeting. George Fernandes, President AIRF and Convener, NCCRS and S. Y. Kolhatkar (CITU) congratulated the workers for their valient strike in the face of tremendous odds and brutal repression. However, when B. S. Dhume (AITUC) rose to speak, the workers shouted him down and did not allow him to speak for the role played by the AITUC during the strike. It was obvious that the workers were united and in a militant mood and were ready to again go on strike at the call of the NCCRS.

State Government Employees demonstrate in Bombay and Poona

Thousands of State Government Employees in Bombay and Poona demonstrated on June 13 and 14 to protest against the decision of the Government to give two increments to the 'strike breakers'. They also decided to observe a 48-hours Dharna on June 21 to protest against the vindictive attitude of the Government towards the employees who

participated in the All India strike of May 15 in support of the Railway workers.

The workers of the Worli Dairy Farm and the Haffkins Institute also went on strike on June 14 and 15 to protest against the victimisation measures of the Government. They also demonstrated outside their respective establishments.

Comrade P. R. Krishnan, Secretary, Engineering Workers' Union has appealed to the employees and workers to reject the 2 increments as being an insult to the entire working class.

48-hours' Dharna by State Government Employees

More than 5000 State Government employees participated in a 48 hour Dharna at Chowpatty in Bombay on June 21 to protest against the decision of the State Government to impose break in service of employees for participating in the All India Strike of May 15 and also for giving 2 increments to the so-called "loyal" employees. The call was given by the Maharashtra State Government Employees' Confederation. The programme of action included State-wide Dharnas in every district and taluka centres.

The Dharna in Bombay was due to be held before the Chief Minister's residence, but as the Police did not allow this, it was shifted to Chowpatty. Police also tried to arrest R. G. Karnik, leader of the State employees, from Chowpatty but the employees firmly resisted this arrest.

CITU Demands Recognition of PRG of South Vietnam

ON the occasion of the Fifth Anniversary of the founding of the Provisional Revolutionary Govt. of South Vietnam, the CITU has conveyed its warmest greetings to the heroic South Vietnamese people on their valient struggle against US imperialism. The CITU has also urged upon the Government of India to accord immediate recognition to the PRG of South Vietnam.

Com. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU issued the following statement on June 5 :

“On the occasion of the Fifth Anniversary of the founding of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam on 6th June 1974, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions conveys its warmest greetings to the people of South Vietnam for their valiant struggle against U. S. imperialists and its puppet regime.

The CITU strongly condemns the blatant violation of Paris Agreement and demands that the U. S. and Thieu Government should strictly observe the cease-fire, release all the captured civilian and military personnel and guarantee democratic liberties for the people.

The CITU while reiterating its full support to the six point proposals of the PRG of South Vietnam urges upon the Government of India to accord immediate recognition to the PRG of South Vietnam as the

sole representative of the people of South Vietnam.

The CITU calls upon all its unions to bring pressure on the Government of India through various forms of movement so that it gives recognition to the real representative Government of the people in South Vietnam.

South Vietnam Delegates Visit Delhi CITU Office

On June 6 last, Com. Tran Hosi Nam and Com. Nguyen Phuc, representatives of Provisional Revolutionary Govt. of South Vietnam visited the office of the Delhi State Committee of the CITU. Com. Ghanasyam Saran Sinha, General Secretary of the Delhi State CITU warmly welcomed the South Vietnam representatives and expressed full support of the CITU to the working class and people of South Vietnam in their struggle against US imperialism and the puppet Thieu regime.

“Demands Week observed” in Tripura Plantations

AS per decision of the AIPWF, Tripura Tea Plantation Workers' Union observed the “Demands Week” by postering, distributing handbills, group meetings etc. to focus the attention on the question of closed gardens. There was a protest strike for 4 hours in Kailashahar, North Tripura, where Com. Nripen Chakrabarty and others addressed the workers.

CITU Calls for Funds to Defend Victimised and Dismissed Railwaymen

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President and Com. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, have issued the following statement to the Press :

The Government of India and the Railway Board have resorted to the most vindictive measures and dismissed thousands of railway workers without regard even to the rules and regulations framed by the Government itself. In pursuance of the resolution adopted unanimously by the meeting of the representatives of the Central Trade Union organisations, the Secretariat of the CITU directs all its State Committees to immediately collect funds from the working class, approach the legal profession and constitute legal aid committees and fight these illegal dismissal orders through legal channels wherever possible. It calls upon all its affiliates to immediately launch this collection drive with the utmost vigour. It appeals to the working class, which had unprecedentedly responded to the call to demonstrate its solidarity with the striking railwaymen, to contribute their utmost to the legal aid fund.

Reports from other States also gives the news that signatures are being collected on the petition to be submitted to Parliament in the month of August on this particular question.