



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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AGAINST WAGE & DA FREEZE, VICTIMISATION & REPRESSION

UCTU CALLS FOR ALL INDIA PROTEST STRIKE ACTION

THE General Council of the United Council of Trade Unions which met in New Delhi on 21st and 22nd December noted with satisfaction that the working class in all the States raised its strident voice of protest against the Act impounding half of any increase in D. A. and the whole of rise in wages and bonus. Conventions were held in all States at state, regional and district levels. Statewide one day protest actions have taken place in Kerala, Maharashtra and Rajasthan while rallies, dharnas and other forms of protest actions have been resorted to by workers all over the country.

In a resolution adopted on this question the UCTU observed that "the Government of India is impervious to the unanimous protest of the trade union movement." It continued, "On the other hand, moves are already on to impose a ceiling on D. A. and managements of some of the public sector undertakings have already made recommendations to the Government in this regard. Already in the Indian Rare Earths Ltd., a public sector undertaking under Ministry of Atomic Energy, a united strike is on for over 90 days resisting the attempt to impose ceiling on the variable D. A."

The UCTU, while congratulating the workers through-out the country for their united actions against the Act, called upon them to intensify their activities and prepare for an All India Protest strike action.

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU presided over the meeting. George Fernandes, Convener UCTU reviewed the activities of the UCTU and expressed his confirmed opinion that possibilities of all-India strike action had become real. Representatives of CITU, HMP, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) TUGG, All India Insurance Employees Association participated in the meeting while representatives of the Confederation of the Central

New Year's Greetings To Readers

Government Employees Associations and National Federation of P & T Employees attended as observers.

By another resolution the UCTU strongly protested against the withholding of the 4 instalments of D. A. to the Central Government employees and 7 to 8 instalment to State Government employees when prices of all consumer goods registered an unprecedented rise resulting in big wage cut to these employees. The Meeting called upon the whole trade union movement "to give all out support to and mobilise the entire working class behind the just struggle of the Central and State Government employees."

The UCTU General Council further condemned the barbarous victimisation of the 22000 railway employees and thousands of other State and Central Government employees. It recorded its protest at the Government's refusal to grant facilities to a fact-finding Committee appointed by the International Transport Federation to investigate the massive victimisation of railwaymen in India.

By a resolution the meeting condemned the use of DIR to ban the strike and MISA to detain trade union leaders without trial. It demanded withdrawal of DIR, MISA and other Acts providing for detention without trial and the revocation

of the proclamation of a state of Emergency.

The decisions of the UCTU General Council should be popularised among the mass of workers so that atmosphere from below is created for an All India strike action. The CITU unions should approach the unions and workers of other central trade unions outside the UCTU so that maximum support is obtained for the call of the UCTU.

The Indira Gandhi Government only understands the language of strength. Let the working class prepare to give a powerful rebuff to the Government's policies which alone can protect their living standards from further erosion.

West Bengal Jute Workers To Go On Continuous Strike From January 6

AFTER the 33-day historic strike in January-February 1974, two and half lakh Jute workers of West Bengal are again preparing for a industry-wide continuous strike from January 6, 1975 on their 10-point demands. Although the call for the strike was unilaterally given by the INTUC, AITUC and a section of HMS, without consulting the CITU and other Trade Unions in the Jute industry, the call was later supported by CITU, two UTUC's, TUCG and the All India Jute Textile Workers' Federation in the interest of united movement of Jute Workers.

Earlier, the State Government invoked the DIR to ban strike in

the Jute industry and imposed a watered down version of the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Consumer Price Index thus depriving lakhs of workers of their rightful D.A. to the tune of Rs. 2.5 crores per month. This pro-management action of the Government, on top of their persistent failure to force the Jute managements to settle their other legitimate demands, has created a strong resentment among the workers and they are determined to undo this wrong and wrest their other demands, through the coming strike.

In preparation for the strike, thousands of workers in all Jute Mills observed a one-hour strike in each shift on December 18 and submitted memorandums to their respective managements in

mass deputation. Although, the call for this strike was given by the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU), workers following the other Trade Unions also spontaneously joined it in thousands.

After the failure of the tripartite negotiations of December 23 due to the adamant attitude of the managements, all the Trade Unions in Jute industry have, in a joint statement, reiterated their call to the workers to prepare wholeheartedly for the indefinite strike from January 6.

BCMU Conference

Earlier, the 36th Annual Conference of the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union held at Jagatdal from November 29 to December 1, in an unanimous resolution

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The CITU Working Committee Reviews Struggles

THE deliberations of the Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Sibpur, Howrah on 11th to 13th December underline the increasing role the CITU played in struggles of the working class in the country during the last six months in defence of their interests and trade union rights.

The meeting was held at Nimai Bhawan built in the memory of Comrade Nimai who was brutally murdered by the hirelings of the Sir Biren Mukherjee management and at present house the office of the Burn Shramik Union. A well organised volunteer corps was working day and night to look after the conveniences of the Working Committee members.

Fortythree members and invitees attended the meeting. Sudhin Kumar, C. Kannan, E. Padmanabhan, Robin Chatterjee could not attend the meeting due to illness. Gerald Pereira was unable to attend due to involvement in local struggles.

After P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU hoisted the CITU flag at the terrace, B.T. Ranadive, President CITU presided over the meeting.

Pralay Talukdar, Chairman Reception Committee welcomed the Working Committee members and invitees.

On behalf of the Chairman P. Ramamurti moved a Condolence resolution on Comrade Hare Krishna Konar, General

Secretary All India Kisan Sabha. All comrades stood for one minute in silence to pay homage to his memory. He read a resolution on Comrade K.I. Ranjan, Member General Council of CITU and other comrades who died since the last General Council meeting. All comrades stood in silence for one minute. He moved a resolution on martyrs who laid down their life during the last six months and all comrades stood in silence for a minute.

B. T. Ranadive then delivered his opening speech (for full text see pages 9-16 of this issue) which was circulated in advance among the members.

In his General Report P. Ramamurti, General Secretary reviewed the struggles conducted since the General Council meeting held at Visakhapatnam in April last. "The twenty day strike of the railway workers was the most important event since the last General Council meeting", he noted, "Never before such a mighty industrial action could be organised in the Indian Railway workers movement but this action has no parallel in the Indian Trade Union movement".

Elaborating at length the developments during and after the Railway strike, Ramamurti observed, "such a historic action was possible only because of the formation of NCCRS which brought together more than 110

categoriwise organisations apart from the AIRF". He condemned Government repression during the strike and criticised the role of the AITUC and other leaders during the strike.

Ramamurti reviewed the legal aid given by the CITU to the victimised railwaymen. "Though in relation to the extent of victimisation the work done by us is very small, yet it has been generally appreciated by the railway employees. The prestige of the CITU has gone up higher among the railway workers." He welcomed the international solidarity received by the railway workers during the strike.

Ramamurti pointed out that the observation of National Protest Action Day on 3rd May to protest against anti-people policies of the Government, rising prices, unemployment and deteriorating living conditions was an important development in the direction of united struggles. The observation of one day strike on 1st May all over the country in support of striking railwaymen was another significant action in which lakhs of State Govt. employees also participated.

"With the promulgating of Presidential Ordinance of July last, later replaced by an Act of Parliament freezing wages and dearness allowance," he continued, "the Government has shed the last shreds of socialist pretensions and has launched a ferocious onslaught on the wages and living standards of the workers and employees." He characterised the National Convention of the Working People Against Wage

Freeze, held in New Delhi in August, as a "unique manifestation of a new urge for unity among the working class to resist and fight back the Wage Freeze offensive of the Congress Govt."

Ramamurti reviewed the wage freeze conventions held throughout the country since then and pointed out, "In these Conventions, apart from the CITU, many other organisations took active interest. I must mention here that the All India Insurance Employees Association has taken keen interest in all these Conventions and its cadres were very much active in them. Moreover the participation of Central and State Government employees and railwaymen was more than any other time in the past. These Conventions have brought together these sections of Trade Union movement in close co-operation with the mainstream of the working class". While noting that though AITUC did not participate in the August Convention, local units of AITUC participated in several Conventions he concluded, "A new atmosphere of unity that has been created all over the country should be preserved and strengthened so that the struggles of workers are better co-ordinated and guided".

Welcoming the initiative of the CITU in taking up the question of non-implementation of the ILO Convention on "Equal Remunerations for Men and Women" with the ILO authorities, which led to the decision by the Government to implement it by 1st May, Ramamurti emphasised that Trade Unions should be vigilant and bring to light every case of non-implementation to the ILO.

Ramamurti reviewed the industrywise activities of the CITU and pointed out the need for better co-ordination of activities of unions. He also stressed that the circulation of CITU journals and publications should be increased in order to popularise the CITU's opinions on various issues facing the workers among the mass of workers.

Ramamurti concluded his report by stating, "The Working class looks to CITU for guidance and lead. Let us be prepared to fulfil their expectations in the days to come".

While Ramamurti was delivering his Report the sad news of demise of Com. K. G. Bose in a London hospital reached the meeting place. All Comrades stood in silence for one minute to pay homage to his memory. Jyoti Basu paid tribute to his work and a resolution expressing condolence was adopted by the meeting.

By a resolution the meeting expressed its solidarity with the heroic people of Vietnam and Cambodia in the struggle against U. S. imperialism and their puppets. It supported the struggle of the people of Sikkim and demanded withdrawal of military and CRP personnel. The meeting further condemned the brutal repression on the people of Nagaland and Mizoram.

The Working Committee expressed its solidarity with the heroic people of Chile in their struggle against fascist military junta and condemned the U. S. imperialists for establishing naval base at Diego Garcia. The Committee condemned victimi-

Third CITU Conference

The third Conference of the CITU will be held in Bombay from 21st May to 25th May, 1975. The decision to hold the conference was taken at the Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Shibpur (Howrah) on December 11-13 last.

sation of Central Government employees and repressive measures against the State Government employees.

The meeting by a resolution conveyed greetings to the railwaymen for their heroic struggle and demanded withdrawal of all victimisation of railway workers. It condemned repression on the struggling people of Bihar and called upon the working class to organise solidarity movement for Bihar. The resolution on Bonus Review Committee condemned the retrograde recommendations of the Committee and appealed to all central trade unions to unitedly fight for the right of Bonus to all workers. The meeting condemned the Additional Emoluments Compulsory Deposit Act which virtually cut the wages of workers and demanded immediate scrapping of it.

The meeting condemned the Government for its failure to implement the Beedi and Cigar Act despite Supreme Court Judgement upholding it and demanded its immediate implementation. It criticised the move of the Government to introduce 1970 series of price

index and demanded rectification of all the existing series before introduction of new series.

By separate resolutions the meeting supported the demands of newspaper employees, electricity workers, Calcutta Port and Dock workers, College and University Teachers, Air India pilots, road transport workers, cashew workers, Coir workers, India Rare Farth workers, Contractor workers, Kolar Gold Field workers, jute and coal workers, Kesoram Rayon workers etc.

The meeting condemned the brutal repression on Kerala workers and congratulated the workers in the State for their resistance to Achutha Menon repression. It condemned the Government of West Bengal for non-implementation of the decisions of State Labour Advisory Committee regarding restoration of trade union offices forcibly occupied by gangster elements, and for invoking DIR to drastically waterdown the recommendations of the Expert Committee on price index for Calcutta.

AIPWF Conference Postponed

The Second Conference of the A. I. Plantation Workers' Federation, which was scheduled to be held at Vandiperiyar in Kerala from January 31 to February 2, 1975, has been postponed due to the sudden death of Comrade K. I. Rajan. The decision to postpone the Conference was taken at a meeting of the Working Committee of the Federation held in Calcutta on December 14 last.

By a resolution the meeting demanded jobs for all or unemployment relief. It called upon the working class to fight against food scarcity and high prices of essential commodities.

The meeting also adopted resolutions on cotton textile crisis, on equal wages for men and women, on reopening of closed plantations, on power crisis and on electoral reforms.

By another resolution the meeting expressed its solidarity with the peasants' struggle.

The meeting condemned the continued use of DIR and National Emergency and demanded immediate withdrawal of both these measures.

The Working Committee welcomed the invitation of Maharashtra State Committee to hold the Third Conference of the CITU at Bombay and decided to hold the session on 21st to 25th May 1975.

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU while summing up the deliberations of the meeting, expressed his confidence that the CITU will play its honourable role in the forthcoming days.

A well attended rally was held at Howrah Jute Mill Maidan which was addressed among others by B.T. Ranadive, Jyoti Basu, P. Ramamurti and Hari Sadhan Mitra.

Among those who participated in the discussions were E. Balanandan, P. K. Kurane, S.Y. Kolhatkar, Monoranjan Roy, M. K. Pandhe, Biren Roy, Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury, N. Prasada Rao, Hari Krishna, R. Umanath, Jagjit Singh Lyal-puri, Shivaji Patnaik, Amal

Ghosh Dastidar, S. S. Bose, Padmalochan and Mohan Punamia. The participants pointed out how from their own experience the resistance of the working class was growing everywhere. They also noted some of the weaknesses in the organisation and stressed the need to overcome them.

W. B. Jute Workers

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called upon 2,50,000 jute workers in the State to go on an indefinite strike from January 6, 1975 unitedly and called upon the other Jute Trade Unions to build up unity of the workers at all levels for the success of the strike.

The Conference was inaugurated by Comrade B. T. Ranadive, President CITU. The main report was presented by Comrade Kamal Sarkar, General Secretary.

Besides the main resolution on indefinite strike, the Conference also adopted resolutions on Railwaymen's strike, against Wage Freeze, minimum wages of agricultural workers, direct purchase of raw jute by Government at Rs. 100 a maund, nationalisation of Jute industry etc.

The Conference elected a 227-member Working Committee which re-elected the 19 office-bearers.

The huge open rally held on December 1 at the Golghar Maidan was addressed by B. T. Ranadive, Jyoti Basu, Niren Ghosh, Md. Amin and Kamal Sarkar.

The Coal Agreement - A Balance Sheet

AFTER thrice withdrawing the strike threats the leadership of the AITUC and INTUC once again gave up their own demands and compromised with the Government by watering down the agreement they had arrived at with the management earlier. The action of these leaders had given a green signal to the Government to veto all the bipartite settlements in public sector undertakings.

The strike calls of the AITUC and INTUC were given without consulting the CITU. They were also withdrawn without consulting the CITU. On the one hand they were calling upon the workers to prepare for indefinite strike, on the other they were confabulating with the authorities behind the back of workers. There is no wonder that they did not do any preparations for the strike at any stage.

When one day strike call was given in September in Singareni Collieries, the management and the AITUC unions decided to observe the day as paid holiday

A. I. Port & Dock Workers' Convention

The All India Port and Dock Workers' Convention will be held from February 12th to 14th, 1975 at Calcutta. Comrade B. T. Ranadive, President CITU will inaugurate the Convention. A broad-based Reception Committee, with Comrade Krishnapada Ghosh as Chairman, has been formed.

while the workers were asked to work on the other holiday. Thus they even evaded the strike in collusion with the management. This only shows the hollowness of their call for struggle.

Despite CITU's effort for united action the leadership of both the organisations refused to have serious dialogue on the question. Had there been united action of the coal workers the gains of the workers could have been much more.

The gains achieved by the workers in this agreement were due to their several local struggles while the shortcomings represent the surrender of the leadership of the AITUC and INTUC.

In a note addressed to Shri O Maheepathi, Member Secretary, Joint Committee for the Coal Industry, M. K. Pandhe, CITU representative in the Bipartite Committee, has clarified the CITU'S position with regard to the Bipartite Agreement on Wage revision in the Coal Industry signed in New Delhi on December 11 last. The full text of the note is given below :

"I have gone through the bipartite agreement signed in New Delhi on 11th December 1974. Since I did not get a copy earlier, I could not express my views on it.

However, as a member of the Bipartite Committee, I would like to place my views on record.

It has been reported in the press that I was present in the meeting though I could not attend the meeting. Comrade

Niren Ghosh who attended on behalf of CITU has already expressed his opposition to some of the proposals of the agreement.

After going through the agreement I would like to clarify the position of my organisation.

1. The CITU agrees with the minimum wage of Rs. 325 at 246 price index with 1960 as the base year.
2. The CITU also agree to the dearness allowance of Rs. 1. 30 per point rise in Consumer Price Index number.
3. I am surprised to note that even the agreement arrived at with the authorities by the INTUC and AITUC representatives is not being adhered to. This has created a very bad precedent for all future industrywise wage negotiations. The present agreement provides even less than what was earlier agreed by the management.
4. We do not agree with the proposal for the scrapping of the house rent allowance though earlier it was agreed that Rs. 15.00 per month would be paid as house rent allowance. Similarly the payment of underground allowance was to be 10% of Rs. 325.00. The percentage also has been brought down to 7 with provision to pay 10% after 3 years only. Moreover, now it would be on basic of 260%

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Parmanency of a Worker

A vexed question often arising in disputes between employers and workmen is that of permanency. Under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, employers are required to classify workmen according as their tenure is permanent or otherwise. A model definition is also given in the model rules appended to the Rules framed under the Act. Thus, according to the model definition given in Schedule 1A to the Central Rules framed under the Act, a permanent workman is one who is appointed for an unlimited period or who has satisfactorily put in three months' continuous service in a permanent post as a probationer.

State Rules and necessarily the models adopted by them are variations upon the aforesaid definition given in the Central Rules. The obstinate question that is persistently raised by the employers is, however, whether a workman becomes automatically permanent on completion of the period of probation.

A similar question arose and has been decided by a Special Bench of Gauhati High Court in the case of the Management of Dekorai Tea Estate v. The Presiding Officer, Labour Court and another (1).

The Standing Orders in force in regard to that Tea Estate classified the workers, inter alia, as followed :

"1. Classification of workers. In these orders unless there

is anything repugnant in the subject or context.

(a) A permanent worker is one who resides upon the tea estate and whose name is entered in the estate roll of workers and includes any person who has completed a probationary period of 6 months.....including breaks due to sickness.

(b) A 'probationer' is a workman who is provisionally employed to fill a permanent vacancy post and has not completed 6 months' service therein".

In the instant case, the employee Shri Ajit Kumar Chakravarty was appointed on probation for 6 months to expire on 1 April 1967, but before that, he met with an accident and was absent on medical leave for a month from 29 October 1966.

The management extended his probationary period by successive periods of six months till 1 November 1967 and by an order dated 25 October 1967 terminated his service on the expiry of his probationary period on 31 October, 1967. The Labour Court to which the dispute was referred held in favour of Shri Chakravarty that the order of termination of his services was contrary to the provisions of the Standing Orders and also the terms and conditions of his appointment.

The matter was taken to the High Court of Assam by the employer and there the employer contended, inter alia, that there

was an agreement between the employer and the workman subsequent to his appointment under which the management was authorised to extend his probationary period. Under that circumstance, it was contended, Standing Order 1 (a) and 1 (b) did not apply.

In this case, there was another noteworthy fact, namely, the letter of appointment did not also contemplate any further period of probation than what was stipulated in the Standing Orders. Clause 2 of that letter provided, inter alia, that his service could be terminated by seven days' notice if during the probation he was found unsuitable for continuance in his employment, but that, "at the end of the period of probation, if you are considered suitable you will be confirmed to the garden service".

The Gauhati Court relied on the Supreme Court decision in *Western India Match Co. V. Workmen (2)* to hold that either prior or subsequent agreement cannot override the Standing Orders. Gajendragadkar, J., said in that case that "it is not open to (an employer) to enforce simultaneously the Standing Order regulating the classification of workmen and a special agreement between him and an individual workman settling his categorisation".

The next question that was decided was whether the employer could extend the probationary period beyond the six months' limit set by the Standing Orders. The Full Bench of Gauhati High Court again relied

on another decision of the Supreme Court though not in an industrial matter, namely, in the case of *State of Punjab v. Dharam Singh* (3) and held,

"...if the probation period could be extended indefinitely then the respondent no. 2 (the workman), even though he was retained in service, after expiry of the first period of probation for six months, he would continue to be a probationer on the view that his initial period of probation has been extended by necessary implication. In the appointment letter dated 1st September 1966 it is not stated that the probation period may be extended indefinitely or for any particular period. On the other hand, clause 1(a) of the Standing Orders clearly says that a worker who resides upon the tea estate and whose name is entered in

the estate roll of workers and who has completed a probationary period of six months in the industrial establishment is a permanent worker under that establishment; and clause 1(b) of the Standing Orders lays down that a probationer is a workman who is provisionally employed to fill a permanent vacancy post and has not completed six months' service therein. Since neither in the appointment letter nor in the Standing Orders any provision for extension of six months' period of probation exists and since the subsequent special agreement between the employer and the workman cannot override the Standing Orders, it is quite permissible to draw the inference that the Respondent no. 2 who was allowed to continue in the post on completion of the maximum period of proba-

tion of six months has been confirmed in the post by implication or he has become a permanent employee, even though there is no specific order of confirmation."

The judgement explains itself and there is no further need for any more comment, except only that it was not necessary for the Gauhati Court to refer to the appointment letter because, according to the Supreme Court judgement, Standing Orders will prevail over either prior or subsequent agreement.

(1) *1974 Lab. Industrial cases 1354 (FB)*

(2) *AIR 1973 SC 2650 = 1973 Lab. Industrial Cases 1602*

(3) *AIR 1968 SC 1210 = (1968) Lab. Industrial Cases 1409*

—Arun Prokas Chatterjee

Coal Agreement

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and workers would lose a minimum amount of Rs. 14.00 on that account.

5. The CITU does not agree with the scales of pay adopted for the higher categories of workers. The wages of these categories have been kept just nominally above the minimum wages and there will be deep resentment among these sections of employees. This aspect is extremely important in view of the fact that only about 10

per cent of the employees are unskilled in coal mines.

6. The CITU does not agree to the increase in the workload of the employees. In view of the prevalent shocking working conditions in mines the existing workload itself is excessive in some categories. Under these circumstances increase in the workload will add to the fatigue of the workers. Moreover, it has also been our experience that increase in the workload has always been accompanied by reduction

in job potential of the industry.

7. The CITU also would like to express its concern at the mechanisation and modernisation plans of the Government which are likely to cause retrenchment of above 1 lakh workers in Coal mines. When the unemployment problem is assuming serious proportions in the country, such steps will have serious social consequences. We consider that it is possible to increase the production by resorting to labour intensive methods."

New Offensive Of Capitalists And Landlords

B. T. Ranadive Speaks At The Working Committee Meeting

Comrades

With feelings of sorrow and great loss I pay homage to the memory of Com. Hare Krishna Konar whose services to the cause of the revolution few can equal. A brilliant Marxist-Leninist, member of the Central Committee of the CPI (M), General Secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha, Hare Krishna Konar passed away leaving the revolutionary movement poorer by his loss.

I pay my homage to the memory of our fallen martyrs, the organisers of CITU and its unions who fell victims to the assassins' dagger in Kerala and West Bengal; to the memory of those who fell victims to police firing. We must specially remember the Bharatpur martyrs who were the first to shed their blood in the struggle against the wage freeze Act.

We all must remember the services of Com. Rajan our devoted leader of Kerala plantation workers and member of our General Council who passed away last month. We send our condolences to his wife and children.

I pay homage to the memory of Comrade Ramaswamy, our active worker at Madurai who showed indomitable courage in defying death when the railway engine overran him while protesting against the use of black-legs during the All India railway strike.

Comrades, you will join me in congratulating those of our comrades who narrowly escaped the assassins' dagger. One among them being Com. Shanti Ghatak, Member of our Working Committee. The repression and brutalities that our comrades, the CITU leaders and unions had to face during the past few months have no limits. Arrests, imprisonment, tortures and beatings, humiliation and insults at the hands of the police officials, police firings and gangster attacks—these have been our fare for conducting the struggle of the workers.

In Cannanore in Kerala, Comrade Kannan, President of Kerala CITU was assaulted by the police, the CITU office was raided and a number of other leaders including Com. Bharathan, were

beaten and jailed. The police used gangsters to attack our workers and our MLA Com. Raghavan was insulted and beaten. It should be remembered that more than 130 people belonging to the CITU and other mass organisations have been murdered in Kerala at the hands of gangsters in the last two years. This is the black record of the Achutha Menon Ministry—the unholy coalition of the Right Communist Party and Indira Congress—a coalition which the Right C.P. wants to expand in all States to spread its pestilential results.

In this background the 19th September united strike to protest against the wage freeze was a magnificent demonstration of working class unity for which our Kerala CITU and other central organisations deserve our congratulations. The strike was complete; the All India Radio was also paralysed. Never before was the sweep of the strike so big and all-embracing. It drew within its ranks the AITUC and its workers and revealed how the unity of the working class is marching ahead despite the efforts to divide and suppress it.

The CITU hailed the victory of the Vietnamese people against American imperialism embodied in the Paris Agreement. But the treacherous American imperialists notwithstanding their honeyed talk of *detante* agreement on limitation of nuclear weapons with USSR, and professed friendly relations with Peoples' China, are sabotaging the Paris Agreement and encouraging military adventures of Thieu and preparing for another intervention. They are also preparing for intervention in North Korea with the help of the South Korean stooge Government.

The CITU must denounce the moves and lend its full support to the fighting people of Vietnam and Korea in their struggle against American aggressors.

The Railway Strike

Comrades, you all know about the historic struggle of the Railway workers in May last and

how the Indira Govt. made every effort to suppress it. The various unions of Rly. workers forgetting their differences, joined in a common battle to defend the interests of the railway workers. You all know how the CITU played its role in working for the unity.

With the workers braving police terror, invasion of the homes by armed CRP, with their women showing unexampled heroism in all parts of India, the railway workers' struggle inscribed a glorious chapter in the history of trade union resistance. This was the first All India strike and perhaps the longest in the world.

In spite of the steadfastness of the workers, some leaders like the AITUC leaders and its Indian Railway Workers' Federation got cold feet and betrayed the workers to continue their line of collaboration with the Indira Congress.

Today, thousands of Rly. workers stand victimised and dismissed. The Rly. Minister quotes falsified figures to show that the Govt. is relenting in its attacks and is taking back the workers. More than 20,000 workers are deprived of their jobs. Many thousands have been punished with break in service. And the strike breakers are being rewarded with quick promotions. So manifestly urgent and arbitrary are some of these orders that a number of High Courts—The, Calcutta High Court, the Gujarat, Hyderabad and Kerala High Courts—declared these to be illegal and even mala fide. But the Govt. in its contempt for laws has refused to implement the High Court directives and do justice to the affected workers.

It is the duty of the CITU and the entire trade union movement to fight against this victimisation and not rest till all the Rly. workers are given back their jobs. The permanent as well as temporary and casual workers must be restored to their work and Mishra's victimisation campaign must be defeated. We must assure the Rly. workers and their organisations that the CITU stands by them and will continue its efforts till justice is done to them. The report of our General Secretary deals with the work done by the CITU for relief and legal aid to the Rly. Workers and I need not say anything about it.

The brutalities perpetrated against the Rly. workers have become an international scandal and a number of workers' organisations in other coun-

tries are realising the real character of the Indira Government. It is because of this that the Government dared not allow a delegation of transport workers from abroad to visit the country. The Transport unions wanted to assess the post-strike situation on the railways and have first hand knowledge about how the authorities dealt with the strike. The CITU must emphatically protest against this ban on working class leaders while leaders of multi-national corporations are welcomed at State banquets.

New Problems

Comrades, the CITU must take note of the prevailing organisational situation on the railways and help the railway unions to overcome it. As happens after any struggle accompanied by victimisation, despondency and despair seize hold of the weaker elements. Fissiparous tendencies quicken and the lesson of unity is easily forgotten. The bond of common sacrifice, sufferings and common cause gets loosened. This gives an opportunity to the authorities to create disruption.

It is a pity that the NCCRS has not yet met in a big representative convention, assessed the strike experience and taken steps to strengthen unity. The NCCRS, the embodiment of the Rly. Workers' unity, was considered an anathema by the Administration and now some of its agents are attempting to bury it.

Taking advantage of the present despondency and victimisation, craft and sectarian appeals are being made; opportunist leaders seek to disrupt the unity of all organisations and return to the position before the strike. All this is encouraged by the Rly. Board which wants to see an end to unity.

The workers should remember that the unity is all the more needed to beat off the victimisation offensive. With regard to Loco Running Staff the authorities are sabotaging the agreement to introduce the 10 hours' duty—an agreement reached after the heroic strike of LRSA workers. It is clear that the Rly. Board has no intention of fulfilling its promise made after the strike.

The CITU and its organisations must throw their full weight to protect and strengthen the unity of the Rly. workers and rouse the working

class to defeat the victimisation drive of the Government.

Government's Labour Policy

Last eight months have revealed one ugly feature after another of Government's labour policy. At the Visakhapatnam session, I had occasion to refer to the virtual liquidation of all trade union rights in the IAC under the control of a retired military official. I may mention here that the Government is inducting more and more military officials to run industrial concerns—the aim being to introduce military barrack discipline in factories. This spells ruin for the trade union movement and this trend to be resisted. The trade union movement besides should take serious note of the fact that efforts are being made to train army personnel so that they can replace workers during strikes. The use of the Territorial Army for purposes of breaking the May Rly. strike is known to all.

The brutal suppression of Rly. workers in May is followed by use of widespread repressive measures in the growing strike struggles. Hundreds have been arrested in bundhs, demonstrations and strikes and cases have been proceeding against thousands. Persecution and prolonged proceeding have become a weapon of systematic harassment of workers and cadres.

The use of goonda gangs against the workers with the police supporting them is becoming an all-India phenomenon. These goondas act as the storm-troopers of the employers or the Congress Party.

These attacks are a part of the general Congress onslaught on the democratic rights of the people and the growing erosion of all democratic norms. The scandalous ordinance issued to protect the Congress MPs and the Prime Minister from the effect of the Supreme Court judgement, the misuse of MISA and the detention of hundreds of political prisoners and the cruel treatment to the political prisoners in jails are part of this growing attack on the democratic rights of the people. The T. U. movement has received its full share of this erosion of rights and must discharge its responsibility fighting against these policies of the Congress Govt.

Along with these attacks, the Govt. has been taking one measure after another to thrust the burdens of the crisis on the workers and enforce a

reduced standard of living on them. While in the last few months it has sanctioned large price increases in foodgrains to benefit the landlords and to the capitalists, it has enforced wage freeze on the mass of workers and employees. Under it the Central and State employees have been denied a number of additional increases in their D. A. and in almost all industries, the Govt. is putting pressure to see that no further wage increase is granted to any section of the workers. Half the increased D. A. is spirited away in deposits, further wage increases have been frozen and in some cases, D.A. itself has been frozen, the total effect being a reduction in the real wage of the workers. Against this Act, the working class and the T. U. movement have started fighting and is starting building its unity to meet this offensive. The successful strike of 19th September in Kerala and the October 30 strike in Maharashtra reveal how the working class is getting into direct action against the anti-labour measures of the Govt.

Not satisfied with the wage freeze Act, the Govt. agents have manipulated the recommendations of the Bonus Commission and have come out with reactionary suggestions. They have denied the right of the Rly. and other workers and employees to bonus and they have also laid arbitrary limitations on the source of relief to the hard-pressed workers. Two other measures attacking the interests of the workers are also in the offing. The Industrial Relations Bill which seeks to attack the right of the workers to strike, to enforce arbitration machinery on them is being canvassed in secret. The Govt. also intends to foist a new wage policy on the workers under which the minimum in organised industries will not be more than Rs. 200. Wage increases will be reduced to a farce, D. A. also will be drastically reduced, all in the name of reducing the inequalities in wages among the workers. The Sukhamoy Chakrabarty's report which is the basis of the so called wage policy is a weapon to divide different sections of the workers, fool the public with the claim to introduce a scientific system of wage payment. It resorts to the usual trick of talking about the low income in the countryside and the income of the workers in unorganised industries and paints the workers in organised industries as a special favoured class whose emoluments must be curtailed and brought

in line with the general level of Indian poverty. The report does not talk at all about controlling the incomes of the higher classes, but only about wage differentials. It thus constitutes yet another weapon in the armoury of the Govt. to attack the workers and may be enforced with vigour under the stress of the developing crisis of the economy.

The Sick Textile Undertakings (Nationalisation) Bill is a piece of legislation which will ultimately benefit the employers. Despite bungling, embezzlement of funds the Companies are being paid over Rs. 39 crores as compensation which will be premium for their fraudulent practices. The Bill further seeks to modernise the mills and retrench thousands of workers. It, therefore, does not give an assurance that all the workers employed in these mills prior to closure would be taken back on duty on same terms and service conditions. It also does not give any assurance on workers' arrears of wages etc. prior to the take over of managements. The Bill shows how even the slogan of nationalisation is being used by the capitalist in their own class interests.

One can easily understand why the Govt., therefore, uses more and more direct force against the T. U. movement since it is bent upon pursuing a policy of drastically reducing the living standards of the working class and the gains that they have all accumulated through years of struggle, and sacrifices.

In West Bengal, the Government issued notification under DIR to water down the recommendations of the Expert Committee on consumer price index numbers which admitted the index fraud. As a result of this, the workers who would have received Rs. 60 to Rs. 100 per month in the form of additional dearness allowance will receive only Rs. 16 to 18. If the workers resort to strike action in protest against this they will be victims of DIR.

United Resistance

The General Secretary's report gives a detailed account of how a united movement of workers and employees is developing to fight the wage freeze Act of the Government. In this movement, thousands of employees and workers are coming together in conventions, conferences, meetings, demonstra-

tions and strike actions symbolising a new unity of all the affected sections. The CITU unions should realise that it is not only the employees and workers that are under attack, that the professionals like doctors, lawyers, upper and lower income groups are also bearing the strain of this Government effort to pass the burden of the inflationary crisis to the shoulders of the people. These sections also are compelled under the law to deposit part of their earnings with the Government and a number of them have been victims of officials raids by income tax and other officials. The wage freeze act and other accompanying measures affect a vast section of urban people who must be directly drawn into the movement and the entire struggle has to be turned into a huge democratic protest against official policies.

The Government passed off these measures as anti-inflationary measures intended to bring down prices. In actual fact, all that has happened is that while there is hardly any relief to the people in the shape of falling prices, there has been a direct reduction in the purchasing power of the people and their real incomes. The mass of people has to bear the burden of the inflationary crisis as well as official measures to counter the crisis. It is quite clear that inflation and counter-inflation in the way they operate are nothing but class measures to solve the economic difficulties of the capitalist-landlord economy at the expense of the common mass. The working class should not allow itself to be cheated by those who present inflation or counter-inflation measures as just measures flowing from an increase or decrease in the supply of money. This is not an impersonal phenomenon but a manipulation by the exploiting classes and their Government to transfer value from the mass of people into the hands of the exploiting classes. That is why we find that the people are suffering as much under the inflationary developments as under the supposed measures to counter them. In actual fact, these counter measures have not only attacked the earnings of the working class, they are also creating large-scale unemployment in small industries and leading to closures of a number of these small concerns. The measures to control credit in the name of fighting inflation has affected the holding capacity of small industries which employ nearly 40 per cent of the workers in organised industries. The workers in

organised units have to understand that tens of thousands of handloom weavers, powerloom workers and workers of smaller engineering concerns are virtually on the streets partly at least because of the way the Government intends to fight inflation and transfer the burden to the common people.

The working class has learnt to its own cost how the problem of food is being tackled by the Government. Repeated concessions to landlords, the denudation of the small peasants and the agricultural workers have now created a situation in which a few thousands have already died in the villages of India. Many more perhaps are going to die and hundreds of thousands are becoming the victims of slow starvation. A callous Government refuses to admit that hundreds are dying in our villages. But it is also a fact not honourable to the T. U. movement that when such is the condition in the villages, powerful protests form the organised T.U. movement in defence of the peasantry are not emerging in any T.U. Centre. It speaks of a very low class consciousness and a self-centred character of the movement which must be got rid of as early as possible if the working class is to play its role in the struggle for Socialism and ending of class domination, for peoples' democracy and end of Indian poverty.

Political Repression

The weakness of the peasant movement in rural areas, the weakness of political consciousness of the working class have enabled the ruling party to deal with the democratic movement in a ruthless way and perpetrated every kind of atrocity on the fighting people. I have already referred to the large-scale repression against the T. U. movement which was also shared by all sections of the people including the students, the agricultural workers, the teachers and the mass of untouchables. A Government which is ruthless to them in their struggle is equally cruel to them when they are arrested and jailed. The treatment of political prisoners in India has become an international scandal and it is no surprise that the Government of India did not vote in the U. N. for a resolution demanding the release of all political prisoners kept by the Chilean fascist junta. Beatings, shooting, tortures—all have reached such a height that in the end the Supreme Court had to warn the Government that even prisoners in jails

possess certain fundamental rights which no bureaucracy could override. Add to this the statement made by responsible leaders in Bihar that in certain jails of Bihar, women prisoners are virtually kept naked, the authorities refusing to supply them with clothes, according to jail rules.

It is against this regime of starvation, high prices, and political suppression accompanied by the most widespread corruption that the people have started fighting, demanding immediate redress to their grievances. The movement in Bihar against corruption, for dissolution of the Bihar Assembly, for release of all arrested people, for electoral reform, forms part of this angry protest which people are trying to launch in several States. The electoral reform has come into the forefront because the utter corrupt character of bourgeois democracy is being exposed before the eyes of the people, under the Congress regime. As you know, in Bengal, there have been virtually no elections and the same attempt to spirit away the people's right to elect may be made in the forthcoming elections in many states. Against these legitimate demands raised in Bihar under the leadership of Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Govt. has come down with ruthless repression, arresting thousands and shooting many. Leaders of political parties have been externed from Bihar, those who led the movement they have been jailed and interned, a reign of terror has been established in Bihar.

There is no doubt that the association of reactionary parties like Jana Sangh with the movement not only supplies a handle to the Government and its ally, the Right C.P., but also befuddles the mind of the people and constitutes a source of danger to the advance of the democratic movement. For the whole purpose of the movement will be lost if those who are manifestly opposed to democracy and struggle against landlord and capitalist exploitation get the upper hand and get themselves elected in place of the Congress. This danger, the T.U. movement and the working class can never forget and in its vigilance, it must warn the people against it. At the same time, the organised T.U. movement must throw its weight behind the democratic demands and lend its support to them. The weakness of the T.U. movement in Bihar has so far prevented it from playing its due role in this democratic struggle from protesting against the

repression directed against the people, from actively endorsing the demand for the dissolution of the Assembly and the release of political prisoners. This weakness has to be overcome in the near future though the task is difficult because the CITU is weak in the State compared with the AITUC and the INTUC, who are opposed to this democratic struggle.

The World Capitalist Crisis

Comrades, this meeting of the Working Committee must take serious note of the world capitalist crisis that is developing fast and its repercussions on India and the livelihood of the working class and our people. The spokesmen of the leading capitalist nations who hitherto were proclaiming that a crisis of the old type could no longer shake up the world capitalist system are now thinking in terms of the economic recession of the 1929 when in the U. S. A., 25% of the working force was unemployed and production had fallen by 40 per cent. The fact that advanced capitalist countries are remembering those night-marish years itself shows how the situation has rapidly deteriorated.

In contrast the socialist economies are advancing rapidly and they neither show the inflationary price rise of the capitalist world nor its recession. Capitalist newspapers have been recently remarking about the steadiness of prices in all Socialist countries coupled with rising growth rate. This is in contrast with the capitalist countries where till recently the growth rates could be kept up only by inflationary price rise at the expense of the working class. The conditions obtaining in Socialist countries are not accidental. There is no capitalist class there to use its monopoly of production or its control of State power in the interest of the exploiting classes. There is no exploiting interest to use the price mechanism to defraud the workers. That is why a continuous growth rate is possible and a rise in incomes is easily obtainable. The production gains of society are distributed among the producers apart from what is kept for socialist accumulation. It is, therefore, not surprising at all that every Socialist country is free from inflation, free from unemployment, free from a declining growth rate and shows a continuous rise in the real incomes of its people.

Inflation, rising unemployment and recession

in advanced capitalist societies directly flow from the State monopoly capitalism that obtains in these countries. Since the end of the second world war, the power of monopolies and now multi-national monopolies has grown immensely. They hold these countries completely in their grip and they manipulate the entire economy and the State apparatus in their own interests. When they cannot carry on genuine productive activity, they go in for huge military budgets, nuclear weapons, wars abroad like the war against Vietnam and artificially try to create a sense of prosperity and demand. This always means high prices and in the end the crash comes as it is coming now with the USA showing nearly 6 million unemployed and with the European countries also showing unemployed from half a million upto 2 millions.

The crisis is basically the result of the contradiction between the developing productive forces and their monopoly control which is reflected as the contradiction between the purchasing power of the working class and the people and the productive capacity of society. The monopoly domination prevents these societies from utilising the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution which consequently only leads to huge unemployment. Simultaneously, the rivalries between these imperialist countries have accentuated, leading to further accentuation of the crisis. Existence of the Socialist world, the virtual collapse of the old colonial system, all have tremendously intensified the crisis besides making it difficult for the imperialist countries to transfer their burdens to the backward countries. It is because of the collapse of the old colonial system that 10 oil producing countries are able to create a first-rate oil crisis which further exacerbates the crisis of the system.

These developments are leading to a wave of working class struggle in all the western countries. Reactionaries in the USA are talking of a Red takeover in Western Europe. In Italy, the pro-fascist forces organise provocations. In England, the unstable situation saw two general elections in the recent period. In Italy, ministries are rapidly changing and American imperialists are intervening to prevent an alliance of democratic forces, in France, there is a huge strike wave of the working class affecting railways and communications also. In Japan, the working class has been carrying on

persistant resistance to win its demands. This is just the beginning of the crisis and the future promises to be full of conflicts and struggles for the working class. One thing is quite clear in these countries it is not easy for the capitalist class to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the shoulders of the working class.

Our economy is in a large measure linked up with the economy of the Western countries. Our export-import trade which is directly connected with our employment, with its ups and downs of the situation abroad and we have to understand how the situation is likely to affect us. During the last 2-3 years, when our own economy was stagnant and also the economy of the Western countries was showing rapid ups and downs, to a certain extent our economy and our employment was supported by the boom conditions obtaining abroad. You perhaps all have read in the papers how the Government have been advertising the rise in our exports and claiming credit for itself. In reality, the inflationary boom conditions obtaining abroad were giving us a temporary help. Even though the monetary value of our exports have been rising rapidly, there was not a proportionate rise in the quantity of our exports. But now these conditions are rapidly disappearing and there is a fall in the value of exports. If these tendencies continue and if some of our important industries like the textiles and others lose their markets rapidly, then it is bound to affect our employment and our wage structure. Already there are signs that there is slackness in the demand for textile exports, there is a lowering down of the demand of our engineering and marine food exports, there is a lowering of the unit value of a number of our exports—all these create a situation of concern for us that might lead to a closure of a number of our factories some of whom will close because they have no orders, others might close because they cannot get imported raw materials and other accessories necessary for their production.

The latest Report of the Reserve Bank on Currency and Finance also refers to recessionary expectations in the economy. It talks about conditions of stagnant and declining demand in the case of capital and intermediate goods such as iron and steel, construction materials, machinery and transport and consumer goods.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Gandhi's denial the recessionary tendencies are already in evidence. As I have said the immediate burden is borne by the workers in small and unorganised industries. Thousands of powerlooms in Maharashtra, West Bengal, have ceased to work. Thousands of handloom workers in Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu are without work.

Thousands of coir and other workers are working short time. Similarly thousands of workers in small engineering factories all over the country are thrown out of jobs or laid off without any compensation.

These lay offs or closures sometimes last for a few days only but they inflict intense sufferings nonetheless.

The big industries also are going in for temporary closures or cutting down of production. In October more than 25 cotton textile mills in Ahmedabad closed their third shift, throwing out 5000 workers. Some of them resumed working after reducing cloth prices and clearing stocks. But some have yet to reopen.

The RBI report says that the adjustment so far has been made in the reduction of stocks of finished goods and of trade dues, rather than in any significant cut back in production of prices. But how far the situation can last, how far they will continue production at the present level—none can tell.

In fact the situation is getting worse every day.

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

Engineering factories in West Bengal and U. P. are throwing out thousands of workers—in many cases without any retrenchement compensation. Heavy Electrical Plant of Bhopal complains that State Electricity Boards are not lifting their orders with result that stocks valued at half the value of the total production, this year have accumulated in the factory.

The figures of unemployment are mounting high. The registered unemployment in August 1974 has reached a record level of 87 lakhs a rise of 10 per cent in a period of one year. The actual rise will be much more. The figures of educated unemployment have also reached a phenomenal level of over 40 lakhs.

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

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

It calls the entire working class, all trade unions to unite to resist this offensive more all-pervading and pernicious than the wage freeze. The workers and employees have achieved unprecedented unity

at the August convention in Delhi and carried forth the battle in various conventions and above all, strike, and bundhs. This unity in action has to be further strengthened to ward off the coming attack. Against the threat of unemployment, the workers must unitedly raise the demand for right to work, unemployment benefit. They must again raise their voice against rising prices, wage freeze and demand drastic reduction in profits, nationalisation of monopoly concerns, confiscation of foodstocks of landlords to distribute them among the people at prices within their reach. Raising the demand for need-based wage they must demand better living conditions for the agricultural labourers, fair price to the peasant for his produce and drastic increase in taxation against the monopolists, big capitalists and the landlords. They must demand elimination of black market and its operations and confiscation of all wealth earned in blackmarket transactions.

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

Strike By Five Lakh Workers In Italy

Faced with spiralling inflation and high prices five lakh workers and employees in all the major industries of Italy went on strike on December 5 last on their demands for revision of wages in keeping with rise in price Index, Pension, security of jobs etc. All work in factories and offices in the industrial city of Turin came to a halt as workers and employees *en mass* joined the strike. 35,000 workers of the construction division of the Fiat automobile factory joined the strike on their main demand

35 Lakh Workers In Japan On Nation-Wide Strike

Thirtyfive lakh workers in Japan went on a nation-wide strike on November 19 last, for their main demands of year-end Bonus, security of jobs and compensation for fall in real income due to inflation. The strike was led by a Joint Action Committee comprised of Japan General Council of Trade Unions, Federation of Independent Unions and other Central Trade Unions.

One of the biggest strike in
for 8-hour work. This is the second time that Italian workers went on strike this year.

Japan in recent times, it was joined by all workers of nationalised and private Railways, bringing operation of railways in Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe and other centres to a grinding halt. Employees of 800 Post Offices and 200 Telegraph offices went on strike for 24 hours. 18000 Textile workers also joined the strike.

Dock Workers, Metal and Chemical Workers, Taxi drivers, Doctors, Nurses, Teachers and Government employees brought out big processions on the day to demonstrate in support of their demands.

Convention Against Wage Freeze Throughout India

IN pursuance of the call given by the National Convention of Working People held at New Delhi on 28th August, Trade Union conventions were held throughout India during the last two months to protest against the Wage Freeze law.

A Convention against wage freeze was held on 8th December, at Tanjore at the initiative of Thanjavur Trade Union Council. 113 delegates and 28 observers representing 31 unions of LIC, Banks, Railways, P & T, Income Tax, Non gazetted Government Officials and unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC and ADMK participated. The resolutions demanding immediate withdrawal of Black Wage Freeze Act., against repression on Railwaymen, etc. were adopted. The well-attended public meeting in the evening was addressed by N. Sakaraiah (CITU), A.M. Gopu (AITUC), N. Venkatachalam CPI (M) and others.

Hindusthan Lever Ltd and its Associated/Allied Companies Employees Union, in their meeting on 2nd December, 1974 at Sanmukananda Hall, Bombay, by an unanimously passed resolution demanded immediate withdrawal of the Black Act freezing wages and D.A.

The biggest ever convention in Orissa against Wage Freeze, Price rise, unemployment, and other anti-people policies of the Congress Government was held at Cuttack on 1st and 2nd December and was participated by P. Ramamurthy, General

Secretary CITU. The convention was inaugurated by Saroj Chowdhury, General Secretary AIIEA. The two-day delegates session was attended by 465 delegates and observers. The programme of action decided by the convention were (i) to organise district, zonal and local conventions by 15th January 1975 to popularise the 17 point charter of demands, (ii) to observe 4th February '75 as Demands Day, (iii) to organise mass signature campaign, and (iv) to organise a central rally and demonstration before the State Legislative Assembly during Budget session. A 24 member Action Committee was also elected. The mass rally at Gopabandhu Bag on 3rd December was addressed by Md. Ismail, Arabinda Ghosh, and other leaders.

A convention against Wage Freeze was organised on 24th November 1974 by All Trade Unions Anti-Wage Freeze Committee at Jullundur (Punjab) and was participated by 2000 delegates and observers from 100 unions. P. Ramamurthy, General Secretary CITU, while inaugurating the convention, explained the capitalist path pursued by the Congress Government and held them responsible for the deepening economic crisis, poverty, unemployment, price rise and other hardships faced by the masses in India. The resolution condemning the Additional Emoluments Compulsory Deposit Act 1974 and demanding its

West Bengal Beedi Workers Strike On Jan. 29

At the call of the Federation of West Bengal Beedi and Tobacco Workers' Unions, Beedi Workers of West Bengal will go on a State-wide strike on January 29 in support of their 14 point Charter of Demands which includes minimum wage of Rs. 5.50 for one thousand beedis, implementation of the Beedi and Cigar Act, 1966 in West Bengal, end of contract system etc.

immediate withdrawal was moved by Gurbachin Singh of AIIEA, and seconded by S. S. Kooner (AIIEA), Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri (CITU) and others, and was unanimously adopted. The convention also decided to prepare for a days strike, mass signature campaign, mass Dharnas at Block headquarters in December. An Action Committee was also elected.

The Karnataka State Convention against wage freeze was held at Chikmagalur on 10th and 11th November and was attended by 147 delegates and 44 observers from 24 unions representing 20,000 workers in the State. The convention was sponsored by CITU, AIIEA, AIBEA, National Federation of P & T workers and others. Resolutions on suppression of Railwaymen, Trade Union and democratic rights and other anti labour policies of Government were adopted. The public meeting on 11th November evening was attended by all sections of people and was addressed by R. Umanath, P.

Rama Chandra Rao, G. S. Shastri, M. K. Deshpande and S. Suryanarayana Rao.

The All Gujarat Convention of Working people against Wage Freeze was held in Ahmedabad on December 14 under the auspices of the Preparatory Committee consisting of representatives of CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMP, LIC, Bank employees, Central Government employees etc. Saroj Chowdhury, General Secretary AIIEA, inaugurated the Convention which was attended by 400 delegates representing 50 Unions. A resolution condemning the Act freezing wages and D. A. and other anti-people policies of the Government was adopted unanimously.

A District Convention against Wage Freeze and for democratic and Trade Union Rights was held at Tinsukia (Dibrugarh District) in Assam on November 30 and December 1 last. Jagadish Bhattacharya, M. P. inaugurated the convention. More than 255 delegates representing Trade Unions of Tea, Plywood, Oil, and Fertilizer industries, Bank, General Insurance, Railways, P. & T., State Government employees etc. attended the Convention. Amalendu Ghosh Dastidar, Secretary, Assam State CITU greeted the Convention and addressed the open session, among others.

Secretariat of AIRTWF Meets

A meeting of the office-bearers of the A. I. Road Transport Workers' Federation was held in Calcutta on December 14 last.

Consumer Price Index Numbers

(Industrial Workers/1960=100)

State/Centre	1974			State/Centre	1974		
	July	Aug.	Sept.		July	Aug.	Sept.
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa			
Gudur	324	351	350	Barbil	309	306	305
Guntur	327	343	345	Sambalpur	315	336	343
Hyderabad	299	308	316	Punjab			
Assam				Amritsar	328	334	335
Digboi	316	339	337	Rajasthan			
Doom Dooma	321	358	361	Ajmer	332	355	346
Labac	298	322	342	Jaipur	341	360	356
Mariani	311	333	338	Tamilnadu			
Rangapara	300	335	325	Coimbatore	303	319	319
Bihar				Coonoor	334	356	365
Jamshedpur	324	331	336	Madras	299	308	311
Jharia	354	361	357	Madurai	332	353	360
Kodarma	421	427	429	U. P.			
Monghyr	389	399	388	Kanpur	326	339	347
Noamundi	378	378	359	Saharanpur	332	358	355
Gujarat				Varanasi	382	383	395
Ahmedabad	307	327	322	West Bengal			
Bhavnagar	320	341	345	Asansol	325	332	337
Haryana				Calcutta	295	308	314
Yamunanagar	331	343	342	Darjeeling	282	293	295
J & K				Howrah	304	316	324
Srinagar	245	250	253	Jalpaiguri	296	304	303
Karnataka				Raniganj	349	356	357
Ammathi	328	343	345	Delhi			
Bangalore	314	328	326	345	354	350	
Chikmagalur	324	334	330	Other Centres			
Kolar G. F.	317	324	328	Berhampur ('49)	398	429	463
Kerala				Cuttack (1949)	365	384	395
Alleppey	369	374	373	Jabalpur (1949)	405	418	436
Alwaye	353	349	344	Beawar ('51-'52)	363	389	389
Mundakayam	338	347	338	Tripura (1961)	264	265	275
M. P.				H. P. (1965)	232	240	244
Balaghat	349	367	378	Goa (1966)	201	202	209
Bhopal	321	334	338	Bhilai (1966)	195	206	214
Gwalior	354	371	369	Kothagudam('66)	192	203	209
Indore	357	372	370	All India ('49)	390	406	407
Maharashtra				do ('60)	321	334	335
Bombay	290	291	297	* Figures in bracket indicate base year.			
Nagpur	310	326	314	(Labour Bureau, Simla)			
Sholapur	318	330	338				

KERALA NEWSLETTER

Kerala Bundh Complete

Facing fierce attacks by the police and gangsters of the ruling parties, the people of Kerala observed complete bundh on 10th December in response to the call of the Action Committee of opposition parties.

Shops were closed, transport paralysed. Reports from all districts indicate massive participation by the working class and employees.

Police resorted to brutal lathi charge in Trichur town. More than 100 people have been admitted to hospital. Among those who were victims of police brutalities are Father Vadakkan, General Secretary of the Karshaka Thozilali Party, Dist. Office bearers of Kerala Congress, Lonappan Vattakkuzhi and Lonappan Nambadan, Municipal Councillor K. P. Antony.

Lathi charge was also resorted to in Koratti and Pottah near Chalakudy in Trichur Dist.

Police lathi-charged a demonstration in Quilon and Kottarakkara. Other places where lathi charge was resorted to by the police are Koothattukulam in Ernakulam District., Mayithars, near Shertallai in Alleppey District, Sreekantapuram and Thottumungam in Cannanore District

2-Month long struggle of IRE Workers

The workers of Indian Rare Earths (Cochin) have been on strike for more than two months.

They were protesting against the limit imposed on D.A. In order to render effective support to this struggle, a meeting of different T.U. Organisations was held at the Kalamassery Panchayat office on 1st December. This meeting decided to take all steps including general strike in the Elur Industrial belt. About 200 representatives from T.U. Organisations affiliated to CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS attended this meeting. The IRE Struggle Assistance Committee formed at the above meeting decided to organise a general strike on December 23 in the Alwaye-Elur-Kalamassery industrial belt. Declaring support to the struggle of the IRE workers, picketing has been going on for the last 54 days, under the auspices of different Trade Unions and political parties. Over 500 workers have been arrested so far

Other Struggles :

1,000 bidi workers of Kondotty (Malappuram District) started an indefinite strike from 23 November in support of their demands which include Rs. 7.50 for 1,000 bidis, etc.

Journalists and non-journalists of "Chandrika", organ of the Kerala State Muslim League, struck work on 29th November due to which the paper did not come out on 30th. The strike was in support of their demands of 4 months salary as bonus, etc.

Tailors of Tellicherry taluk (Cannanore Dist.) resorted to one-day strike on 27th November demanding eradication of

unemployment among tailors, prohibition of import of ready-made goods, etc.

Workers of Pazhukkanam Tea garden of Earallipetta started an indefinite strike from 17th November in support of their demands for minimum wages, etc.

Protesting against police repression on the driver of a private bus, private buses and taxis of Chengannur town struck work from 2nd December.

Private bus transport services in Trichur Dist. were completely paralysed by the strike of private bus workers on 26th November in protest against police repression on bus workers and ordinary people in Guruvayoor.

Employees of Harijan welfare hostels throughout the State started an indefinite strike from 2nd December, demanding implementation of the agreement arrived at between the concerned minister, departmental heads and representatives of employees.

Workers of Tata Oil Mills, Cochin, started an indefinite strike from 26th November in protest against the retrenchment of three workers.

Demanding resumption of work of Kulamavoo Dam, 1300 workers of Idikki Project in Kulamavu, Nadukani and Moolamattom struck work on 16th December.

Labour Handbook 1974

The First Edition of Labour Handbook 1974 has been completely sold out. It is proposed to bring out the Second Edition at an early date. The inconvenience caused to prospective buyers is regretted.

CITU Working Committee Denounces The Bonus Review Committee Report

AT its meeting held at Shibpur (Howrah) on December 11-13, the Working Committee of the CITU adopted the following resolution on the Bonus Review Committee Report.

"The Working Committee meeting of the CITU expresses its strong resentment at the retrograde recommendations of the Bonus Review Committee which instead of granting additional bonus to the workers imposed several new restrictions on workers right to bonus. Though the report of the Committee is not unanimous, the majority recommendations constitute a sinister attack on the hard-won existing right of bonus.

"The eight and one third per cent as the minimum bonus is recommended by the Committee when large number of workers are already getting more than ten per cent bonus through struggle. Further, it has excluded large sections of employees including the Central and State Government employees, Local Self Govt. Employees and various other sections of employees like LIC, Banks etc. Thus the demand of the Trade Union movement that bonus should be paid to all the workers irrespective of the size and type of employment has been totally rejected by the committee.

"The Committee has further recommended that Section 34 (III) of the Bonus Act should be

struck off which would mean that the workers who were winning bonus more than 20% through their organised strength, will be legally deprived of this right of settlement of bonus through bipartite negotiations outside the legal framework. The Bonus Review Committee further maintained all the anti-working class provisions of the earlier Bonus Act. The concept of prior charges continues to offer huge surplus to the employers and deprive the workers of their rightful bonus. The fake balance sheets prepared by the companies to avoid the taxation will be continued to be used in denying adequate bonus to the workers, while workers will have no right to challenge the balance sheets of the employers in the court of law. They cannot even ask details of the expenses incurred by the management about which the workers have doubts.

"The notorious concept of set off and set on will continue to bring down the bonus available to the workers even though they are entitled to get higher bonus even under the existing defective formula relating to available surplus.

"The CITU while reiterating that bonus is a deferred wage demands :

- 1) 10 per cent minimum bonus with further provision that there should be annual increment of 1 per cent in the minimum

bonus for a period of five years.

- 2) The available surplus should be determined by deducting depreciation charges from the gross profits. Major portion of which should be paid to the workers in the form of bonus.
- 3) Workers should have the right to scrutinise all aspects of balance sheets of the company.
- 4) All exemptions to the companies including the first five years period in case of new concerns should be withdrawn.
- 5) There should be no ceiling on payment of bonus.
- 6) Bonus should be paid to all the workers in public and private sectors including Central and State Government employees, Local Self Government employees, casual, contract labour, shop assistants irrespective of the size of the establishment.

"The CITU calls upon the working class to close their ranks and launch a powerful movement throughout the country so that the Government is forced to scrap the report of the Bonus Review Committee and bonus is paid to the workers on the lines mentioned above.

CITU appeals to all the central trade unions to come together so that the movement against the Bonus Review Committee's recommendations takes a broadest possible shape at an early date."

Second Conference Of Maharashtra State CITU

WITH an impressive record of trebling its membership in the last four years, of a number of grim and tenaciously fought struggles including several historic Bundhs achieved through its persistent efforts for forging unity for struggles, the Maharashtra State Committee of the CITU held its second Conference at Bombay from 20th to 23rd December last.

B. T. Randive, President CITU who inaugurated the Conference and P. Ramamurti, General Secretary warmly greeted the working class of Maharashtra for the magnificent fighting unity built up by them as manifested in the growing number of struggles, strikes, gheraos, demonstrations and Bundhs that took place since the foundation Conference held in 1970.

Bal Dandawate of HMS, Godawari Parulekar for AIKS and Ahilya Rangnekar of Shramik Mahila Sangh greeted the Conference.

Over 550 delegates, men and women, from all industrial centres in the State attended the Conference. S. Y. Kolhatkar, President of the State CITU presided over the Conference.

At the outset the Conference paid homage to the memory of Comrades Ho Chi Minh, Muzaffar Ahmed, Harekrishna Konar, R.P. Dutta, A. Raghavan, R. B. More and other leaders of the working class.

In his inaugural speech, B. T. Randive emphasised the vital role that the T. U. movement should play in fighting for the

peasantry. He said, "The working class of India can never liberate itself from poverty and exploitation unless it liberates the peasantry, the agricultural labourers from the landlords and opens the way for them to go forward to socialist production". He added, "The self-centred character of the TU movement, its exclusive concern with its own demands must end if the movement is to become a social force daring to overthrow the present order".

Referring to the grim battle waged by the Railway workers and the massive repression and victimisation to which they have been subjected, he said, "It is the duty of the CITU and the entire TU movement to fight against this victimisation and not rest till all railwaymen are given back their jobs."

He spoke of the growing unity of workers and employees, 40 lakhs of whom were represented at the August Convention in New Delhi, and called on them to popularise its decisions. He dwelt on the growing recession and unemployment, the new wage policy of the Government and called upon the working class and TU movement to resist this offensive.

While presenting the report, P. K. Kurane, General Secretary of the State CITU reviewed the background of the TU movement in the State at the time of the Foundation Conference in 1970 and pointed out how the CITU, through its persistent efforts at mass mobilisation, building up united struggles and determined lead in strike struggles, has been

able to achieve a place and role of honour in the TU movement of the State in the last four years. Some of the significant struggles fought during this period have been the Bonus struggles of 1972, the great Bundhs of 1973, the Textile Strike and great Bundhs of 1974 and the General strike in woollen industry.

Kurane laid special stress on the role played by the Shramik Mahila Sangh and its contributions to the Women's Anti-Price Rise United Committee which waged heroic struggles against Price Rise and for food during this period and source of inspiration to the class and the masses.

About 60 delegates including Laghve, J. Sawant, Bhalerao and Sayeed Ahmed, among others, took part in the discussions on the Report after which it was unanimously adopted. They narrated their experiences gained in the course of struggles, their work for building up unity.

Summing up the discussions, B. T. Ranadive, pointed out that the ruling class hates the CITU because it not only leads the working class in its struggles against the owners and against the Government, it educates the working class and teaches it to fight the class rule to liberate itself.

The Conference elected a State Executive Committee of 42 members including S. Y. Kolhatkar as President and P. K. Kurane as General Secretary.

A 10,000 strong mass rally was held at the Maharashtra High School Maidan on December 23 which was addressed by B. T. Ranadive, P. Ramamurti and the State CITU leaders. Addressing the rally, Ramamurti explained the decisions of the UCTU General Council meeting in Delhi, which has called for a nationwide protest strike action, and called on the working class to prepare for it.

CITU Protests Against Use Of DIR To Waterdown Recommendations Of Expert Committee On Price Index

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU has issued the following statement to the Press:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns the West Bengal Government for invoking DIR to waterdown the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Consumer Price Index Numbers for Calcutta and depriving lakhs of workers in West Bengal their rightful DA to the tune of Rs. 2.50 crores per month.

The Expert Committee, whose Secretary was a senior official of the Labour Department, found the index fraudulent and linking factor between different series defective. Full implementation of the recommendation would have enabled the workers to receive additional DA varying between Rs. 60/- and Rs. 100/- per month. By this order, the workers now have to be satisfied only with a paltry rise by 16/- and in some cases Rs. 18/-. The adoption of this arbitrary method is clearly intended to serve the employers by enriching their coffers and to create a background for suppression of any movement on this issue. In this connection, the stand taken by the INTUC to welcome the order will only help the employers in defrauding the workers and disrupt their movement.

The CITU cannot ignore the fact that this brazen faced order is promulgated in the wake of the decision of 2.5 lakh jute

workers in West Bengal to launch a continuous strike from January 6 on demands including the implementation of the Expert Committee recommendations. The Government chose this path despite its earlier commitment in the West Bengal State Labour Advisory Board which only proves its mala fide intentions in the matter.

CITU Opposes Arbitrary Introduction of New Index Series

The Working Committee meeting of the CITU expresses its grave concern at the manner in which the Govt. has decided to introduce New Consumer Price Index Series with 1970 as the year. The Govt. is introducing this series at a time when trade union movement all over the country is engaged in a serious struggle against several fraudulent practices that are in vogue most of the centres today. While the State Govt. as well as the Central Govt. have been systematically resisting any move to rectify the Index, the introduction of the new series is being done only with the purpose of perpetuating the fraud and deprive the workers of their rightful dearness allowance to the tune of crores of rupees.

Family budget studies conducted by the Labour Bureau, Government of India for the purpose are defective in character, the sample of families are arbitrarily chosen while cooperation of trade unions at all levels as provided by the International

The CITU demands immediate withdrawal of this draconian order and full implementation of the recommendations of the Expert Committee.

The CITU calls upon the workers of West Bengal and urges all the Central trade unions to launch joint and powerful movement against this order so that the West Bengal Government is compelled to accept the recommendations of the Expert Committee in full.

Labour Organisation was not done in all the cases.

The fraudulent index has become a weapon in the armoury of the Government in its wage freeze offensive against the working class and must be squarely defeated by the organised trade union movement.

The CITU therefore demands that before introduction of this new series (i) The earlier series in all the centres should be fully rectified and workers are given full compensation after arriving at correct index. (ii) The family budget studies should be scrutinised by the trade unions before the weightate diagram is prepared. (iii) A proper machinery should be evolved with trade union representatives to supervise the compilation of the index series.

The CITU therefore appeals to the central trade unions to resist the move of the Government to introduce the new series in an arbitrary manner and force the Government to rectify all the existing series and scrutinise all the family budget studies before the new series is introduced.

Reports From Unions

Attack on CITU Orissa State Committee Office

On the midnight of December 3 last, hired miscreants set fire to the CITU Orisa State Committee Office at Bajrakabati Road in Cuttack. The whole office, including furniture, records of Court cases and other records were burnt to ashes. Eight workers who were sleeping in the adjacent room was trapped inside, as the miscreants had locked the door from outside, and somehow saved themselves by breaking open the main door.

Although the incident was immediately reported to the police, no action has been taken so far.

The General Secretary of the Orissa State Committee of CITU has condemned this heinous attack on the CITU office which is solely designed to curb the activities and growing influence of the CITU in Orissa as a fighting organisation of the working class. A meeting of Road Transport Workers held at Rayagada on December 15 condemned this dastardly attack.

Fertilizer Workers Federation Formed

Decision to form the Fertilizer Workers' Federation of India was taken at a conference of workers and employees of different units of the Fertilizer Corporation of India, held at Sindri on December 14-15 last. Representatives of 17 unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC, HMP and BMS as well as independent unions participated in the conference. The constitution

of the Federation was unanimously adopted by the participating unions. A 21-member Executive Committee with R. K. Pande (Gorakhpur) as President and S. K. Banerjee (Durgapnr) as General Secretary was also elected by the Conference.

The Conference also chalked out a programme of movement on their demands as well as against Wage Freeze for implementation of Third Pay Commission recommendations.

Conference of Andhra Motor Transport Workers Federation

The 7th Conference of the Andhar Pradesh Motor Transport Workers' Federation was held in Rajahmudry on November 9-10 last. 128 delegates from affiliated unions and 32 fraternal delegates attended the Conference. Representatives of Bus and Lorry workers unions from Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore, Chittor and Kurnool districts attended.

G. S. Balaji Das, President of the Federation presided and Parasa Satyanarayana, President of Andhra Pradesh State CITU inaugurated the Conference.

N. Prasada Rao, General Secretary of State CITU and of the Federation presented the report. Several resolutions on minimum Wages for Motor Transport Workers, against Wage Freeze, on victimisation of Railwaymen etc, were adopted. The Conference also approved the Charter of Demands.

The Conference elected a 26-member Executive with G. S. Balaji Das as President and N. Prasada Rao as General Secretary. The big open rally held on November 10 was addressed by G. S. Balaji Das, Parasa Satyanaryana and N. Prasada Rao, among others.

Rise in Number of Unemployed

Number of applicants on the live register of Employment Exchanges at the end of

(rounded off to nearest 000)

States	August 1973	August 1974
Andhra Pradesh	4,47	5,60
Assam	1,04	1,20
Bihar	10,91	11,96
Gujarat	2,42	2,97
Haryana	1,41	1,75
Himachal Pradesh	66	73
J & K	30	23
Karnataka	3,15	3,43
Kerala	4,93	5,74
M. P.	4,39	4,19
Maharashtra	6,65	7,11
Manipur	59	20
Meghalaya	7	7
Orissa	3,07	3,37
Punjab	2,10	2,40
Rajasthan	1,95	2,02
Tamilnadu	5,77	6,14
Tripura	41	43
U. P.	8,60	8,26
West Bengal	15,21	16,02
Chandigarh	24	27
Delhi	2,06	1,59
Goa	18	24
Lakshadweep	1	2
Mizoram	2	2
Pondicherry	17	17

Total (All India) 80,79 86,04

Source : Labour Journal

COMRADE K. G. BOSE

THE Working Committee of the CITU, at its meeting held at Shibpur (Howrah) on December 11, adopted the following condolence resolution at the sudden demise of Com. K. G. Bose in a London hospital:

“The Working Committee of CITU expresses its deep sorrow at the premature demise of Com. K. G. Bose who was an outstanding trade union leader of our country. He was President of National Federation of P&T Employees and Joint Convener of 12th July Committee. He was victimised by the

P&T Department for his outstanding role in the historic Postal strike of 1946. Since then he has always been in the forefront of Central Government employees struggle. He was one of the foremost organisers and leader of All India P&T employees and other Govt. employees. He also played a leading role in the strike of Central Government employees in 1960 and 1968. Com. K. G. Bose showed unbending courage and determination in facing the attacks of the Congress anti-socials. His house was frequently attacked, his wife also

was stabbed. After 1972 election he and his family members were forced to leave their home due to unprecedented terror unleashed by the Congress anti-socials with the connivance of police and the Govt. Yet, he and his family did not surrender.

Com. K. G. Bose was a tireless worker and an uncompromising fighter in the cause of the working class.

The Working Committee of CITU pays its homage to the memory of Com. K.G. Bose.

The Working Committee of CITU sends its condolence to his bereaved family.”

Money Income Up, Real Income Down

The following table will show how the per capita income in real terms has declined in recent years, although money income has shown an upward trend. For instance the per capita National Income in 1972-73 was Rs. 687.6 at current prices, a rise of 14.5 per cent over 1969-70. But when computed at 1960-61 prices it comes to only Rs. 337.5, a decline of 1.3 per cent over 1969-70. Similar decline is noticeable also in 1970-71 and 1971-72.

Per Capital National Income			
1972 73	% chang over	Rs. 1969-70	1970-71 1971-72
Current Prices			
687.6	14.5	9.6	6.5

1960-61	337.5	-1.3	-2.4	-1.8
Prices				

Working Committee of AITRWF Meets

A meeting of the Working Committee of the A.I. Tyre & Rubber Workers' Federation was held in Calcutta on December 14 last. Dinen Bhattacharya, M.P., President of the Federation presided over the meeting.

After observing two minutes' silence in memory of Comrades Muzaffar Ahmed, Harekrishna Konar, Satish Pakrasi, K. I. Rajan, K. G. Bose and Dr. Narayn Roy, the meeting adopted a condolence resolution on martyrs.

P.P. Sanzgri, General Secretary presented the report on the

activities of the Federation since its inception in 1973. Several members took part in the discussion on the report. It was decided to observe a “Demand Week” throughout India on the two main demands—Fixation of minimum wage for Tyre and Rubber Workers State-wise, and 100% lay-off compensation in Tyre industry.

A resolution was adopted against repression on and detention without trial of S.F.X. Pereira, Secretary AITRWF and Dulal Dey and Md. Bashir, Working Committee members. Resolutions were also adopted supporting the struggles of the workers of KEMRUB, INDCOM and Great Bengal Rubber Works; on Railwaymens' strike; against Wage Freeze law; etc.