



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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Prevent Sabotage of Railway Agreement

B. T. Ranadive

President, CITU

THE STRIKE OF CALCUTTA PORT STEVEDORE LABOUR for higher bonus in September was an occasion for Government spokesmen to arraign the dock labourers for holding up foodships in the midst of food shortage. The shippers and exporters rolled out figures to show that the unpatriotic labourers were holding back exports worth Rs. 50 crores depriving the country of the much needed foreign exchange. All these accusations were made because the dockers demanded a 20% per cent bonus instead of the minimum 8 $\frac{1}{3}$ %.

But the real culprit and criminal was soon exposed by the President and General Secretary of the Forward Seamen's Union. They charged that the Chairman of the Dock Labour Board prevented the shipping companies from paying a higher bonus, though the former were willing in view of the enormous profits made by them through constant increase in freights.

This charge against Dock Labour Board Chairman was substantiated by the Master Stevedores' Association. The statement said, "The stevedores were formally and informally advised by the authorities concerned not to pay anything more than 8 1/3% bonus in any circumstances" as such a step would have "very serious repercussions in all other parts in the country." It is quite clear that the strike was being prolonged not because the stevedores could not meet the just demand of the workers but because the Dock Labour Board Chairman was sabotaging all settlement by using official pressure to deny the workers their dues. It is the Government, its policy and officials that sabotage our economy to pursue their anti-working class policy.

This danger is now intensified on the railways. The Railway Board and its officers are bent on blowing up the agreement between the Ministry and the All India Loco Running Staff

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Association reached last month. They have succeeded in sabotaging the negotiation talks which were held in Madras on 9.9.1973. On that day the leaders of the ALRSA met Railway Deputy Minister Quareshi only to be told that the talks were postponed as a protest demonstration was being organised by an affiliate of the AIRF whose leaders are the favourites of the Railway Board. They, it will be known, had opposed any negotiations with the ALRSA; they had betrayed the loco workers in the past.

The D.M.K. Government promptly declared it a law and order question and asked the Deputy Minister and ALRSA to abandon the meeting. When Chief Minister Karunanidhi was questioned, he disclaimed all responsibility and passed it on to his Chief Secretary.

The local Railway Administration extended full facilities to the AIRF Union to organise the so-called protest. By their circular dated 4.9.1973, they encouraged all staff to apply for leave and take passes so as to be present at the General Manager's Office on 10.9.1973 to stage a demonstration against the Railway Minister and his Deputy who were to negotiate with the LRSA. The Railway Board was telling the Ministers that they could not carry their policy over the head of the anti-working class bureaucrats.

The Railway officials were taking one step after another to see that this meeting in Madras did not take place. They did their best to see that the LRSA leaders did not reach Madras.

Shri P. K. Barua, Secretary General of LRSA, was not given Railway pass to cover his journey from Lumding to Madras. Shri S. K. Dhar, Joint Secretary General, was not issued pass in time. Shri R. P. Sharma, Zonal Secretary, Northern Railway, was issued pass but was not granted leave to proceed to Madras. Shri D. N. Paul of Bareilly—North Eastern Railway, was not provided with passes and not granted leave. Shri H. S. Chowdhury, another member of the negotiating team, was not even intimated about the meeting in time.

Not For Shunters

If this was the treatment meted out to the General Secretary and others, the President, Ratna Sabhapathy, was also not spared. He was informed of the meeting and told that his absence from work will be treated as special casual leave. But he was not given passes for travel by first class. The Railway Minister may deal with Sabhapathy as the President of the LRSA but not the Divisional Superintendent. For him, he is only a "shunter" in the railway. How can he be given a first class pass? This is a garibi hatao, socialist Government. Better travel facilities are reserved only for Peter Alvares, Maniben Kara and other favourites of the Board. Not for shunters.

The Railway Administration from the Board downwards is stuffed with such anti-labour rotten officials whose filthy stench one can smell from a distance of miles.

Apart from this, there is the usual story of broken promises, the local bureaucrats refusing to carry out the assurances, given by the Minister.

The promise to withdraw all cases and persecutions remains unfulfilled and a large number of workers, though released on bail and allowed to resume duty, continue to be under the threat of prosecution. The victimisation orders vindictively passed by the authorities are not yet withdrawn. Those whose services have been terminated as part of the victimisation drive have not been reinstated. In some cases the services of the son have been terminated because his father participated in the strike. The bar against promotion, which was arbitrarily imposed against a large number of workers has not been withdrawn. Those who did not participate in the strike are being favoured and promoted. This special favour for strike-breakers is the most despicable move of the garibi hatao government. It makes an end of all trade union movement by encouraging selfishness and treachery towards fellow workers. This is where the situation regarding the Loco workers stands. If it goes on like this there is bound to be a burst-up in a few days.

The question is who rules the Railway? The boastful L. N. Mishra—has he got the guts to call railway officials to order and see that the settlement is seen through? Will the Labour Minister and the Congress Government at the centre intervene before the Railway Board junta plunges the country into another strike?

Hind Motor Workers On Indefinite Strike

Protesting against large-scale victimisation of workers and police repression following an incident on September 10, and demanding settlement of their 5-point demands, 15,000 workers of the Hind Motor factory at Uttarpara (near Calcutta) started a continuous strike from September 12 at the call of Hind Motor Workers' Union (CITU).

The Tripartite Agreement in Engineering Industry was signed on June 25, but for two long months the management have been delaying its implementation on one pretext or another. By the end of August the patience of the workers was exhausted. The workers decided to resort to direct action if the management failed to concede their demands by August 31. When no response was received from

The Congress Party often talks of a committed bureaucracy. Will it see that railway officials not committed to the settlement are given the sack? It is the duty of the Central Trade Union organisations to make a common front to defend the loco workers. Some of the members of the Socialist Party head the AIRF. Will the Socialist Party leaders intervene to see that their followers do not play the game of the Railway Board.

All democratic parties, all Central Trade Union organisations must join in support of the loco workers and rouse the people to foil the game of the Railway Moghuls. ■

the management the workers started a tool-down strike from September 3. This was, however, postponed twice to allow the management to settle with good grace. The State Labour Minister had meanwhile advised the management to settle the dispute by September 10.

Then the incident of September 10 took place. On that day while the workers, led by the CITU and INTUC unions, were holding a demonstration before the main office in support of their demands, some agents provocateurs went on a rampage damaging office furniture and setting fire to some cars. The police fired teargas shells and arrested 30 workers. The Workers' Union (CITU) later declared categorically that neither the Union nor the organised workers had any connection with the incident.

Taking advantage of this incident, however, the management started victimising the workers. So far, charge sheets and suspension orders have been served on 290 workers and more are in offing. The police, as a part of the conspiracy, have started indiscriminate arrests of workers and the CRP have been posted to intimidate and terrorise the workers.

At a meeting of the workers held on September 12, it was declared that the workers would not go back to work unless (a) all charge-sheets and suspensions are withdrawn; (b) the Tripartite Agreement is implemented forthwith; (c) the bonus demand of the workers is met immedi-

AIPWF Affiliated To TUI Body

The All India Plantation Workers' Federation (CITU) is now an affiliate of the Trade Union International of Agricultural, Forestry and Plantation Workers (T.U.I.A.F.P.W.), Prague.

This was communicated in a recent letter from Loria Abbiati, General Secretary of the organisation.

ately; (d) all other pending demands are settled; and (e) duty hours are reduced by 15 minutes.

The State CITU has, in a statement, supported the strike of Hind Motor Workers and has demanded immediate settlement of their 5 point demands. ■

Dock Workers On Strike

Led by the Dock Shramik Jukta Morcha—a united body of 8 Unions and 5 Sectional Committees of dock workers including those affiliated to the CITU, AITUC, INTUC and HMS—registered workers of the Dock Labour Board, Calcutta, observed strike in all the shifts on September 6, and again from September 12 to 14, demanding 20 per cent bonus for 1972-73. The Port authorities, with the approval of the Central Government, invoked emergency powers to ban the struggle. But undeterred by this, all the workers including supervisory and clerical staff have started refusing double duty from September 16 which has brought loading and unloading operations in the port virtually to a standstill.

Jaya Settlement : A Retrograde Step

THERE is much more than originally meets the eye in the Government of West Bengal's orders of September 18, dramatically invoking the Defence of India Rules and announcing unilaterally the resumption of work at the strike-bound Jaya Engineering Works, Calcutta.

The piecemeal settlement which the Government order seeks to impose now is a sinister attempt to split the united movement of the 6000 workers of the factory. The tripartite agreement for engineering workers had provided for an increase of Rs. 54 per head, of which Rs. 49 were to be given right away. But the new order settles for only Rs. 30.

This is not the only instance of the Government's going back on its words. The question of the revision of norms of production in the moulding department which the Government had undertaken to consider has been completely passed over. What is alarming, the workers are now debarred under the DIR from carrying on their struggle.

The tripartite agreement had also agreed in principle to the reinstatement of 9 employees who were being forcibly prevented from reporting for work. The new order is silent on this issue as it is on another important question—the payment of bonus at 18 per cent. The demand of the sales employees for wages at par with the workers of other departments—another provision

of the tripartite agreement—has also been evidently turned down.

A meeting of Jaya workers held on September 19 at the Muslim Institute Hall under the auspices of the Jaya Engineering Workers' Union (CITU) expres-

sed resentment at the Government action. But since in the meanwhile the AITUC and INTUC unions unilaterally asked their workers to report for duty, the CITU Union had no other alternative than to ask the workers of Fan and Serning machine units to go back to work for the sake of unity. ■

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

State/Centre	1973			State/Centre	1973		
	May	June	July		May	June	July
Andhra Pradesh				U. P.			
Hyderabad	239	245	255	Kanpur	221	227	239
Assam				West Bengal			
Digboi	216	217	222	Calcutta	211	213	217
Bihar				Howrah			
Jamshedpur	224	229	238	Delhi	241	250	256
Jharia	229	231	245	Other Centres			
Gujarat				(On different bases)			
Ahmedabad	224	230	236	1973			
Bhavnagar	258	256	266	May	June	July	
Haryana				Cuttack (1949)	282	283	297
Yamunanagar	232	238	246	Berhampur			
J & K				(1949)	327	327	332
Srinagar	196	197	201	Jabalpur (1949)	285	588	307
Kerala				Beawar			
Mundakayam	237	252	267	(1951-52)	261	272	285
M.P.				Himachal			
Bhopal	223	324	243	Pradesh (1965)	172	175	179
Gwalior	244	249	263	Goa (1966)	153	160	158
Indore	251	258	276	Tripura (1961)	240	235	222
Maharashtra				All India Consumer Price Index			
Bombay	25	230	235	(Working Class/General Index)			
Nagpur	217	220	259	Base			
Sholapur	259	266	281	1973	1949	1960	
Mysore				January	255	210	
Bangalore	243	247	250	February	259	213	
Orissa				March	263	216	
Sambalpur	230	230	235	April	269	221	
Punjab				May	277	228	
Amritsar	230	233	239	June	283	233	
Rajasthan				July	295	243	
Ajmer	235	240	246				
Jaipur	235	242	250				
Tamilnadu							
Coimbatore	201	204	210				
Madras	217	221	226				
Madurai	218	221	228				

Rajasthan State Employees' Strike

—An Assessment

THE 34-day strike of the two and half lakh State Government employees of Rajasthan, in the face of the severest repression, is one of the most significant trade union struggles of the recent period. The strike started from July 9 on the demands for D.A. at Central rates, removal of anomalies in pay scales, need-based minimum wage, 8.33 per cent bonus, grant of T.U. rights, etc.

Initially, the All Rajasthan State Employees' Federation gave notice of strike from August 27 in support of their demands. But the Rajasthan Rajya Karmachari Sangh, a former affiliate of the Federation, asked its members to go on strike from July 9. When the Working Committee of the Federation was meeting on July 14 to consider the strike call given by the Sangh, all the members of the Committee were arrested by the police under E.S.M Act. This blatant repressive measure triggered off a spontaneous reaction and the 2.5 lakh State Employees of Rajasthan, including teachers, went en masse on strike from July 16. On the same day a huge procession of the State employees and other sections of people, parading the streets of Jaipur to protest against the arrest of their leaders, was attacked by the CRP and police without any provocation. As a result, several hundred processionists were injured and a retired employee

of the state Electricity Board was beaten to death by the Police.

In protest, a successful 'Jaipur Bundh' was observed on July 17 at the joint call of the State Employees' organisations and the Co-ordination Committee of Workers and Employees of Rajasthan comprising the CITU, AITUC, INTU, HMP, All Rajasthan State Employees' Federation, Insurance Employees' Association and several other organisations. The bundh was total and was joined by all sections of the people. Even on the bundh day, the Police and CRP attacked employees' processions in various centres throughout the state, arrested many employees including Action Committee members, promulgated curfew in Jaipur and Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. in most of the towns. Orders of termination of services, suspension and reversion were issued on several thousand employees.

Largescale Repression

Despite large-scale repression and victimisation, the employees remained firm in their stand defying the threats and ultimatum of the Chief Minister. Attempts of the leaders of the A.I. State Govt. Employees' Federation (AISGEF) to persuade the Government to start negotiations, however failed due to the adamant attitude of the government.

To give expression to the growing mass support for the striking state employees, the Co-ordination Committee gave a call for "Rajasthan Bundh" for

July 24 if the Government failed to come to a negotiated settlement. At the behest of the Government the INTUC, a constituent of the Co-ordination Committee, started opposing the bundh call at this juncture and ultimately withdrew its support on the eve of the bundh. This attempt at disruption, however, failed miserably and July 24 witnessed a total and completely successful bundh which paralysed normal life in the entire state. The Government mobilised its entire repressive force to break the general strike and, on the bundh day, when a huge mass rally preceded by a procession was being held in Jaipur the police swooped down and arrested the leaders of the Co-ordination Committee, including Mohan Punamia, President of the State CITU. Similar demonstrations and rallies were held on the day in many other centres.

This massive success of the bundh and the growing mass support for the striking employees brought about a shift in the Government attitude and negotiations were re-opened. Meanwhile, the National Executive of the AISGEF gave a call for a "Rajasthan Day" for August 3, a solidarity programme which was observed by 4 million State Employees throughout the country through rallies and demonstrations. Simultaneously, the leaders of the AISGEF including Sukomal Sen, Secretary, R. G. Karnik and R. S. Dhillon, renewed their efforts for a negotiated settlement which again failed due to the adamant

attitude of the Government on the issue of salary for the strike period and certain other demands.

In this situation, the negotiations were discontinued and both the State Employees' Federation and the Co-ordination Committee decided to intensify the struggle backed by mass action of the organised toiling masses of the state with a view to strengthening the employees' movement and to exert pressure on the Government. Programmes of mass actions, including mass violation of Sec. 144 and courting of arrests by the employees, were chalked out.

Confusion

At this stage, however, the indefinite fast by a CPI MLA and AITUC's encouragement to individual fastings added an element of confusion to the process of growing mass actions. But this was soon dispelled and overshadowed by the upsurge of mass actions conducted by the Co-ordination Committee and the AITUC had to withdraw the individual fastings on August 13. In the meantime, hundreds of volunteers of CITU and HMP courted arrests as part of the mass action programme. On August 14 alone about 1500 CITU volunteers were arrested.

The sweep and intensity of the movement soon forced the Government to re-open negotiations with the employees' leaders and seek a settlement. A settlement was ultimately reached on August 16 and the strike was withdrawn. As per the terms of the settlement, there would be

no pay-cut for the strike period, a major victory for the employees. Besides, the strike period would be adjusted with leave due, orders of victimisation would be withdrawn, the latest instalment of Central D.A. would be paid with effect from May 1, 1973 and the rest of the demands would be referred for consideration to a Committee comprising the representatives of both the employees and the Government.

Some unfortunate legacies of the struggle are still there. A

number of volunteers of the CITU and other organisations are still in jail. But this historic and grim struggle has given the State employees a rich experience which should enable them to strengthen their unity and march forward. The struggle has also proved beyond doubt that it is not individual actions like fastings but united actions by the toiling masses which can force the Government to bow down and concede their demands. ■

Rajasthan State CITU Meets

A meeting of the Rajasthan State Committee of the CITU was held at Jaipur on August 13-20.

The Committee considered the 38-day long strike of the State Government employees and decided to extend all possible help to strengthen the unity and organisation of the State employees.

The Committee strongly condemned the brutal repression perpetrated by antisocials on July 19 last on the textile workers of Beawar who were then on strike for their demands for higher wages, bonus, etc. under the leadership of the Textile Mazdoor Ekta Union (CITU). At the behest of the Police and the Mill management, the anti-socials attacked the workers and set fire to the hunger-strike camp and the Union office. More than 30 union leaders including its Presi-

dent were brutally assaulted. The police, instead of protecting the workers, arrested 25 workers and registered false cases against them. The authorities of the Edward Mills and Bakshmi Mills also dismissed 25 workers.

The Committee decided to raise its strong voice in support of the struggle of the Beawar workers and to render all possible financial help to the workers. It called upon all its affiliated unions to hold meetings and demonstrations supporting the Beawar workers and demanding reinstatement of the retrenched of the retrenched workers and settlement of their demands for wages, bonus, etc. They have also been asked to render all possible financial help to the struggling workers. ■

Who Gets The Bonus

IN our last legal notes, we discussed how Supreme Court judgements have put wide categories of employees outside the benefit of the Industrial Disputes Act on a narrow interpretation of the definition of Industry.

On that definition, the employees in educational institutions, clubs, the firms of chartered accountants and solicitors, universities etc were excluded from the benefit of bonus when bonus was paid under the Industrial Disputes Act by industrial adjudication.

The payment of bonus has now been placed on a statutory basis by the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 hereinafter referred to as the Act. By section 1 (3) of the Act, the provisions thereof are applicable to (a) every factory and (b) every other establishment in which twenty or more persons are employed on any day during an accounting year. Subsequent fall in the number of employees below twenty will not take an establishment outside the benefit of the statute.

The amount of bonus payable to an employee is calculated in accordance with the provisions of sections 4, 5 and 6 and 11 of the Act. The minimum bonus at the rate of 8.33 per cent is ensured under section 10 of the Act (as amended).

But can bonus be available to employees of establishments which would otherwise not be

industry according to the Supreme Court? The question arises because bonus is paid out of the allocable surplus which is a percentage of the available surplus and the latter is the gross profits of any accounting year after deducting therefrom the sums referred to in section 6 of the Act.

The question further arises because under section 22 of the Act any dispute between an employer and his employees with respect to the bonus payable under the Act shall be

Arun Prokas Chatterjee

deemed to be an industrial dispute within the meaning of the Industrial Disputes Act and the provisions of that Act shall, save as otherwise expressly provided, shall apply accordingly. We have seen in our last issue's legal notes that dispute between an employer and his employees in an establishment which is not an industry within the meaning of the Industrial Disputes Act as interpreted by the Supreme Court is not an industrial dispute. Thus, a dispute, for example, between the employees of a firm of Chartered Accounts and the authorities of that firm will not be an industrial

dispute and, therefore, even if a reference is made, the Industrial Tribunal may refuse to enter upon adjudication on the ground that it has no jurisdiction. Can a dispute, however, referred to a Tribunal under section 22 of the Act be refused entertainment by a Tribunal where the dispute is between the employer and employees in establishments or Undertakings that are not industries according to the interpretation imposed on the definition of industry in the Industrial Disputes Act by the Supreme Court?

In my opinion, that should not be the case. For, the Statute makes use of a deeming provision. According to section 22 of the Act, whenever such a dispute relating to eligibility for bonus arises between an employer and the employees such dispute shall be deemed to be an industrial dispute within the meaning of the Industrial Disputes Act. A deeming provision always creates a legal fiction, and, therefore, a dispute should be an industrial dispute even if the establishment concerned may not be an industry according to the decisions of the Supreme Court. Section 22 does, in other words, take out of the jurisdiction of courts the power to decide or even to entertain any question as to whether establishment is an industry or not.

My opinion seems to be corroborated by the provisions of section 10 of the Act which makes it mandatory that every employer shall be bound to pay to every employee in an accounting year a minimum bonus which is now 8.33 per cent according to

the amendment passed by Parliament. It is noticeable that this section does not even use the word establishment or factory and does not make any distinction between industry and non-industry. The only restriction is imposed by section 32 of the Act. Of course, the exceptions carved out by that section are perniciously wide and whole classes of employees are outlawed from the Payment of Bonus Act. Universities and educational institutions and institutions (including hospitals, chambers of commerce) and social welfare institutions established not for purposes of profit and hosts of other establishments are excluded. Such exclusion is already leading to agitation by working people in the different excluded concerns, particularly, Government Departments.

Benefit Of The Act

But all other establishments whose aim is to earn income or profits for their proprietors or owners should fall within the benefit of the Act.

The Supreme Court has also, in one of its decisions, noted the amplitude of the definition of the word establishment, of course, subject to the restrictions of section 32 of the Act. It has observed :

“Though section 1 (3) excludes an establishment other than a factory having less than 20 employees from the application of the Act, all establishments which are factories irrespective of the persons employed therein and

all establishments which are not factories but are having 20 or more employees are covered by the Act. Therefore, only small establishments having less than 20 employees and which are not factories are excluded. Even in such cases if any establishment were to have 20 or more persons employed therein on any day in any accounting year, the Act would apply to such an establishment...” (1)

Section 32 of the Act, however, with its wide ranges of exclusions, needs to be deleted from the Act. The Government does not, it is true, easily give way except under the pressure of mass agitation. Much may be done, in any event, by leftist M. P.'s inside Parliament to compel the Government to shed its principle of exclusion. It is significant of the class character of the present day Government that, when it concedes anything to the working people, it does under pressure of mass agitation and again dilutes the concession by a mass of exclusions and exceptions. They cannot afford to ignore the directives from the ruling classes which are conducted to them by visible and invisible threads. ■

1. Sanghi Jeevraj Ghewar Chand v. Madras Chilies Union, 1968 (17) *Factories and Labour Reports* at page 218—1969 (1) *Labour Law Journal* at page 719

Jute Workers & Growers Launch Joint Action

AS was decided by the Baduria Conference in August, jute growers and jute mill workers in West Bengal have made a joint, decisive move towards wresting their long-standing demands.

On September 15, the two organisations which are sponsoring the unique action, the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU) and the Provincial Kisan Sabha, held a huge demonstration in Calcutta. Thousands of jute growers and workers from the outlying districts, reinforced by a sizable number of students, women and white-collar employees, assembled at the Subodh Mullick square from where they marched on the Raj Bhavan in a mass deputation.

Speakers who addressed the gathering at Esplanade East—Jyoti Basu, Harekrishna Konar, K. G. Basu and Kamal Sarkar among them--all reiterated the demands of the Baduria Conference. These include a minimum procurement price of Rs. 80 per maund of jute, 20% bonus for mill workers, takeover of the entire jute trade and nationalisation of the industry without compensation.

Meanwhile, resentment is growing among jute workers following the silence of the jute barons on the question of the 14-point charter of demands submitted by the BCMU. In a statement issued on behalf of the organisation on September 18, Niren Ghosh and Kamal Sarkar have called upon the workers to prepare for what is going to be an inevitable strike from November. ■

CITU's Memorandum To Minister

Repression In W. Bengal Continues

Unabated

In spite of the claims made by the Government and sundry other official agencies, repression in West Bengal is showing no visible signs of abatement. Murderous attacks continue to be made on trade union activists, union offices forcibly occupied and workers prevented from reporting for duty. In a memorandum submitted to West Bengal's Labour Minister, Dr. Gopaldas Nag, on September 10, the West Bengal Committee of the CITU has pointed this out.

What is more alarming is the fact that repression is now being extended to new areas. This is being done with the help of anti-social elements who not only enjoy an obvious freedom to assault, maim or kill but may even defy court orders with impunity.

Earlier this year, in reply to enquiries made by the ILO, the Government of India claimed that the situation was rapidly improving. The State Government too liberally handed out all kinds of promises; at a meeting of the State Labour Advisory Board in September, 1972, the West Bengal Labour Minister even undertook to see to it that no worker who was being prevented from going to work lost his job.

The CITU would like to cite a few examples of the so-called improvement in the situation.

When a number of workers employed with the Westinghouse Saxby and Farmer, Calcutta State Transport, Bengal Enamel and the Kalyani Spinning Mills who had been threatened with dire consequences tried to go back to work, they were held back and assaulted once again by rowdies of the ruling party. The incidents took place under the very nose of the police. What is curious is that the workers were armed with the orders of the High Court directing the guardians of law and order to give all possible protection to the workers who had been evicted from their home and living.

Interesting Incident

Another interesting incident was reported from Carter Pooler & Co., now a Defence Ministry undertaking. When Md. Ismail, M. P. and President of the West Bengal Committee of the CITU, wrote to the Union Defence Minister of State asking for protection for some evicted workers, the Minister wrote back to say that the authorities were apprehensive that if any of the workers turned up at the factory, he was "likely to be beaten up by the members of the (Congress) union." The Minister went on to give the rather frank advice that it would be in their interests if these workers did not insist on serving in that particular unit!

Governmental promises have been, as usual, of little help. A

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number of workers who had been forcibly prevented from going to work have already lost their jobs; a sizable section of them were employed in State Government undertakings like the Westinghouse Saxby and Farmer, Kalyani Spinning Mill and Durgapur Project Ltd. It is, thus, obvious that the Government's writ does not run even in its own undertakings.

The West Bengal Committee of the CITU looks with concern at the induction of anti-social elements whose principal job is to disrupt normal trade union functioning. It feels that this, along with the Government's attempt to outlaw the right to strike, is bound to give birth to semi-fascist tendencies. In the circumstances, the CITU demands that attacks on trade unions be stopped and freedom of normal, legitimate functioning be fully guaranteed. ■

“Unity Day” Observed By Central & State Government Employees

IN response to the call jointly given by the Confederation of Central Govt. Employees and Workers and the A.I. State Government Employees' Federation, 'Unity Day' was observed on August 28 last throughout the country by Central and State Government employees and workers and other organisations. (Also see September 1973 issue of *The Working Class*).

Assam : In Shillong the day was observed by employees and workers with great enthusiasm. In the evening, a joint mass meeting was held near the Assam Secretariat. The meeting was presided over by A.C. Bhagwati and addressed by, among others, Asutosh Bhattacharya, General Secretary of the T.U. Convention and leaders of the State Employees' Co-ordination Committee, U.B.I. Employees' Association etc. The meeting adopted a resolution calling upon all Central, State and Local Self Government Employees and those of other Private and Public establishments to build up broadest unity of all sections of workers and employees on a common platform.

In Gauhati, the day was observed jointly by the employees of Central and State Government establishments and public sector undertakings and private sector employees through wearing of badges and holding of demonstrations before their respective

offices. In the evening a mass rally of about 7000 workers and employees was held under the presidentship of Manomohan Das, Convener, United Committee of Railwaymen. The meeting was addressed by Saroj Chowdhury, General Secretary, All India Insurance Employees' Association and others. After the meeting a colourful procession paraded the streets.

Tamilnadu : In Madurai, a meeting was held at the Edward Hall Compound to observe the day. It was preceded by a thousand-strong procession of Central and State Government employees. The meeting was presided over by J.S. Bharatan, Vice-President of the NGO Union and addressed by A. Balasubramaniam (CITU), N. K. Bahuleyan (NFPTE), Logaguru (DREU), M.S. Pandian (ADMK) and others. The meeting adopted a resolution criticising the Third Pay Commission Recommendations and the use of Article 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution and other preventive laws to victimise employees and demanding bonus for all, reinstatement of victimised employees, etc.

In Vellore, the day was observed under the auspices of the Vellore City Trade Unions through wearing of badges, distribution of leaflets, procession and meeting. Nine trade unions representing State Govt., P & T,

Railway, Insurance, Bank, Electricity and other employees and teachers participated in the day's programme. The meeting held in the afternoon was presided by Com. Jagadeesan (AIIEA) and addressed by leaders of NFPTE, NGGO, AITUC, AREC, etc. A resolution was adopted criticising the retrograde Pay Commission recommendations and incorporating the employees' demands.

Mysore : In Mysore City the day was observed by the Income-tax Office employees by staging a demonstration during the lunch hour and shouting of slogans to focus attention on the employees' demands. On August 29, a public meeting was held jointly at the Town Hall by 13 Central and State Employees' Associations to observe 'Unity Day'. The meeting was addressed by leaders of the NFPTE, Mysore District Govt., Employees' Association etc.

Punjab : In Gurdaspur, the day was observed under the auspices of the T.U. Council of all Employees, Gurdaspur through holding of a mass rally of employees and workers of Central, State and other Public undertakings. A resolution was adopted at the rally condemning repression on the striking State employees of Rajasthan, use of DIR, MISA and other preventive laws to suppress T.U. and democratic

movements etc. and demanding direct dialogue between employees and the Government for a just settlement of their demands.

Bihar : The day was observed in Ranchi by Central and State employees, Insurance employees and workers under the banner of the CITU and HMS. Separate processions were taken out by the Central and State Government employees, Insurance employees and factory workers. In the afternoon, a mass meeting was held under the presidentship of K.P. Sinha, leader of the Insurance employees and was addressed by M. N. Prasad (A I L R S A), Ganesh Jha (CCGEW), Kapil Pandey (Non-Gazetted Employees' Federation), Chandi Prasad (Bihar State CITU) and Sita Ram Singh (HMS).

Kerala : The day was successfully observed in the Cochin-Ernakulam area unitedly by employees and workers of 23 organisations of Central, State, quasi-Government and Public and Private sector undertakings. Despite inclement weather, a huge procession paraded the streets and ended in a public meeting held at the Board Jetty Maidan, Ernakulam. The meeting was presided over by A. R. Prakasam (Kerala N. G. O. Union) and addressed by, among others, E. Balanandan (CITU), E. Padmanabhan (NGO Union) and C. Thomas (HMS). A resolution was unanimously adopted incorporating the demands and expressing the resolve to build up a united struggle against the

CITU Condemns Counter-Revolutionary Coup In Chile

Encouraged and helped by U. S. imperialism, the reactionary forces in Chile, spearheaded by a military junta, staged a counter-revolutionary coup on September 11 overthrowing the Leftist Government of Dr. Salvadore Allende. Dr. Allende, who refused to resign, was arrested and later murdered by the reactionary junta.

Condemning the counter-revolutionary coup in Chile, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, issued the following statement on September 13 :

The CITU denounces the murderers of Dr. Allende as common criminals.

The reactionary forces in Chile were not reconciled to the election of Dr. Allende as President. They, however, would not

have succeeded in their attempts to overthrow him had they not been helped by the C.I.A. and other American agencies.

The C.I.A., the reactionary army Generals and the Chilean vested interests have brought about the downfall of a Government which was determined to protect national independence, end foreign exploitation and expand democracy.

This is Nixon's first present to the world after signing detente agreements and assuring peace all round. The CITU pays its tribute to the memory of Dr. Allende who died fighting in the cause of freedom and socialism. It expresses its deep solidarity with the fighting workers and democratic masses of Chile.

retrograde Pay Commission recommendations.

West Bengal : In Calcutta, Unity Day was observed by Central and State Government employees through a huge meeting at the Sahid Minar maidan at the joint call of the Co-ordination Committees of Central and State Government Employees. The meeting was presided over by K. G. Basu, Joint Convener of the 12th July Committee. Moved by Dipen Ghosh, General Secretary of the Co-ordination Committee of the

Central Government Employees, a resolution was adopted at the meeting rejecting the wage-freeze policy of the Government and the retrograde Pay Commission recommendations and demanding, among other things, need-based minimum wage, 8.33 per cent bonus for all, reinstatement of retrenched employees and repeal of DIR and other repressive laws, restoration of T.U. and democratic rights etc.

The day was also observed at Malda, Suri and other important centres in the State.

UCTU SECRETARIAT REVIEWS SITUATION

THE Secretariat of the United Council of Trade Unions met at Coimbatore on September 10 and 11, 1973, and reviewed the developments on the trade union front since its last meeting.

The Secretariat noted with satisfaction that its call for the observance of July 23 as 'Anti-unemployment Day' had evoked enthusiastic response from all over the country. Rallies and demonstrations were held in over 800 towns and industrial centres, some of them in places where no constituent of the UCTU existed. This only indicated the acuteness of this situation.

The Secretariat also noted that Unity Day was observed by the Central and State Government employees on August 28 all over India in response to a call given by the New Delhi Convention of Central and State Government employees in July. It warned the employees against the sinister attempts by the Central Government to negotiate a settlement on the issue of the Pay Commission's recommendations with a section of the Government employees through the JCM.

The Secretariat noted with satisfaction that its line of unity and struggle was steadily gaining ground. On different occasions, trade unions outside the UCTU had collaborated with those inside it in organising struggles in places like Delhi, Bombay,

Bangalore and the states of Andhra and Kerala.

The Secretariat called upon all Central trade Union organisations to launch a united campaign against rising prices and against the policy of a freeze on wages. It stressed the need for

building up a movement in support of the demand for relief or jobs to the unemployed and for recognition of unions by secret ballot.

In other resolutions, the Secretariat extended its support to the struggles led by the LIC employees and the power engineers and demanded that the state of emergency be lifted forthwith.

ORISSA

Brutal Attack By Congress Goondas On Students & Workers

IN the face of growing isolation from the masses and the rising wave of people's movements, the Congress in Orissa have started to rely increasingly on semi fascist methods on the West Bengal model.

Recently, on September 11, a meeting had been convened by the State CPI(M) at Jajpur Road (Cuttack) in support of the struggle of the Ferrochrome Project employees for bonus and need-based minimum wage. The meeting was to be presided over by Shivaji Patnaik and addressed by Krishna Pada Ghosh, member of the working committee of CITU. When a procession of students was proceeding towards the meeting, it was suddenly attacked by members of the Congress-led Union of the Ferrochrome Plant and hired armed goondas in alliance with the Plant security forces. A large number of students were severely injured and two student leaders kidnapped by the goondas.

Not content with this, the goondas went on a rampage and launched a wild attack with lethal weapons on everybody present at the meeting. They forcibly prevented the willing workers from joining the meeting, assaulted the workers belonging to the CITU-led union, forced many of them to resign from the the CITU Union and evicted many others from their quarters. The office of the CITU Union was ransacked and the rampage continued till the next day. Over a hundred workers and six students were seriously injured in the attack.

A strong police party under a Magistrate was present all along but they neither intervened nor arrested any of the known culprits.

Leaders of the CITU, AITUC and HMS jointly met the Governor on September 12 to protest against this brutal attack. They later issued a joint statement condemning the attack and demanding an enquiry. The students held a protest meeting in the town on September 12.

Jitpur Accident Enquiry Reveals Violation Of Safety Rules

Fortyeight miners lost their lives and many more received severe injuries in a disastrous accident at the Noonodih-Jitpur Colliery, Dhanbad (Bihar) on March 18 last (see report in April 1973 issue of *The Working Class*).

As a result of the forceful and persistent demand made by the CITU, the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India and other Trade Unions, the Government of India was forced to set up a one-man Court of Enquiry, headed by Shri R. C. Dutta, which held public hearings from 17th to 21st April and submitted its report towards the end of August.

According to the report, the accident was the result of acts of gross irresponsibility and negligence on the part of the management, as well as criminal violation of Coal Mines Regulations of 1957 and other mines laws by them.

On the day of the accident, which was a Sunday and the weekly day of rest, a large number of workers were deployed for a maintenance job and laying of a main shaft cable during the first and second shifts. While such a large number of workers were working underground, the main ventilation fan was stopped for three hours during the first shift and again continuously for six hours during the second shift. This resulted in heavy accumulation of fatal methane gas which was further aggravated by the working of the auxiliary venti-

lators in the 14 seam resulting in formation of a uniform explosive mixture of gas in the galleries. A drill panel unit was working nearby with electric apparatus, but the power supply was not isolated thus creating the possibility of a spark and ignition of the explosive atmosphere in the seam. It was the finding of the Enquiry, that such an electrical spark actually set off the explosion at about 20.00 hours in the evening causing wide-spread roof-fall as a result of the force of the explosion.

Primary Cause

Thus the Court of Enquiry found the non-operation of the main ventilating fan to be the primary cause of the accident. This, and all the other consequent lapses, which set off the explosion, was the result of gross negligence and violation of mines regulations by the management. Fortyeight precious lives could have been saved if the ventilation fan was worked as per rules or in the alternative power was disconnected or the workers taken off the job as per rules as soon as the prolonged stoppage of the ventilation fan was noticed. In fact, according to the findings, during the afternoon of the fatal day there was a total collapse of the management and no responsible official was in charge of operations at the time of the accident. The management not only tried to shirk off their responsibility in this fatal lapse, they even tampered with the Fan log book to suppress the fact.

The managerial staff simply refused to bear any responsibility of issuing the order for the stoppage of the ventilating fan.

The Court of Enquiry further pointed out a lack of co-ordination and communication between the different departmental officials and an attitude of complacency in the management. Even after this disastrous accident it took about one and half hours for the first rescue team to arrive at the mines. Possibly a few more lives could have been saved if the rescue operations were started sooner.

The Court of Enquiry, in its report, observed violation of various mines rules and regulations by the management including several regulations under the Coal Mines Regulations 1957, Indian Electricity Rules, 1956 and the Mines Act, 1952.

The Court of Enquiry also made several suggestions for minimising such fatal accidents, viz. specific written permission from the authority before stopping ventilation fan and its record in the fan register; intimation to the senior and supervisory officers of their duties and responsibilities as per rules; action by Manager to disconnect power and withdraw men from underground without delay in case of stoppage of fan; framing of suitable rules by the DGMS and Ministry of Labour on the lines of the ILO draft; organising of separate cadre of ventilation and safety officers; setting up of Thermal Power units for ensuring regular supply of power, installation of Methanometers and Air Velocity Meters; establishing more feeder rescue stations; frequent inspections by DGMS; etc. ■

Discontent Amongst Locomen

AS the agreements arrived at during the recent struggle of the Loco Running Staff are not being implemented speedily, resentment amongst them is growing. During the discussions held on August 23, leaders of the Association pointed out that breaks in service have not been condoned, penal transfers not cancelled, and those retrenched during the agitation have not been reinstated. Samar Mukherjee, M.P. has also drawn the attention of the Railway Minister to this.

On the other hand, various benefits and facilities are being granted to those who reported for work during the period of struggle. Some of them have been promoted superseding hundreds of their seniors. This favouritism had led to murderous attacks by the black-legs on South Eastern Railway. At Anara of the same railway, there has been protest action for two hours against such attacks.

At Sahibganj on Eastern Railway, some of the leaders of the Loco Running Staff were arrested 10 days after the settlement of the struggle. There was protest action for about twenty four hours, which eventually forced the authorities to release them unconditionally.

The negotiation fixed for September 10 at Madras could not take place because the AIRF-led Union on Southern Railway led a demonstration on that date

and the Government of Tamilnadu considered this a law and order problem.

The leaders of the Loco Running Staff Association are visiting different places and explaining the situation to the staff in general. The morale at all levels is very high and the workers are determined to ensure that the agreement is implemented by the authorities.

Conference at Bilaspur

More than 150 delegates from all divisions and the Head Office of South Eastern Railway assembled at Bilaspur on September 9 and 10, in a Conference to discuss the problems of Ministerial staff. K.G. Bose, President, NFPTE, inaugurated the Conference. He pointed out that the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission have been a blow to the living and working conditions of ministerial staff who face not only an immediate increase in their office hours but also the increasing menace of automation. The Conference adopted resolutions rejecting the recommendations of the Pay Commission, demanding need based minimum wage, automatic linking of D.A., bonus for all, equal work for field offices and filling up of the existing vacancies. It has been decided to form a Co-ordination Committee at the zonal level to co-ordinate

CITU WORKING COMMITTEE TO MEET IN DELHI

The next meeting of the Working Committee of the CITU will be held in New Delhi from the 3rd to 5th October, 1973.

the movement of the ministerial staff.

SER H. Q. Staff Agitate

The staff of the S.E. Railway Head Office at Gardenreach and Calcutta have been agitating for about a month against penal transfer orders served on four clerks, who have been transferred to far away places. Meetings and demonstrations are taking place continuously. On representation, the General Manager has agreed to communicate his final decision within a short time.

Victory For Chittaranjan Workers

The resistance of the authorities to honour the verdict of the Calcutta High Court, which had quashed the transfer orders on the leaders of C.L.W. Labour Union as malafide, has since been broken down. Due to mounting pressure of the movement at the work site and representation at the level of the Railway Minister, the authorities have been forced to withdraw the transfer orders. Before the leaders rejoined duties at Chittaranjan on July 17, five thousand workers assembled in a rally to celebrate the victory.

August 24 Bundh--- A Great Success

AT the joint call of the Left parties—C P I (M), C P I, Socialist Party—and mass organisations of peasants, agricultural labour, youth and students, the people of all walks of life successfully observed “Andhra Pradesh Bundh” on August 24. In Hyderabad city, the Muslim Majlis and the Telengana Praja Samity also joined the action.

Earlier, the Andhra Pradesh Committee of CPI(M) along with mass organisations had given a call for holding demonstrations throughout the state on August 15 on the demands for selling of rice at Re. one per kilo, jowar at 80 paise per kilo and other essential goods including fertilisers at cheap and controlled prices. Despite large-scale arrests of volunteers and brutal atrocities of the Police, the demonstrations of August 15 and the dehoarding drive proved immensely successful.

In the meantime, the activists of CPI (M) and mass organisations had started a bold and novel experiment in Gannavaram taluk (Krishna District). After intensive campaign they forced the landowners to keep enough stock of rice in the taluk to feed the people till the next harvest and to sell rice at Re. one per kilo. They also started buying rice directly from the peasants and selling them at Re. one per kilo through their own depots.

For some weeks, the workers of CPI have also been carrying on agitation against hoarding and have been picketing retail shops, markets etc. to bring out hidden stocks. All these campaigns and agitations paved the way for the successful bundh of August 24.

On the eve of the Bundh, large-scale arrests of activists of the left Parties, T. U. leaders and leaders of SFI and AISF were made by the Police to prevent successful observance of the Bundh. Large-scale concentration of police and CRP in all important centres was also there. But all this could not stop the people from observing the Bundh most successfully.

Bundh Complete

Reports received so far indicate that the Bundh was complete in almost all the important cities and centres. On that day, all workets belonging to CITU, AITUC, HMP, Bank Employecs' Federation and RTC Employees' Union did not report for duty. Shops, hotels, cycles, auto-rickshaws and cinema house observed total bundh throughout the State. Students boycotted schools and mass meetings and demonstrations were held in most places.

A Conference of Extra Labour Reserve (casual Labour) of Vijayawada Division of South Central Railway was held on September 8-9 at Rajahmundry. Dinen Bhattacharya, M. P. inaugurated the Conference. 120 delegates representing 10,000 casual labour of all parts of the division attended.

The Conference was presided over by P. Sreeramulu, Presi-

dent, S. C. Railway Employees' Union and addressed by M. V. Subbiah, General Secretary of the S. C. Railway Employees' Union, Parsa Sathyanarayan and G. S. Balaji Das, President and Vice-President of State CITU, Nrisingha Chakravarty and other Railway T. U. leaders.

Resolutions were adopted criticising the retrograde recommendations of the 3rd Pay Commission and demanding Rs. 6 as daily minimum wage for casual workers, including women, implementation of the Miabhoy Award and payment of regular wage scales to casual workers on completion of 4 months' service.

The Conference also called upon the workers of the S. C. Railway to observe September 19 as 'Demands Day'. After the Conference, a huge procession of railway workers went through the railway colony led by the Railway and CITU leaders.

Strike In Coromandel Fertilisers

The entire employees of the Coromandel Fertilisers, Vishakhapatnam are on an indefinite strike for more than a month on their demands for 20% bonus for 1972 and normal promotions. The Company refused to pay bonus and stopped all promotions from this year.

Failing to break the unity of the workers, the management suspended 9 leaders and got the police to arrest 13 employees on false charges.

The entire working class of Vishakhapatnam has come out in support of the Fertiliser employees. 27 Trade unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC, HMS and

INTUC as well as some independent unions met on September 12 and decided to call for a day's General Strike for September 20, if the employees' demands were not met in the meantime.

In the meantime, the workers of the Ore-handling Plant, Hindusthan Shipyard and employees of Andhra University have started hunger strike in batches from September 14 in support of the striking employees. On September 16, a public meeting was held in the Stadium under the auspices of the Trade Unions where a resolution was adopted calling upon the entire workers and employees of Visakhapatnam to join the General Strike.

MAHARASHTRA

Victorious End To Doctors' Strike

THE 26-day strike by 2,600 resident doctors in Government and municipal hospitals in Maharashtra—reinforced for its last two weeks by all honorary practitioners in the State—ended on September 11 following agreements finally reached with the Chief Minister. The strike was in support of three principal demands, higher pay-scales, fixation of duty hours and better housing facilities.

Revised payscales which would now give the interns Rs. 225, house-men Rs. 475 and registrars Rs. 625 a month would come into effect from April 1, 1974; but interim relief would be disbursed from October 1, 1973. According to George Mathai, President of the Maharashtra

Association of Resident Doctors (MARD), which led the struggle, termination and eviction orders served on doctors would be withdrawn forthwith.

Whatever the financial gains of the movement, important as they are, they would be far outweighed by the overall impact the strike made. The struggle which came in for a good deal of repression demonstrated exceptional unity and singleness of purpose all through. The Government of Maharashtra had declared the strike illegal even before it started, and then, finding the threat futile, proceeded to arrest, dismiss and evict the medicos on a mass scale.

The entire medical community of the country rallied magnificently to the support of the striking doctors in Maharashtra. The IMA held demonstrations and sponsored, in collaboration with working class organisations, strikes at the regional as well as national level. When the hospitals were paralysed, the doctors ran free outdoor clinics to look after emergency cases.

There is no doubt that the refusal of the Government of Maharashtra to begin negotiations led what began as a strike by resident doctors of the city of Bombay to snowball into a united, countrywide action by doctors. For days on end, the Government insisted that the strike had to be called off first thing. At one stage, S. Y. Kolhatkar, Vice-President of the CITU, issued a statement warning that the working class would actively intervene if the

Government failed to take effective steps to end the dispute.

United Struggle Brings Victory To Firestone Employees

LED by the Firestone Tyre Employees' Union; about 1800 workers of Firestone Tyre & Co. at Sewri, Bombay—a 100 per cent U.S. subsidiary—won a significant victory through a month-long united struggle. This was the first major struggle of Tyre workers launched under the guidance of the A.I. Tyre & Rubber Workers' Pederation,

The workers had once before, in 1967-68, waged a 8½-month long bitter struggle against this U.S. concern, when 101 out of 130 workmen of the Vulcanising department were victimised. This time also, the management suspended 22 workers and were ready to charge-sheet and suspend 70 more. But the workers remained firm and united in the face of this ruthless victimisation. The management was ultimately forced to withdraw the charge-sheets and suspension orders and start negotiations which resulted in a settlement on August 14.

According to the terms of the settlement, each worker would get Rs. 40 p. m. as house rent allowance, Rs. 300 per year as leave travel expenses and 2% of annual earnings without any salary ceiling as extra bonus in addition to 20% bonus under the Bonus Act. This would give the workers additional earning of Rs. 19 lakhs per annum, besides the 2% extra bonus. This union has also reserved the right to agitate for higher quantum of

bonus if the prices of tyres and tubes are further upgraded by the Government. Under this new rate, a permanent unskilled worker or a sweeper at the beginning of grade would earn Rs. 499 p. m.

Tyre and Rubber workers of Bombay are now planning to hold a Convention towards the end of September to mobilise workers of cycle tyre factories and smaller units in Bombay, Thana and Ambarnath many of whom are now paid starvation wages, to secure for them need-based minimum wages.

Gherao by BEST and Municipal Workers

On August 23, a 10,000 strong joint demonstration of the workers of Bombay Electric Supply and transport undertaking (BEST) and municipal workers marched to the municipal building and gharaoed the officials on the demand for a Centenary Bonus, this being the centenary year of the municipality. A meeting of the Corporation, which was being held at that time, ultimately came down and passed a resolution agreeing to pay the bonus.

TAMILNADU

A Total Bundh

'Tamil Nadu Bandh' on 13th September at the Call of CPI (M), CPI, ADMK, CITU and other mass organisations was a 100 per cent success.

The Tamilnadu State Committee of CPI (M) met on 28th August at Kovai and decided to observe bundh on 6th September. The ADMK, CPI and Congress

(R) also gave a call for bundh on the same day. It is interesting to note that the Congress (R) later on withdrew from the bundh call under pressure from its High Command. Ultimately the bundh was held on 13th.

The Bundh call was given by CPI (M) as a protest against the anti-people policies of the State and Central Governments which was responsible for the price rise, unemployment, power-cut and other hardships faced by the people. The ADMK and CPI, however, blamed only the state government for all ills.

The DMK Government arrested 8000 leaders and workers of CPI (M), CPI and ADMK and adopted all other strike-breaking methods. In spite of victimisations by the Government and terrorisation by the DMK and Congress (R) goondas with the help of police, the bundh was a success throughout Tamil Nadu.

Earlier at the Call of CPI (M), CITU and mass organisations, tens of thousands participated in the 'Dharna' before District collectorate, R. T. O. and tehshildar offices throughout Tamilnadu on 1st September.

The demands were takeover by Government of whole-sale trade in rice, supply of yarn to weavers at reasonable prices, supply of sugar, kerosene, dal, oils, suji and cloth by ration cards in towns and villages; sale of fertilisers to farmers through Fair Price shops etc. Though the 'Dharna' is a democratic method and was held most peacefully, 6000 participants including District Secretaries, Trade Union

leaders, student leaders were arrested and remanded in jail for 15 days.

CITU On Labour Advisory Board

The Tamilnadu State Labour Advisory Board meeting was held on August 26, 27 and 28 at Kuttalam. The CITU was invited to join for the first time since the Board was constituted. R. Umanath participated in the meeting.

Hemachandran and Govindarajan will represent CITU in the sub-committees on Labour Law implementation and Draft Procedures during lock-outs and layoff.

Victory For Photo Film Workers

The 11-point Charter of Demands of Photo Film workers of Ooty was settled on September 1. Since the management was delaying negotiations the workers, led by the CITU, gave a strike notice on 25th May. After the strike notice was given the management placed various proposals which were however not acceptable to the Unions. The workers went on agitating for their demands through demonstrations, rallies and meetings, which ultimately forced the employers to settle the dispute.

Transport Workers To Observe Demands Day

Under the auspices of the CITU, leaders of transport workers met at Dindigul on 8th and 9th September. The meeting was presided over by Com. Govindarajan, Vice-President of Tamil Nadu state CITU. The meeting decided to observe Octo-

ber 1 as 'Demands Day' through protest demonstrations, rallies, meetings etc. The 17-point demands include regular working hours, duty pass facilities, minimum wages, D. A., house rent allowance, bonus etc.

Disputes Settled

The prolonged struggles of the Workers of Sri Krishna Iron Works and Gold Spot factories at Madurai led by CITU were at last settled on 25th and 24th August respectively. The agreements were signed in the District Labour Directorate. K. Vasudevan signed the agreement on behalf of the workers of both the factories.

Plantation Workers To Get More Bonus

In accordance with a bonus agreement signed on July 6 between workers and management of Tea and Coffee Plantations of Tamil Nadu workers will get 1/4 per cent more bonus for 1972 (10.75 for Tea and 10% Coffee workers, in all) than last year. For the first time, this was achieved through the joint participation of all plantation Unions including CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, DMK, and ADMK, all of whom signed the agreement.

KERALA

Unique Food March In Trivandrum

September 1 witnessed an unprecedented scene in Trivandrum, the State capital. At the call of the opposition parties, lakhs of starving people from all over Kerala came pouring

into Trivandrum from the early morning by train, by bus and on foot. They converged on the Puthirikandam maidan from where a giant procession started at 2 p.m. on its five kilometre march on the Rajbhavan led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad and other leaders of the CPI(M), KSP, KTP, Socialist Party and Kerala Congress. Traffic came to a standstill as a mass of humanity packed the roads and even the side-walks. They had come to demand minimum 12 ounces of food per head and other items of food articles at reduced prices.

After reaching the Rajbhavan, the leaders of the five parties went in a deputation to meet the Governor and demanded food for the starving people of Kerala and declaration of the State as a famine-affected area.

Strike Paralyzes Rail Traffic

Work in the Ernakulam Jn., Ernakulam Town and Cochin Stations of Southern Railway was completely paralysed as railway workers and employees, including Assistant Station Masters, went on a lightning strike from the morning of August 28 demanding supply of rice at lower prices and refundable advance of Rs. 500. The strike paralysed all train services from Cochin.

When the Personnel Officer of the Olavakkot Division rushed to Ernakulam he was gheraoed by the workers and employees on the demand for interim relief and other benefits as already granted to employees of Madu-

rai Division. The workers of Irimpanam Refinery Yard and Marshalling Yard also joined and started satyagraha in front of their respective offices. By August 29, the strike spread to other centres like Alwaye, Trichur, Shoranur, Kozhikode, Cannanore etc. bringing railway traffic in the region to a stand-still. The strike was ultimately withdrawn on September 1 after the Central Government agreed to give an advance up to Rs. 300 to the class III and IV employees.

Total Bus Strike

All buses of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) stopped plying from the midnight of September 3-4 as about 1600 State Transport workers struck work at the call of all the seven unions of workers and employees, including these affiliated to INTUC and AITUC, on the issue of Bonus and other demands.

The workers are demanding at least 14.5 per cent bonus—the same percentage as given last year. The Government at first offered 8.33 per cent bonus and when it was rejected by the workers the offer was raised to 11.5 per cent. Faced with a dilemma and rift in ruling coalition, the Government tried on the one hand to wean away the INTUC, AITUC-led unions and on the other hand planned to call in the army to run State buses.

The vacillating leadership of the INTUC and AITUC unions ultimately succumbed to the pressure and withdrew from the strike on September 14. Things are, however, yet to return to normal.

Other Struggles

Led jointly by the CITU, INTUC, AITUC and UTUC unions, about 1.5 lakh cashew nut workers observed a day's token strike on August 23 in support of their demand for bonus.

On the same day workers of Janayugam Press (a Right C. P. daily) went on a day's strike on their demands for bonus and wage revision.

In protest against the refusal of the management to pay bonus even at the rate paid last year, workers of Premier Tyres started an indefinite strike from August 28.

800 workers of various weaving mills of Cannanore are on strike from August 27 on the demand for bonus.

At the joint call of CITU, INTUC, AITUC and UTUC, about 70,000 plantation workers observed a day's token strike on August 31 demanding 50% rise in wages. Earlier, the unions had decided to hold the strike on August 25 which was later changed. However, 4000 workers of coffee and tea plantations of North Wynad and the entire workers of Nelliampati Zone, who did not get intimation of the postponement in time, observed the strike on August 25.

Employees of Cochin Port Trust and Dock Labour Board struck work for two hours on August 31 demanding Rs. 500 as famine relief.

After 42 days of struggle, Southern Railway Casual workers recently won an impor-

tant victory when an agreement was signed by the authorities agreeing to reemploy retrenched casual workers in three batches beginning September 12.

Insurance Employees Fight For The Jobless

Led by the All India Insurance Employees' Association, insurance employees of Calicut and Coimbatore divisions con-

ducted dharna before their respective offices on August 16 and 17 respectively to protest against the injustice meted out to more than 100 unemployed young men and women who were interviewed and selected for appointment in August 1971 but were later refused appointment after the Coimbatore division was split up and the Calicut division came into being. ■

W. Bengal Convention Demands 10 p.c. Bonus

IN accordance with the decision of the State Council of CITU held on August 11 and 12, a Bonus Convention was held on 28th August at the Muslim institute Hall, Calcutta. The Convention was followed by a rally held on 4th September at Shaheed Minar. In the convention and rally, Robin Mukherjee, Vice-President of CITU, West Bengal Committee, presided. The main resolution was moved by Santi Ghatak, Secretary, West Bengal Committee of CITU. Speakers included Kamal Sarkar, Secretary, CITU, and others. The resolution raised the following demands :

1. Minimum 10 per cent Bonus should be given to all including employees under Central and State Governments, municipalities, and Local Bodies etc.

2. The Ceiling on Bonus as provided for in the Bonus Act has to be scrapped.

3. The total amount of Bonus has to be paid in cash.

4. Under no circumstances the quantum of Bonus paid last year should be reduced this year.

It may be recalled that the

working class through hard struggle realised 8.33 p.c. minimum bonus last year. So, considering the factor of abnormal rise in the price of all essential commodities the demand for 10 p. c. minimum bonus is only too justified. The real value of 8.33 p.c. bonus paid last year has fallen due to price rise ; so there can be no justification in not paying 10 p.c. minimum bonus this year. Moreover, lakhs of Government (Central & State) employees and Local authorities' employees who have been excluded from the purview of minimum bonus, should also be paid this bonus. It may be mentioned here that a successful Convention demanding bonus for all - was held in Delhi under the auspices of UCTU.

In the Convention, another resolution demanding 20 p. c. bonus for jute workers was adopted.

Both the Convention and the rally were successful. After the rally on 4th September, a huge procession paraded different streets of Calcutta. ■

Book Review

Workers' Control And Labour Welfare In The Soviet Union by G.D. Sane, Thacker & Co. Ltd., Bombay. PP. 160. Price Rs. 24.

The achievements of the working class in Socialist countries are always a matter of pride for the workers in a capitalist country. They compare the conditions in their own country with those in a socialist country and understand the vast gulf existing in a capitalist and a socialist society.

Many writers who visited the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in the past have effectively put the achievements of socialist constructions by comparing the conditions with their own country.

When trade union and democratic rights are suppressed in India by the Congress Government one naturally expected the author to say something by way of comparison to show how the rights of a worker there compare with the suppression of rights in India. However, this is exactly what is missing in Sane's book.

The author deals with wages fixation machinery, legal rights of workers, role of trade unions and industrial relations machinery in the Soviet Union. He has mainly relied on the official and trade union publications as well as the I.L.O. reports. Some material has been collected by the author personally during his visit to the Soviet Union sponsored by the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions.

That the author, who was once

a trade union leader, should have chosen to observe discreet silence over the glaring contrast in conditions in India and the Soviet Union keeps the reader guessing throughout the book. One wonders whether this was due to the desire of the host that the author would keep himself aloof from such "controversial" questions.

M. K. Pandhe

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Gherao And Labour Unrest In West Bengal—by K. N. Vaid, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, New Delhi. PP 252. Price Rs. 30.00.

This is the outcome of a study undertaken by Shri Ram Centre For Industrial Relations and Human Resources, New Delhi. The study tries to analyse and understand the industrial conflict and social tensions. The study has been undertaken for the year 1967 when United Front Ministry was in power in West Bengal. A question may be asked why such study was not undertaken for any other period or for any other State. The book is helpful in so far as a good deal of data and facts have been collected and compiled. But despite such study the author has failed to understand and analyse the real causes behind workers' movement in 1967. The deep discontent due to low wages, inadequate dearness allowance, inordinate delay in the settlement of disputes, non-implementation of Tribunal awards, and Wage Board recom-

mendations, denial of trade union and democratic rights, lay-offs, retrenchment and closures combined with the enthusiasm created by the formation of United Front Government gave rise to a wave of spontaneous movement among the workers of West Bengal—this often took the form of Gherao. B. T. Ranadive is right when he says, "The present Gheraos are an expression of the mass awakening following the electoral defeat of the Congress. It is a perfectly legitimate weapon a trade union weapon—of protest and action" (Quoted by the author in his book).

The author has also failed to understand that the capitalist class raised a scare about 'Gherao' on a national scale. It launched a three-pronged attack—a systematic campaign through press, it continued its offensive against the workers, it sought the protection of law courts for securing injunctions. Instances were not rare where employers sought protection against gheraos where no gheraos had taken place at all. The author has failed to give comparative figures to bring out the number of gheraos as was none too large compared to the previous period under the Congress regime.

Though a lot of information has been given in the book, it has failed to study in depth and bring out the real and deep-rooted causes behind gheraos and labour unrest in West Bengal.

Biren Roy