

# **Surging Tide Of Working Class Struggles**

- **Report of Com. P. Ramamurti to the General Council meeting held at Coimbatore on June 11-14, 1971.**
- **Resolutions.**

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## MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE CITU, COIMBATORE, JUNE 11-14, 1971

—A REVIEW

“With a total membership of over a million fighting workers we are looked upon by our enemies as the most formidable force to be reckoned with, and by the common mass of workers even belonging to other trade union centres as the most doughty and uncompromising defenders of their interests,” said Comrade P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, summing up his report to the General Council of the CITU held at Coimbatore from June 11 to 14 last.

One hundred and twentyfive members of the General Council and 25 observers applauded Comrade Ramamurti when he said, “with still greater persistence in this line, with a proper and fraternal approach to the rank and file of all unions who are after all our class brothers, and with the prospect of further offensive by the employers in the offing, our line of unity and struggle is bound to win greater victories.”

A broad-based Reception Committee was constituted with M. Bhupathy as President and Comrade K. Ramani as Secretary by several unions in Coimbatore. Well-planned arrangements were made for the stay of the General Council members and holding of the Council meetings. Several unions in the adjoining districts contributed in kind to make the session of General Council a success.

The Working Committee met on June 10. before the session of the General Council.

Comrade B. T. Ranadive, President of the CITU, could not attend the meet due to his ill-health. A Presidium of Comrades

Md. Ismail, S. Y. Kolhatkar, Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury and E. Balanandan, all Vice Presidents of the CITU, was elected to conduct the deliberations of the Council.

After hoisting of the CITU Flag by Comrade S. Y. Kolhatkar, the General Council session began on June 11. At the outset the Presidium moved a resolution on martyrs who laid down their lives while facing attacks of the police, anti-social elements and naxalites. The Council stood up in silence to pay homage to their memory.

Representatives from various states spoke on the report and related their experience. Among those who spoke were Comrades R. Umanath, N. Prasada Rao, Monoranjan Roy, Niren Ghosh, Mohan Punamia, Chandi Prasad, P. K. Kurane, Ravi Sinha, Rabin Chatterjee, Motilal Sharma, Balachandran, Balanandan, Gerald Pereira, Biren Dutta and Jyoti Basu.

The report was adopted by the General Council after discussion. It also adopted the audited Statement of Accounts for 1970. The accounts up to May 1971 were also placed before the Council by Comrade Kamal Sarkar, Treasurer, CITU, for information.

Comrade Kamal Sarkar who had been nominated to represent the CITU at the Sixth Conference of the Romanian Trade Unions held at Bucharest in the third week of March last gave a report of the conference. The General Council endorsed the work done by Comrade Sarkar during the conference.

The General Council greeted the working class and the people of West Bengal for their relentless struggles against the semifascist repression perpetrated by the Government and called upon the working class of India to develop a powerful movement in support and solidarity with the struggles of the people of West Bengal. This resolution was moved by Com. Samar Mukherjee and supported by Com. Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury.

By another resolution moved by Com. Sudhin Kumar and supported by Com. Dinen Bhattacharya, the General Council sent its warm fraternal greetings to the gallant freedom-fighters of Bangladesh against the military junta of Pakistan. It demanded immediate recognition of the Government of Bangladesh and

condemned the attitude of the Government for its docile stand on this question. The CITU called upon the working class and people to contribute to the fund being raised by the Bangladesh Solidarity & Aid Committee.

The meeting condemned the Indira Gandhi Government for the proposed Maintenance of Internal Security Bill by a resolution moved by Com. Shanti Sekhar Basu and supported by Com. P. Satyanarayana and called upon all trade unions to raise their voice of protest in order to force the Government to withdraw the black measure.

The General Council passed a resolution welcoming the eight-point programme chalked out by the meeting of the Central T. U. organisations in Delhi and called upon all unions to prepare for united actions on local, regional, statewide and all-India levels. The resolution was moved by Com. Kamal Sarkar and Com. Niren Ghosh supported it.

By a resolution moved by Com. Umanath and supported by Com. Rabin Mukherjee the General Council condemned the pro-employer and anti-working class labour policy of the DMK Government of Tamil Nadu and called upon the affiliated unions to rouse all sections of workers to defeat this offensive. It further condemned the anti-democratic practices of certain public-sector managements of Tamil Nadu of attacking the trade union and democratic rights of the workers.

The meeting adopted resolution on Andhra Pradesh State Government employees' strike ( moved by Com. Balaji Das and supported by Com. Laxmi Das ), greeting the Kotah workers ( moved by Com. M. Punamia and supported by Com. Commission Satyanarayan Tewari ), delay in submission of the Third Pay Report ( moved by Com Nambiar and supported by Com. Gopal Basu ), Kerala Government's anti-labour policy ( moved by Com. Ravindranath and supported by Com. S.F.X. Pereira), condemning the Maharashtra Recognition of Trade Unions and Prevention of Unfair Labour Practices Bill ( moved by Com. Krishna Khopkar and supported by Com. P. K. Kurane) and greeting the railway workers ( moved by Com. Nrisingha Chakravarty and supported by Com. Nambiar ).

The meeting expressed concern at the closure of hundreds of factories and enterprises throughout the country and demanded a ban on closure by amending the Constitution of India and steps to reopen all closed factories and payment of retaining allowance to the workers for the period of closure. Com. Shanti Sekhar Basu moved the resolution and Com. Umanath supported it.

The meeting conveyed its greetings to jute workers for their long-drawn struggle and assured the jute workers of firm support for their struggle to wrest concession from the jute barons in the present boom conditions created by the situation in Bangladesh. The resolution was moved by Com. Umanath and Com. Md. Amin supported it.

The meeting paid homage to the heroic Communards of Paris who laid down their lives a hundred years ago for the cause of the world proletariat and called upon the Indian working class to draw lessons from their historic experience and prepare for the struggle to overthrow the rule of the oppressing classes. Com. S. Y. Kolhatkar moved the resolution and Com. Ajit Mukherjee supported it.

Com. A. Nallasivam moved a resolution on Public Sector undertakings. Com Ramamurti supported it.

The meeting adopted a resolution moved by Com. M. K. Pandhe and supported by Com. P. Ramamurti on unemployment demanding unemployment relief.

Com. M. K. Pandhe moved a resolution on the Family Pension Scheme. Com. S. Y. Kolhatkar supported it.

Industry-wise meetings of members and observers were held during the Council meeting of engineering, plantations, mines, steel, transport, bidi, paper, cotton textile and cinema industries. The recommendations of these group meetings were reported to the General Council and appropriate decisions taken to co-ordinate and guide the activities of unions working in these industries.

Comrade Jiban Roy, Joint Secretary of Hindustan Steel Employees' Union, Durgapur, reported on the movement of steel workers while Comrade Nrisingha Chakrabarty reported

on the railway workers' movement.

Comrade Bisweswar Ganguly gave a brief report on the working of the ESI Scheme. The General Council decided to form a committee to study the scheme in detail and report to the Working Committee with Comrade Dinen Bhattacharya, M.P., as the convenor. Other members of the committee are Comrades S. Y. Kolhatkar, A. Nallasivam, Bisweswar Ganguly and Balachandran.

The meeting decided to co-opt Comrade Nrisingha Chakrabarty, West Bengal, as a member of the General Council.

Comrade Shanti Ghatak read out the report of the Credentials Committee. Over 40 unions with a membership of nearly 13,000 had applied for affiliation during the period after the conference. The report of the Committee was adopted unanimously.

Comrade M. K. Pandhe made report on the employees' family pension scheme and explained how the scheme would be disadvantageous to the working class. The meeting called upon the workers not to opt for the scheme, but to launch a country-wide movement to scrap the present scheme and for formulation of a new scheme with more benefits and less restrictions on the workers.

A big rally attended by 25,000 people was held at Chithambaram Pillai Park on June 13. Several thousands of workers joined the rally in a colourful procession. Comrade M. Bhupathy presided over the meeting which was addressed by Comrades Sudhin Kumar, Jyoti Basu and P. Ramamurti.

## REPORT OF COM. P. RAMAMURTI

Dear Comrades,

We are meeting one year after the foundation conference of organisation, the CITU.

In my Report submitted to the Foundation Conference, it was pointed out that "both the Budget and the fourth plan show that the working class and the people will be fleeced through inflation, high prices and high taxation on consumer goods."

It was also pointed out that these politics would meet with resistance of the working class for the struggles.

The last one year has amply demonstrated the correctness of these assessments. It has been a year of the most dogged and determined struggles of the working class and middle class employees—struggles which were the most protracted ones in the history of the trade union movement.

Several finest sons of the working class lost their lives in police firings and during gangster attacks by anti-social elements and naxalites with the connivance of the police. Hundreds of the struggling workers have faced torture in police lock-up; beatings and lathi charges have become more common in the struggles. On behalf of the General Council, I pay our respectful homage to these great martyrs and express our sense of pride at the indomitable courage and determination shown by these workers and middle class employees in the struggles. They have written a new page of heroism in the history of the Indian working class movement.

### ECONOMIC STAGNATION CONTINUES

Smt. Indira Gandhi, by posing to fight the monopolists and raising alluring slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' succeeded in winning a big majority in Parliament in the elections held in March last. It will be suicidal if the working class allows itself to be decei-

ved by the "socialist" promises of Smt. Indira Gandhi and lulled into inaction, hoping that some relief is already on the way. For this purpose, it is absolutely essential to understand the economic situation in the country and the actual policies that are being pursued by the Government, whatever might be its promises and pretentions.

In spite of the fact that the recent rise in agricultural production should have created a big base for industrial spurt by providing the necessary market, the actual situation is not only stagnating, the economy is actually finding it difficult to get out of the morass in which the recent recession has plunged it.

Because of this, the stagnation and crisis in industry continues, closures and lock-out have increased, throwing thousands of workers out of employment. Hence, notwithstanding official claims that the economy is poised for a big advance, the fact is that the economic situation does not show signs of rapidly overcoming the set-backs given by the recession and confronts the working class with the prospect of further attacks on its living standards.

The developments of the last year reveal this very picture and warn the working class against taking a complacent attitude towards the economic situation. While agricultural production has increased and officials promise further increase in the year 1971-72 while many industries might have returned to the production level of the pre-recession year and some might have even exceeded it, the Finance Minister himself had to admit that the economy did not live up to expectations in 1970-71. The prospects for 1971-72 also disclose that there is sagging of production in the key sectors and that the economy will be under constant pressure and will find it extremely difficult to make any significant progress without throwing unprecedented burdens on the working class.

#### DETERIORATING EMPLOYMENT POSITION

The first sign of a developing economy is rising employment, but the results of the last year as well as of the year before that, actually show a deterioration in the employment situation

and in some cases absolute decline in employment. During the 4-year period ( March 1966, the pre-recession year, and March 1970 ), employment in the public sector has shown a nominal rise as follows :

Agriculture, livestock, forestry, etc, by only 37,000 ( from 2.26 lakhs to 2.63 lakhs ); mining and quarrying by 17,000 only ( from 1.60 lakhs to 1.77 lakhs ); manufacturing by 112,000 ( from 6.70 lakhs to 7.82 lakhs ); construction by only 31,000 ( from 7.66 lakhs to 7.97 lakhs ); electricity, gas, water and sanitary by 98,000 ( from 3.03 to 4.01 lakhs ); trade and commerce by 122,000 ( from 1.55 to 2.77 lakhs ); which includes 80,000 in respect of nationalisation of banks ; and transport, storage, communication by 93,000 ( from 20.94 to 21.87 lakhs ). The only noticeable change was in services, namely, 4.51 lakhs ( from 50.04 lakhs to 54.55 lakhs ), a rise of 47 per cent of the total increase in employment in the public sector.

During the same period, the private sector witnessed an absolute fall in employment, namely, of 105,000, from 68.1 lakhs in March 1966 to 66.96 lakhs in March 1970. Except in manufacturing and services which showed a rise in employment of 40,000 and 160,000 respectively during the period and electricity, gas etc. where employment remained stationary at 40,000, all other sections recorded a fall in employment. Thus in agriculture employment fell by 90,000 ( from 9 lakhs to 8.1 lakhs ); mining and quarrying by 98,000 ( from 5.1 lakhs to 4.12 lakhs ); construction by 1 lakh ( from 2.5 lakhs to 1.5 lakhs ); trade and commerce by 30,000 ( from 3.3 lakhs to 3 lakhs ); and transport, storage etc. by 20,000 ( from 1.2 to 1 lakh ). Even in the case of the rise in employment in manufacturing, despite all the advertised increase in industrial production over the period, the increase was barely 1% over the four years. Employment in railways which was 1,359,000 in 1966, came to be only 1,359,000 in March 1970, an increase of 1,000 in four years !

According to a survey conducted by the FICCI, "The stagnation in industrial production and investment has had a

deleterious effect on employment—The total number of unemployed is estimated at 13 millions—in the first half of 1970-71”. According to a recent Reserve Bank Survey, the total number of unemployed in rural and urban India in 1969 was 12.9 million and that in the three years ending 1969 it increased by 3 millions, i.e., a million a year. And yet the Government has the temerity to claim that the Indian economy is better poised to tackle the problems than at any other times in recent years.

The number of educated unemployed has perhaps now exceeded 1.5 millions, since it had already reached 13 lakhs in 1968. Registered unemployed in urban areas are near the 4 million mark, though this itself seems to be an under-estimate since, according to the Nineteenth Round of the National Sample Survey, only 33.2% of the unemployed persons in the cities in Maharashtra, for instance, register themselves.

It is officially admitted that in Bengal, the figure of unemployed is not less than 2.5 million. In Kerala, according to an estimate of the Directorate of Employment, the number of unemployed in 1970 was 9 lakhs, a rise of more than 60% over 5 years.

It is in this background that the Government's much advertised plans to fight unemployment and to create new jobs have to be examined. It will be extremely foolish for the working class to take these promises seriously and believe either in Government's promise of a rapid economic advance in the next year, or in its schemes devised to fight the unemployment. In the first place, it should be realised that working class unemployment is an inevitable accompaniment of the capitalist order. Even the capitalistically advanced economy of U. S. A. is to-day face to face with unemployment running into million. The latest figures show that the number of unemployed there has reached more than 5 percent of the number of employed and the 5.5 million mark. So long as the present capitalist-landlord regime continues in India, unemployment is destined to grow and grow by leaps and bounds, as indeed it has during the last two decades of Indian planning. It is absolutely clear that without the means of production being completely socialised

and without the political power coming into the hand of the working class and the mass of the people, unemployment cannot be abolished. That is the lesson of all socialist revolutions, and any one who lulls the workers into believing that he has got a solution to problem of unemployment within the framework of the capitalist path, only hoodwinks the people. Indira Government's plans for spending a few crores of rupees in the name of creating new job is just an eye-wash, an attempt to sidetrack attention from the basic problem. the least that could be done by the Government is to guarantee unemployment benefit and relief for those whom it cannot provide with work. The earlier promise of creating 5 lakhs new jobs a year has proved to be just words and as is clear, even if 5 lakhs new jobs were created every year, that would hardly meet the situation.

It is for this reason that the entire T. U. movement has to wage a determined struggle for the assertion of the workers' right to work, and to have this right included as Fundamental Right in the Constitution.

But in actual fact, as we have seen industrial advance since 1965-66 is only creating unemployment or creating new employment at a very slow pace, so that the new entrants in the labour market can hardly find any jobs for themselves. While the Indira Government talks about fighting unemployment, it is encouraging and financing devices to create further unemployment. It has placed more than Rs. 20 crores at the jute industry, which means wider adoption of labour saving machinery like automatic looms which will deprive thousands of their jobs. It is prepared to finance this massacre of textile workers by advancing loans at low interest and also by giving financial guarantee. It has sanctioned the import of computers from abroad and has also licensed the ICBM to produce them indigenously. It was recently reported in the press that the workers of the State Trading Corporation demonstrated against the growing computerisation in the departments. The employers are demanding more retrenchment and more work from the workers, and the Government is encouraging them.

Two facts stand out from the above. One is that the Government plans to fight unemployment are mere eye-wash, and the Government itself is adopting measures which will lead to further unemployment. Secondly, more unemployment, more workload on the workers, these are the devices of the ruling class to get out of the slough of economic recession and to increase production. Their formula is "More production at the cost of the working class." The working class therefore must be aware and vigilant about the coming dangers because in the next year also, vigorous attacks will continue against their employment and attempts will be made to force more work on them, in the name of increasing productivity.

Apart from this, the working class today is directly faced with lock-outs and closures extending over months. In West Bengal, the situation is serious and it was estimated that closures have thrown not less than 50,000 out of work. Closures have also taken place in other parts of the country. For instance, it was reported that one lakh cashew nut workers in Kerala were thrown out of work this year. If instead of flambuoyant promises to end unemployment, the Indira Government were to ban all closures and to re-open all closed mills and factories, that would be some concrete evidence of its real desire to fight against unemployment.

#### FOOD PRODUCTION RISE BENEFITTED WHOM ?

The Government and its apologists have been advertising the rise in food production in recent years as a great feat, virtually claiming that it has eased the economic situation very much. There is no doubt that the economic situation would have been extremely precarious had it not been for the fact that successive harvests had yielded an abundant crop of foodgrains. Foodgrains production has no doubt shown an increase over the last four years from 1967-68 to 1970-71 ; as compared with the year 1966-67 when food production fell to 74.23 million tonnes, the increase in 1967-68—95.05 million tonnes—may appear sharp. But compared with 1964-65, when it had been steadily

rising over the years and had stood at 89.34 million tonnes the rise over the last six years has been barely 3% per annum.

What has been the effect of this rising production on the life of the people and the workers? In the first place, this rise has been achieved mainly in wheat and maize; the new varieties of wheat have demanded a larger input of capital. The benefit arising from this increase as well as from the facilities in loans and fertilisers offered by the Government have gone mainly to the upper crust—the landlords, capitalist farmers and rich peasants. The benefits of this rise in production were not shared by the mass of the rural people and destitution and impoverishment continued to grow among the agricultural workers and poor peasants.

### RESULTS OF MECHANISATION OF AGRICULTURE

Moreover, the Government in its drive for increased agricultural production, encourages mechanisation. Its impact on rural life has been studied recently by C. P. Bharadwaj of the Delhi School of Economics in "Impact of Farm Mechanisation—who benefits most"? He says:

Mechanisation being a technological change would cause an upward shift in production function and, therefore, output per head (labourer) will increase irrespective of the fact that total employment increases or decreases owing to mechanisation. In other words, the labour-output ratio decreases with this technological change. On the other hand, real wage rate is decreasing in rural areas. Between 1961 and 1968, the agricultural wage rate increased by 91 and 78 percent in Punjab and Haryana respectively. But the cost of living for agricultural labour, roughly measured by changes in foodgrain prices has risen by more than 100 percent during the same period in these States. It means that real wage rate has been decreasing over the aforementioned period. Even if we take the real wage rate to be constant the share of labour (wages) in total output will comparatively decrease with decreasing labour-output ratio. Thus the technological change (mechanisation) is labour-saving and

capital-using and, therefore, the income distribution changes in favour of land-owners and against labour class in rural areas.

### GROWING INEQUALITIES

“The economic inequalities between the large farmers and small peasants would also increase as a result of mechanisation and adoption of new technology. Because of the indivisibilities of machines, mechanisation is economical only on large holdings, and thus, the productivity per acre would increase only on large farms without benefitting the small farmers. Since the use of machines enable the farmers to organise agricultural operations on large scale with quite an ease, it has resulted in serious consequences; the large farmers do not lease out land to the small farmers to the extent they used to do in the absence of mechanisation. This decline in leasing out to small farmers would further reduce the size of their operation holdings. The population pressure being already very high, it would result in increasing underemployment in the families with small holdings. It may be that some of the marginal cultivators find agricultural production uneconomical and, consequently, they may sell the land to large farmers and themselves join the class of landless labourers.

In fact, a research study has reported that in the Punjab, “land owned by big farmers increased between 1955-56 to 1967-68 by almost 9.5 per cent. This average hides a significant variation in the rates of expansion. Farms of the size groups 20-25 acres expanded by 4 per cent where as those of the size group 100-150 acres increased by 40 per cent. Most of the addition to the size took place through purchases.” (Ashok Rudra, “Big farmers in Punjab”, Economic and Political weekly, Sept. 27, 1969.)

### TECHNOLOGY DUALISM

In case this trend continues which is very likely, in the long run, there would emerge a “technological dualism” in agricul-

ture sector itself. The big farmers would save significant proportion of their income because of the increasing productivity on their farms and, consequently, capital formation would be further accelerated on these farms. On the other hand, the small farmers would continue to be caught in the "vicious circle" of poverty owing to low productivity and high pressure of population on their farms. Hence, the distribution of income would worsen in rural areas as a result of mechanisation." (The Economic Times, Feb. 8, 1971.)

### POVERTY INCREASES

Is it any wonder, then that by 1967-68 when despite the fact that foodgrains production had reached 95 million tons, the percentage of those living below the poverty line had increased to 70 percent as compared to 52 percent in 1960-61, according to a recent National Sample Survey ?

This is inevitable considering the fact that despite big advances claimed in foodgrains production, the per capita availability has either gone down or shown only marginal increase. Whereas in 1951, the per capita net availability of total foodgrains including imported food supplies was 16.59 oz. per day, and it reached 16.79 oz. in 1965, it fell to 14.24 oz. in 1967 and even after three years of a good harvest the best it reached in 1970 was only 15.71 oz. not even the availability of 1961 !

With all this increase in foodgrain production, imports of foodgrains continued to be high till recently. Though these imports rose very high when there was a fall in foodgrain production, they continued to be substantial even when there was a bumper crop. In 1968, for instance, when net foodgrain production had reached 83.17 million tonnes, the highest on record till then, imports amounted to 5.69 million tonnes. This was 3 million tonnes less than the figure of the preceding year. In 1969, foodgrain production was 82.26 million tonnes and imports 3.87 million tonnes. In 1970, though the net production rose to 87.06 million tonnes, imports were 3.63 million

tonnes. It should be noted that in 1962 when no one talked about the green revolution, the imports were almost the same as in 1970. It should be further noted that the proportion of imported foodgrains to net availability of foodgrains which was 4.8% in 1962 was 4.1% in 1970. No doubt this proportion had very much increased in some of the intervening years which reveal an abnormal rise in imports. But in spite of this fall, India imported as many as 3 million tonnes from abroad, the same quantity that she imported in 1962. It is clear that without the imported foodgrains, per capita availability would have gone down still further.

In the year 1970, the per capita availability could be 15.71 oz. per day only because of the accretion of 4% of the supplies from abroad.

#### PRICES REMAIN HIGH DESPITE "BUMPER HARVESTS"

It is therefore not surprising that notwithstanding the so called bumper crop, foodgrain prices continued to be high during the entire period. The index number of food grain prices (base 1961-62) rose sharply from 159 in 1965-66 to 208 in 1966-67, and since then again to 214 in 1969-70, another year of good harvest, and remained at 200 in 1970. Between 1969-70, there was a fall of 14 points but still the index number was as high as 200.

The bumper crop is hardly reflected in the foodgrain prices in the all-India working class consumer price index number. The index number with 1949 as base was 174 in 1965-66, rose to 228 in 1967-68, while in the years of bumper crops of 1968-69, and 1969-70 it had remained at 223. For the year 1965, it was 172, rose to 228 in 1968, and rose still higher to 233 in 1970. In January, 1971, it was 228, just immediately after the main rice harvest.

Through its policy of deficit financing, and high prices intended to rob the common man of the fruits of his labour, the Government of India ensured that food prices remained high, that the working class and the toilers were forced to

economise on food and the upper crusts of the rural population garnered huge profits.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the general consumer price index number should continue to rise during this period of "green revolution." While in 1965, it was 166, during 1968, it rose to 215 and rose still higher to 223 in 1970. In the first 3 months of 1971, it has gone up still higher at 224. Thus, the economic situation continues to dog the working class at each step.

#### GOVERNMENT'S AND EMPLOYERS' PROPAGANDA.

The Government and the employers have been busy holding the workers responsible for the difficulties inherent in the capitalist path. The stagnation in the economy, its slow growth are all being palmed off as due to the intransigence of the workers, their failure to produce more and the so-called dislocation in production created through strikes. Public opinion in the country is being misled by the ruling classes and reformist T. U. leaders fall a prey to this popaganda and under its influence enter into anti-working class agreements.

Our T. U. movement must consciously repudiate this attempt to make the workers the scapegoat of the situation and to hold them responsible for the ills of the capitalist path.

The fact is that the economy, based as it is on the capitalist path, is finding itself hemmed in from all sides and has now come into conflict with its inherent contradictions. In the first place, the slow growth of the economy now is partly due to the fact that it was greatly dependent on foreign loans and finances and that aid is now being reduced. According to The Economic Survey 1970-71 "Fresh aid commitments including debt relief and unutilised aid commitments of earlier years together amounted to Rs. 2448 crores, Rs. 257 crores less than in 1969-70. New commitments which had risen to Rs. 831 crores in 1969-70, after declining in two previous years amounted to only Rs. 612 crores in 1970-71, The availability of external credit has been affected adversely over the past few years, because

fresh commitments have lagged behind even the declining levels of utilisation of assistance. Thus, against a utilisation of Rs. 1196 crores, Rs. 903 crores and Rs. 866 crores in 1967-68, 1968-69 and 1969-70 respectively commitments all these amounted to Rs. 795 crores, Rs. 756 crores and Rs 831 crores respectively." As for 1970-71, the revised estimate for 1971-72 is Rs. 437 crores only.

Instead of developing indigenous technology, and know-how, the Government of India developed industries mainly through collaboration with foreign monopolists who put up the prices of their machinery and export of their knowhow. As a result of this, a lot of components and spares and even intermediates and raw materials have to be imported to keep these factories running.

This dwindling of the aid and foreign credit has affected the supply of vital raw materials, intermediaries and machineries which were imported from abroad. Indian planning was relying too much on foreign aid and credits and its dependance now is seen in the fact that with a cut in the aid, the economy finds itself face to face with all kinds of shortages, which were formerly financed from foreign credit.

After two decades of planning, with the Government advertising the achievements of the green revolution, the economy should be faced with a serious shortage of cotton is no fault of the workers. The percentage of cotton imported to available supplies has increased and it is now 11.9%, while The Economic Survey promises that next year, there might have to be still higher imports of cotton. If textile mills are closed and production goes down because of shortage of cotton, is it the fault of the workers ?

Similarly, the Government and the industry advertise that there is a serious shortage of raw materials and accessories for the engineering industry and that engineering production would have gone up but for this shortage. Once again, the question arises : who is responsible for it ? When India can produce nearly 6 million tonnes of steel, why has she to licence the import of steel worth about Rs. 197 crores during 1970-71 ?

Why is it that cotton textile production over the last few years has remained virtually stagnant in the organised sector inspite of the fact that the bumper harvest of the last few years should have created a big demand for cotton goods in the rural country side ?

The case of cotton textile industry is very interesting. During the last few years, while the de-centralised sector, which conceals the story of sweated labour, manipulations and fraud by employers posing as working in the de-centralised sector showed an increase of 75 per cent in production, the organised sector continued to stagnate and even showed declining production ? While the production of the Mills sector in 1959-60, was 5649 million metres, it fell to 4401 million metres in 1965-66, and was 3561 million metres in 1969-70. During 1969-71, it fell down still further as is shown in the comparison in the figures for 8 months of 1969-70 and 1970-71, when it fell from 3137 million metres to 3102 million metres.

As the recent discussion in the Lok Sabha showed, for the past 3 years, the number of closed textile mills in the country in any month had ranged between 40 to 60 ; while in the first half of 1970, the position improved some what remaining around 40, in March 1971, it rose again to 56, and was 55 in April 1971. and yet under one plea or another, the Government has pleaded its helplessness to remedy even such a serious situation.

It was not as if the Indian people were either overclothed or better clothed than before. In actual fact, the per capita availability of cloth in 1961-62 was 14.7 metres, it was 14.6 metres in 1965-66, during 1967-68, it was 13.4 metres, in 1968-69, 14.1 metres and in 1969-70, 13.5 metres only. The successive good harvests should have raised the purchasing power of the mass of rural population, but this did not happen, because the benefits and profits from the Green Revolution, went only to the upper crust, actually increasing the impoverishment of the masses of the ruling people. That is why the demand for cloth did not pick up and the production of the cotton textile mills showed an absolute decline.

These are the results of the class policies pursued by the Indira

Government the result of the capitalist path which holds both workers and peasants as hostages of the crisis of the system. It requires unmatched shamefacedness to hold the workers responsible for this state of affairs,

The fact is that both the private and public sectors are creaking because of the limitations of the capitalist path. In spite of heroic assertions that the economy is poised for a big advance many vital industries are in doldrums. The Railways for instance, do not believe that the economy is going to make a turn the next year and have therefore refused to place their usual orders with the engineering industry. In fact, the Railways have cut their investments for wagons by Rs.250 crores in the latest budget. Railway activity being an indication of industrial activity, it is clear that at least so far as this big department is concerned, it does not share the optimism of the Finance Minister. Similarly, the coal industry is facing a crisis of over-stocking at the pitheads though actual production according to the industry, went down by 3 million tonnes during 1970-71. The position of the textile industry we have already noted. Besides, there are a large number of industries in the private sector which are far from utilising their installed capacities and there are industries where unusual stocks accumulated.

This is not to say that certain industries have not overcome their difficulties or that compared to previous years, industrial production has not increased. But if the workers begin to believe that the economy is going to move upwards and upwards offering them new and increasing employment opportunities, they will be misled.

The fact that a large number of industries are not able to utilise their full capacities is one of the forms of economic crisis. It shows that the impoverishment of the people has so narrowed the market for industrial goods, that India finds it difficult to utilise her full industrial capacity.

Apart from the private sector, the complete bankruptcy of the present order is seen in the inefficiency and utter anarchy in the public sector. When India's engineering industry is

demanding more and more steel, the public sector steel plants are unable to utilise more than 60 per cent of their capacities. While the Economic Survey presented by the Finance Minister lays claim to the "situation in regard to utilisation of capacity being better than last year", it has to admit that "the major problem in regard to capacity working relates to steel, heavy engineering and transport equipment. Utilisation of installed capacity in steel during 1970-71 has been of the order of only 67 per cent as against 71 per cent in the case of public sector steel plants, utilisation was as low as 59%. Organisational deficiencies have held back progress in the heavy engineering sector. In the case of transport equipment...lacklustre demand from the railway has affected output."

According to the findings The Economic Times ( April 8, 1971) 16 out of the 68 products studied in 1970-71 in the public sector "utilisation of capacity was below 40 percent to 60 percent in the case of 18 products, and ranged between 60 and 80% for 21 products." In case of Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi while there has been much improvement in the production of mechanical items and castings, in the case of structurals the company produced only 3.8 thousand tonnes of structurals in 1969-70 against 15.3 thousand tonnes in the 1968-69, while in the first nine months of 1970-71, it was only 2.3 thousand tonnes.

As for the Railways, there has been a consistent and even sharp fall in the production of its equipment, According to The Economic Survey itself, percentage fall in production of railway equipment since 1967 as over the previous year, has been 11.4% (1967), 8.5% (1968), 10.6% in 1969, while the fall in the comparable period of the first ten months of 1970 over the corresponding period in 1969 was as high as 19.4%.

Thus almost all the vital sectors in the public sector are working far below capacity, while the industries dependent on their production are compelled to work either short time or close down throwing out thousands of workers. What is the explanation for this phenomenon? It only means in the first place that under the capitalist path India is unable to use even

her existing industrial capacity. But this is not the entire explanation. It has also something to do with the rotten bureaucratic structure and corruption in both public and private sectors. While the Government flaunts its taxation measures as instruments of securing social justice and redistributing national income, the capitalists, contractors, mineowners and corrupt bureaucrats in charge of the public sectors continue to loot public money by supplying and accepting raw materials below standard, by allowing use of rotten material for construction of plants by failing to carry out maintenance work and by using the plants in such a way as to damage their efficiency permanently.

How the combination of private owners and public sector bureaucrats is systematically defrauding the nation can be seen from the following : According to the Economic Times ( Feb. 3, 1971 ) “ At the end of the Second World War, accumulated heaps of black stones, ashes, etc. almost by the side of every colliery, presented a sight of black hills and mountains. But within a decade of Independence, these hills and mountains vanished as if by magic. The colliery owners took full advantage of rampant corruption in the Railways and they were successful in selling everything black coming out of the collieries as high grade coal, mostly to the Railways, steel mills, thermal power stations and other public sector or semi-public sector undertakings.

“While because of the low grade coal blast furnaces and coke ovens of several steel mills and thermal stations were badly damaged causing losses of crores of rupees to the nation, the colliery owners and railway officials fattened. Weigh bridges installed by the Railways have become instruments of corruption. Representatives of collieries having clandestine arrangements with officials easily get their wagons, less in weight, passed as those indicated in the respective receipts. Upgrading of low coal, overweighment at the Railway weigh bridges and rampant corruption in the purchase of coal, have become the order of the day.

“Moreover, small colliery owners are sure that the railways

are not purchasing coal from them, even when they are quoting much less than the big collieries. If small collieries producing below 3000 tons monthly are included in the list of loco tenders the Railways can save a large amount on coal price."

The management of the steel plants reveals the same story. The Government and its apologists widely propagate that it is due to labour trouble and loss of labour productivity, especially in Durgapur, that the capacity of the steel plants could not be utilised. However, the Finance Minister in The Economic Survey had to admit that in Rourkela also, where there was no prolonged strike, production was far below capacity. What about Bhilai? Why is it that in all these public sector plants, production could not be geared to full capacity or anywhere near it?

There is no doubt that there have been a series of strikes and justifiable strikes in the Durgapur steel plant, due to the deliberately provocative behaviour of the authorities. But the real reason for the miserable and criminal performance of the steel plants is the rotten and corrupt management of the plants. Our Union at Durgapur last year again exposed how these criminals, who are considered as managers of the plants, endlessly resort to provocations in order to conceal the real and basic ills of the plants. It has exposed how Indian contractors, combining with the British consortium, were guilty of laying faulty foundations, how sub-standard materials have been used, how the management refused to carry out proper maintenance work, and how in order to show progress in production the management resorts to methods which inflict permanent damages on the capacity of the plant to produce.

The Pandey Committee appointed by the Government of India, held the management responsible for negligence in maintenance work and for other acts of commission. But the Government, protected the corrupt officials and passed on the blame to the workers. In a memorandum submitted recently to the Minister of Steel, the Officers' Association of the Durgapur Steel Plant, has formally charged some of the top officials with gross negligence, holding them responsible for the serious imbalance

in production, particularly in the Steel Melting Shop and Blast Furnace, and concealing the position from the Government by passing the balance on to 'Labour unrest.' The management has also concealed from the Government the sharply decreasing availability of locomotives and other production equipment as compared with 1968.

The Association has further charged the management with having no definite policy or rational plan for procurement and quality control of raw materials, although these cost the plant no fewer than Rs. 22 crores a year. How far the management are responsible for mismanaging the affairs of the plant can be seen from the fact that they have enabled two private suppliers of raw materials to avail themselves of 'bonus' payment for B. F. grade iron ore and limestone supplies to the tune of Rs. 1.5 lakhs a month over the last ten years, making a clean gift of Rs. 18 million to the suppliers. Repeated requests for remedial measures have been ignored and now the contractors are likely to be renewed for a further long period. In addition to all this, the management freely buys non-scheduled supplies of raw materials at abnormally high prices despite the extremely poor quality of such supplies, all in the name of coping with frequent 'crisis', even when the plant production has so far remained much below one million.

This state of affairs is not confined to Durgapur alone. It is known that in Bhilai, the ore supply is sub-standard. The inefficiency of the Heavy Engineering Corporation and its management were also exposed when the equipment supplied by them for a vital plant was found to be sub-standard. The inefficiency of the Heavy Engineering Corporation and its management were also exposed when the equipment supplied by them for a vital plant was found to be not according to specifications.

The mismanagement, corruption and jobbery of the public sector bureaucrats and the private contractors and capitalists in league with them are virtually ruining these of plants. Public assets are being freely looted by these gangs of criminals, while at the same time, they and the official spokesmen join

hands in fathering the inefficiency on the workers and alleged labour troubles. The Economic Times ( April 2, 1941 ), reports :

“Chemical and process plant manufacturers are experiencing a serious shortage of raw materials like stainless steels, nickel and its alloys, superior grades of aluminium, copper, tantalum, graphite and superior qualities of glass. The manufacturers hold that no systematic study of the requirements of raw materials for these vital areas of machinery production has been made either by Planning Commission or by Director General of Technical Development (DGTD.) As a result, imports of chemical and processing plants continue at a time when domestic capacity has reached as Rs. 50 crores a year against annual home demand of chemical and processing plants worth Rs. 150 crores.

But actual production of these equipments has not exceeded Rs. 20 crores a year ( for the last two years at the least ) for the simple reason that a continued and regular supply of raw materials is not ensured, not even for the possible export orders.”

The working class and the Trade Unions must expose this management and the criminal policy pursued in the public sector and educate the public regarding where the real responsibility for the present stagnation in production lies. In its absence, the Government and the private capitalists are presenting the workers as the cause of the economic stagnation and alienating public sympathy from them on the basis of this prejudicial propaganda and vicious lies for freezing workers' wages, for freezing the D. A. for launching anti-strike legislation through such devices as the Industrial Relations Commissions, etc. The working class cannot ignore this aspect of the situation except at its own peril.

#### CONCESSIONS TO MONOPOLIST AND PRIVATE SECTOR

It is clear that inspite of its socialist phrases, the Government has no intention of curbing the private sector or really

hitting at the monopolists whose grip over the industry and finance, is one of the basic causes of the crisis. The Economic Survey frankly states that "The new industrial licensing policy, announced in Feb. 1970...aims at giving much greater freedom to private enterprise. At the same time, the policy is presented as directed against the monopolists which of course is not true. It is only an attempt to channalise the investment and capital of the monopolists in bigger industries. While liberal licences will be issued for concerns below Rs. 5 crores of capital, there is really no provision to curb the growing tentacles of the larger industrial houses. They are only asked to by-pass the smaller concerns and enhance their grip over bigger undertakings." The Economic Survey says : "In order to ensure the timely implementation of programmes in the field of basic, strategic and critical industries, a 'core' sector has been defined and the inputs required for these industries, will be provided on a priority basis. Industries in this sector, as well as in the heavy investment sector involving an investment of more than Rs. 5 crores, will be open to the larger industrial houses and foreign concerns (subject to the reservations made in favour of public sector by the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956.)" And further "Although the delineation of sectors under the new industrial licensing policy imposes certain restrictions on the larger industrial houses and foreign concerns, these restrictions may be relaxed in case the interests of the economy so require. For example, in the middle sector involving investments between Rs 3 crores and Rs. 5 crores, applications for normal expansion will be considered from established firms wherever such an expansion is considered desirable in the interests of cost efficiency."

This is enough to expose the socialist pretensions of the Government and show what the working class can expect in the coming year from the Government policy of encouraging the private sector in general, and offering fresh concessions to the monopolists.

## ROBBERY THROUGH INFLATION AND HIGH PRICES

Once more this year's budget shows that the Government is continuing its policy of inflation and high prices meant to rob the people and restrict the consumption of the necessities of life. This year's Central budget also provides for deficit financing to the extent of Rs. 220 crores. Coupled with the deficit financing of the states, the total deficits may reach the figure of Rs. 500 crores. The budgetary estimates of deficits of States and Central Government for 1970-71 amounted to Rs. 360 crores. In actual fact, it seems, according to the statement of the Finance Minister himself that the Central deficit alone reached the figure of Rs. 270 crores and the total Central and State deficits seem to have exceeded Rs. 500 crores. It is noteworthy that the total deficit financing of Rs. 850 crores provided for the entire Fourth Five year plan has been exceeded in the first two years of the Plan. It is through this excessive deficit financing that the Government has been successful in pursuing its policy of restricting the consumption of the people, enforcing on them a lower standard of living and robbing them of their labours. It is because of this policy that there has been hardly any break in the ever-rising price level which has made necessities of life beyond the reach of the ordinary man and the worker. It will be seen that because of this inflationary finance, even in the years of bumper agricultural production, the index of wholesale prices continued to rise or was just marginally reduced giving no relief to the people. In the year 1967-68, the index number of wholesale prices rose by 11.6 per cent. In the next year, it was lower by only 1.1 per cent. thanks to the deficit financing of Rs. 274.2 crores. In 1969-70, which was also a year of good crop according to official spokesmen, the index number of wholesale prices rose by 3.7 per cent, while in 1970-71, which saw the highest yield in foodgrains, the wholesale price index rose by a further 4.8 per cent. The inflationary finance this year will necessarily add further burdens on the working class and the common man, the middle

classes and the salaried personnel. And the condition of these sections will be extremely precarious if food production does not rise to the expected level.

The Trade Union movement has to take up a consistent fight against inflationary finances which is nothing but an instrument of class exploitation of robbing the working class and other toiling masses and transferring part of their dues to the capitalists and their State. It is the method of creating capital by open robbery of the people.

All these years the working class has been fighting only against the effects of this inflationary policy, which eroded their gains the very day they secured them. It is now clear that there is no stability in wages and earnings unless the Government is compelled to abandon its policy of inflation and forced to stabilise prices. In the alternative, there must be a statutory guarantee of full neutralisation of the rise in the cost of living for all sections of toilers. This is a problem which not only faces the industrial working class and the rural workers but also middle class employees, teachers, college professors, doctor, and lawyers. It is necessary that there should be the widest possible common movement and action to prevent this systematic robbery of all these sections.

### ROBBERY THROUGH TAXATION

The Government of India's budget this year, piles up Rs. 220 crores of additional burden on the country by way of taxation. The major part of this new burden will affect the common man by adding to the rise in prices. Apart from taxing such commodities as tobacco, soap, coarse cloth, etc. the Government of India has not shrunk from taxing *Maida*, and the indirect taxations of the Government some times form 50 to 60 per cent of the prices of commodities which are in daily use. All this of course is in line with the Government policy of restricting consumption of necessaries in the country. But it inevitably raises the cost of living of the people.

In the present budget, the Government has hardly touched the corporate sector. The Government is propagating that its

proposals to raise the wealth tax rates are a measure of social justice. In actual fact, all its taxation proposals have nothing to do with the relief to the common man. They are only intended to garner large funds in the hands of the capitalist State for purposes of public investment to save the tottering economy.

The T. U. movement must realise that the wage and living conditions of the working class are directly affected by the taxation proposals and taxation robbery of the Government. The direct and indirect taxation of the Government takes away part of the earnings that would have otherwise gone to the workers. They raise the cost of living and the prices of commodities, thereby restricting the market. All sections of the people are suffering from this crushing burden and the workers must join hands with them to resist it.

It should be noted that the Indira Government's first budget after elections shirks to levy any tax on the new rural aristocrats who are garnering huge profits aided by the State's programme for food production and agriculture. Chavan's socialism dares not attack these vested interests, Nor does it dare touch the monopolists who control the key economic positions in the industry. The T. U. movement while resisting the new taxation burdens must demand that the new rich in rural areas must be properly taxed and that the monopolist concerns including the foreign ones should be nationalised.

#### THE EXPORT DRIVE AND THE WORKING CLASS

The Government is advertising its success in increasing Indian exports and is boasting that exports in 1970-71 showed an increase of 8 per cent over last year, an increase bigger than that targetted by the fourth plan. It is really doubtful whether there has been this increase this year, as the figure for the first six months of the year showed that exports had actually fallen compared with the corresponding period of the previous year. The relation of exports to workers' wage earnings and other conditions must be fully understood. The T. U. movement generally has ignored this relation and has thereby

enabled the Government to sacrifice the interests of the working class in the name of promoting exports.

It is not yet realised that Indian exports to a large extent express the growing dependence of our economy on foreign imperialist countries and the ups and downs of the world capitalist market to which our economy is largely tied, affect the employment and the living conditions of large sections of Indian workers. In 1969, for instance, exports rose only 4 per cent as compared with 13.3 per cent in the preceding year. One of the main reasons for the unfavourable conditions in the capitalist world market which lowered the prices of some of our traditional goods like tea. The fall in export profit is always utilised by the employers to attack the working class, or resist further their demand. Thus, the link-up with the crisis-ridden capitalist world market seriously affects the wage earnings of Indian workers. But this is not all. Of late, the Government has been organising an export promotion drive and making it appear as if the more we export the more happy and prosperous the Indian people will be, as if the prosperity of our economy can be gauged on the rising export figures. The fact, however, is that India is under strong compulsion to export more and more at whatever cost because of her foreign debt obligation. In The Economic Survey the Finance Minister has stated, "In the coming years, debt servicing will continue to absorb substantial foreign exchange resources. During 1970-71, debt service charges are estimated to reach the high level of Rs. 458 crores; for years to come, the annual outgo of foreign exchange on account of servicing of debt already incurred will continue to be well over the level of 1970-71, i.e. Rs. 458 crores.

How the debt service burden has been increasing continuously in recent years is seen from the following: while in 1966-67 it was Rs. 274.5 crores, it rose to Rs. 458.5 crores. in 1970-71. The debt servicing itself, according to The Economic Survey, absorbs nearly 30 per cent of our export earnings. It will continue to absorb at least 27.5 per cent of our export earnings

in the entire Fourth Plan period, and may be even more in the event of exports falling short of the Plan target.

Besides, India has to import huge quantities of goods required for the maintenance of industries. Thus, the only way to keep the economy running is to have resort to foreign loans as well as to export as much as we can and at any cost so that the needs of import and foreign debt servicing are met. That as much as 30 per cent of our exports is absorbed by foreign debt servicing shows the dire need for India to export more since otherwise the needs of imports cannot be met.

It is this compulsion operating on our growingly dependent economy that is behind the export drive of the Government. It is because of this that some of the exports are subsidised and crores of rupees are given to exporters so that they can undersell in the foreign market and make profit. The tax payers' money is distributed among the exporters who are encouraged thus to garner handsome profits. But this is not all.

The necessity for exports means that Indian goods must be sold abroad at international or competitive prices. Here comes the question of production costs in India. Indian exporters are asked by the Government to produce goods at competitive prices with inflation and rising prices going on uncontrolled. They are compelled to compete with producers from advanced capitalist countries having advanced techniques. Moreover, the building up of our industrial units in collaboration with foreign monopolists, the purchase of maintenance imports through aid funds have meant inflated capital cost of our industries from 50 to 100% as well as inflated cost of components and raw materials. Naturally, all these further increase the cost of production of our manufactured goods. In this competition, they find that the only item on which economy can reduce cost is the wages and employment of labour. The present cry for increase in workers' productivity, for linking wages with productivity and for modernisation, in the name of producing Indian goods at competitive prices constitutes nothing but

the drive of a growingly dependant economy on the living standards of the working class.

How desperate the situation is can be seen from the fact that the Government of India has sent a top-level team of officials to the meeting of the Aid India Consortium to plead for an aid to the tune of Rs. 900 crores per annum, for the remaining three years of the Fourth Plan. That is, they seek further debts during the next three years which would amount to Rs, 2,700 crores, which works out to nearly 40 percent of the loans contracted during the last 23 years.

Of course, it is extremely doubtful if the Government will get this much aid. Already, U. S. imperialism faces a serious crisis as revealed in the increasing adverse balance of payments and the recent dollar crisis. Persistent demands are being made in the Senate and the Congress of the U. S. to further cut down foreign aid. Britain is also facing a crisis and the working class is going on increasingly protracted strikes. It is to these crisis-ridden countries that the Government of India is looking for increased aid even to fulfil the modest targets of the Fourth Plan.

In the coming years, therefore, the necessity for exports will increase all the more. The working class will be confronted with this offensive. If the T. U. movement does not realise the meaning of the Government's export policy on the living conditions of the working class, it will fail miserably in meeting the offensive that is coming.

The struggles conducted by the workers during the last one year were the direct results of the continued attacks of the capitals on the workers in the name of recession.

The upward swing in the strike struggles which showed its intensity since 1967 continued in 1970 and the total number of mandays lost crossed the colossal figure of 19 million—the highest recorded so far in Indian history for any year. The strike wave maintained its vigour in 1971 though for want of statistics it is not possible now to study its exact sweep and intensity.

West Bengal continued its glorious traditions of determined struggles. About half the mandays lost in 1971 were from this state alone. The struggles were more widespread and long drawn than in 1970. With growing militancy of the movement the working class had to encounter the most brutal repression of the CRP and other armed personnel. But the working class fought with remarkable heroism and courage.

Unable to break the militant C. I. T. U. union of Durgapur, the Hindustan Steel Employees' Union—which played a glorious role in uniting the entire Steel workers in India during the wage negotiations and foiled the nefarious conspiracy of the managements and the other trade union centres to agree to lower wagescales—the Government resorted to diabolical conspiracies. At first, without any notice the former Plant Security staff were forcibly replaced by the Central Industrial Security Force without any prior intimation whatsoever and when the Plant Security Forces men refused to accept this dictatorial and illegal order, they were beaten up and arrested. The workers of the Plant answered this by a one day protest strike. The police then arrested Com. Dilip Mazumdar, President of the Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union and Com. Sukhen Sarkar, the General Secretary of the Project Employees' Union, both members of the General Council of the CITU, in a false murder case. Even where their names were not in the FIR and even when the police officer refused to produce his Case Diary, these comrades were refused bail. This was followed by the arrest of the General Secretary and President of almost all trade unions affiliated to the CITU in Durgapur, in the same fictitious charge and bail was refused in similar circumstances.

The workers of Durgapur naturally took this as a nefarious attempt to behead the unions of their leadership, and all the 60,000 workers belonging to all the factories in Durgapur went on general strike from the 11th August 1970.

The Congress Government sent 30,000 armed personnel to crush the struggle of the workers. The police resorted to unheard of brutalities on unarmed workers and their families. Even the milk supply and rations were stopped, curfew was

imposed recklessly to brow-beat the workers. The repression continued unabated even after withdrawal of the strike, and hundreds of leading T.U. functionaries were faced with victimisation threats. All this, however, failed to break the morale of of the workers.

Despite all efforts to wipe out the C I T U from the map of Durgapur with ruthless armed might, the glorious banner of the C I T U continues to fly with pride. The Hindusthan Steel authorities held elections to the Co-operative Societies after the C R P terrorisation with the fond hope of trouncing the C I T U. All the non-C I T U unions joined together to defeat C I T U in these elections. However, the C I T U union came out with flying colours by winning all the 80 seats.

The two and a half lakh jute workers in December, 1970 completely paralysed the jute industry and gave a powerful rebuff to the machinations of the jute barons to avoid fulfilment of the earlier commitments and forced them to concede new demands of workers. The strike, in which all central trade unions, including the I N T U C, participated, forced the millowners to concede bonus at a rate higher than laid down in the Bonus Act, accept the principle of granting allowance to 'badli' workers and payment of gratuity in principle, for the first time in this industry.

The colliery workers in Raniganj area under the leadership of Colliery Mazdoor Sabha led several struggles including strike actions to force the colliery owners to implement the Coal Wage Board recommendations. The union led several struggles against lock-outs and closures and had to encounter several gangster attacks of mine owners and their I N T U C, AITUC and SSP agents.

The struggles of textile workers against closures were a long-drawn affair. Despite privations the workers continued their struggle and refused to be pressurised by the management to accept onerous conditions to reopen the mills. The strikes of road transport workers and municipal employees on the question of higher wages were also marked by their unity. Port and Dock workers as well as shore workers organised

strikes though on different dates. Five thousand shore workers of Calcutta struck work on 23rd June, demanding implementation of tonnage incentive scheme. On 18th July, eighteen thousand Dock workers struck work on the question of de-casualisation of all categories of workers.

Solidarity actions have been an important feature in West Bengal. A united strike of over a lakh of mercantile employees on 10th August 1970, demanding reopening of closed mills and factories and protesting against shifting of offices by Birla management was a complete success despite opposition of the AITUC leadership.

The struggle of workers employed in "Basumati" daily owned by ruling Congress leader, Ashok Sen, against closure was supported by one day strike by all the newspaper employees of Calcutta and by demonstrations of several trade unions, students, youth and kisan organisations.

In 1970 three historic general strikes and hartals were organised on July 14th, August 31st and December 8th throughout the State which highlighted the growing solidarity of the working class with the other sections of the people. The strike on July 8th was in support of the demand of withdrawal of CRP and holding of elections for the Assembly in W. Bengal. The general strike of August 31st was on the occasion of Martyrs' Day. The strike of December 8th was in support of the peasants' struggle for land and also in support of the jute workers' strike. The working class also organised a one-day general strike on March 31, 1971, in support of the heroic people of Bangladesh. Besides, several local bandhs in industrial belts have been organised in protest against the C. R. P. and army personnel's atrocities, the latest being the Calcutta Bandh on June 1, 1971.

These strikes have shown the heightened political consciousness of the working class in West Bengal. An important significance of these strikes has been the participation of the AITUC workers in these actions despite the opposition of their leadership in some of these strikes.

Alarmed by these developments, the administration under

the President's Rule and the Ajoy Mukherjee ministry have resorted to the usual method of terrorisation of the workers and the people. Frequent use of curfew, combing operations, imposition of Sec. 144, have become the major weapons in the armoury of the Government. Use of anti-social elements and naxalites against trade union and democratic movements have resulted in murder of scores of working class and T. U. cadres. The brutalities of C. R. P. and army in West Bengal have surpassed all the past repressive measures. The working class in West Bengal, despite these wanton measures continued its march towards united struggles. The respective might of the Government has only strengthened their determination to fight with more firmness and preparedness.

The militant movement in West Bengal inspired the working class of other states in their struggles, for better wages and working conditions. The workers and salaried employees in various industries and States have also resisted the growing onslaughts of capital.

The Electricity workers in several States struck work to press their demand for higher wages. The State Electricity Board workers of Assam went on an indefinite strike from 11th June demanding higher wages and other facilities. In U. P. also they went on an indefinite strike from 24th August. In Bihar, the workers downed their tools for demands supported by the Shri Karpuri Thakur, President of the Union earlier, but he refused to implement them after becoming the Chief Minister. The SEB workers in Kerala observed one day's token strike demanding grant of interim relief at central rates. In Rajasthan, a state-wide strike was organised by the S E B workers while State Electricity Board workers including junior engineers in Tamil Nadu also resorted to strike action during this period.

In July, more than half a million workers of Kerala observed one day's token strike demanding resignation of Achutha Menon's Government and holding of elections to the Legislative Assembly. This political action in July showed the readiness of the workers to join in actions on broader issues of national

importance. Four lakh coir workers in Kerala observed one day's token strike on January 19th 1971, for D. A. and other demands. Two lakhs coir workers in Alleppey and Trivandrum went on an indefinite strike in support of the demands for higher D. A. and bonus.

The struggle of Tripura plantation workers against lock-out, Victoria mill workers at Kanpur against closure, strike of Indian Explosive workers at Gomia (Bihar) against victimisation of union leaders, to month strike of J. K. Jute mills, Kanpur, for higher wages and D.A., strike of 3,000 workers of Ordinary Clothing factory at Avadi (Tamil Nadu), strike of 3,000 workers of Mukand Iron Co., Bombay, Stay-in-strike of workers of Hindusthan Teleprinters, Madras, strike of 5,000 workers of Gomuri Tinplate workers, Jamshedpur, strike of 2,000 workers of Indian Copper Corporation near Jamsedpur, strikes of Patriot and Ashoka Hotel workers in Delhi, strike of Birla's Rayon Factory workers at Mavoor in Kerala, strike in Cochin Oil refinery are some other major strike struggles in the country during the last one year.

The strike of 40,000 bidi workers in Tamil Nadu for higher wages evoked support from workers in various other industries in the State. The sugar workers of Nellikuppam had also to fight a long drawn battle to win their demands for higher wages and D. A.

The Rajasthan police killed 17 workers during the struggle of workers of Singhanias' J. K. Synthetics. When the workers were agitating for their demands for a long time the State machinery was keeping mum. It pounced on the workers when the CITU union gave a strike call. The Madhya Pradesh Government police killed 5 workers to protect the interests of Birlas in Rayon Factory at Nagda. Even after these killings, the trade unions became the target of attacks. In Kota, the CITU union leaders are still behind the bars while Singhanias have been let free to carry on their exploitation of workers. On 23rd December the workers of Gwalior Rayon at Mavoor (Kerala) went on strike action in protest against killings of Nagda workers.

The Haryana police also killed one worker on September 8th when they resorted to lathi-charge and reckless firing while workers of Delhi Cloth Mills, Hissar branch, were demonstrating before the mill gate against victimisation of union workers. A bus driver and another worker were killed by the Andhra Police when the police opened fire on road transport workers at Tirupati during the State Government Employees' strike.

A notable feature of this period has been that workers in many factories and industries have disowned treacherous agreements entered into with the management by class-collaborationist unions like those of the AITUC, INTUC, DMK etc. and come out on strike struggles by forming action committees of workers composed of workers owing allegiance to all trade union centres. Such cases have been many in Coimbatore, Madurai and other Centres in Tamil Nadu.

In Bombay, and Ahmedabad also, the textile workers resorted to such forms of actions as gheraos over the question of bonus. Later, workers of 35 mills numbering one lakh resorted to strike actions, repudiating the treacherous agreement of the recognised INTUC Union on bonus. It is noteworthy that neither S. A. Dange nor the AITUC G. K. Union lifted a little finger in support of this struggle. Obviously, it was embarrassing for them to do so, since the agreement was based on the majority recommendations of the Bonus Commission to which Dange was a party. In Ahmedabad also, 70,000 textile workers downed tools repudiating the Bonus agreement of the INTUC Union. As a result of these struggles, workers in several mills were able to win more bonus than what they were entitled to under the Bonus Act. In West Bengal, this has been a common feature in all industries. All these facts unmistakably show that the Bonus Act has been designed to deprive the workers of their bonus and given unity and solidarity—they can make the Bonus Act a nullity.

As a result of the widespread struggles, hundreds and thousands of workers in the steel, engineering, all public sector undertakings, including the LIC and Reserve Bank, and in private factories secured notable wage increases and other bene-

fits. In many cases, they were able to stave off the offensive of the employers. It is also true that in a number of struggles the workers could not carry on the struggle for long due to disruption, repression and lack of solidarity actions and lost the battle. But, on the whole, the gains as a result of the struggles far outweigh the losses.

Another important feature of the T.U. movement in the recent period is the widespread struggle of middle class employees. The L.I.C. and Reserve Bank employees resorted to different forms of struggle and ultimately won substantial wage increases. Employees in many States resorted to strike actions. The West Bengal State Government employees went on a three-day strike in support of their charter of demands, for implementations of the Pay Commission appointed by the U.F. Government, complete over-hauling of Service Rules and for withdrawal of the C.R.P. from the State.

The Rajasthan State Government employees went on strike in September, 1970. Despite heavy repression of the strike, they continued the strike and ultimately forced the Government to concede their demands.

In the same month, two lakhs employees of the Maharashtra Government downed their pens demanding interim relief. Ban on the strike under the Essential Services Maintenance Act and arrest of leaders failed to deter the striking employees and the Government was forced to negotiate and reach a settlement.

In Punjab, the Government arrested 400 leading employees before commencement of their strike. Still undaunted the entire employees went on strike and the Government had to negotiate a settlement. The Government employees of Bihar also went on strike on similar demands. In Gujarat, the threat of strike compelled the Government to concede the demand. The M.P. Government employees went on one day protest strike demanding higher interim relief.

The Kerala State Government employees' united strike on the eve of the last general elections was a united protest against Achutha Menon's policy of wage freeze. Despite wild threats of drastic action, the strike went on and the Government was

compelled to negotiate a settlement. In Tamil Nadu, the agitation of the Government employees forced the Government to grant higher emoluments.

The long drawn united struggle of the State Government employees of Andhra Pradesh had to face ruthless repression of the State apparatus. The employees, however, remained firm and continued their struggle for nearly seven weeks. No other strike struggle of the State Government employees was conducted for such a long time.

The resistance of the railway workers was seen on an increasing scale to the policy of victimisation of the authorities and to the brutal police repression let loose on them by the Government. The police repression on Railway workers at Bhilai, and Bilaspur provoked spontaneous strike actions in South Eastern Railway resulting in stoppage of train services for a considerable period. The police repression was also responsible for the strike action in Adra and Kharagpur region of the S. E. Railway.

In Alipur Duar, N.E. Railway strikes took place against victimisation and police repression. The people in Siliguri and other townships observed bandh in protest against police atrocities. Solidarity actions by other sections of the T.U. movement were also witnessed in this struggle. The most arrogant bureaucrats who were in league with the police authorities had the courage to disown even the commitments made by the Railway Minister to the Members of Parliament. The Railway workers in Maligaon ( N.F. Railway ) also fought against the insulting treatment of the Railway officials.

The 22,000 Railway workers of Dhanbad Division went on strike on February 3rd, last, in protest against merciless beating of wife of an employee by the Railway Protection Force personnel. Another railway employee was also beaten by the anti-social elements while on duty. The authorities, however, refused to move in the early stages which provoked this strike.

The strike of rail employees in Garhara Barauni areas for project allowance in April was a complete success resulting in total stoppage of movement of railways in the region. In this

struggle also workers faced police lathi charge, etc. The railway electrification workers of Tundla region tenaciously fought for job security. About 300 workers were arrested in this struggle and two lost their lives in police firing.

A notable feature of all these struggles has been the formation of joint councils of action in which workers of all shades of opinions participated. Such committees were necessitated by the refusal of the leadership of the AIRF and NFIR to support these struggles. In some of these struggles, the leadership of these unions shamelessly joined hands with the railway authorities and acted as strike breakers. The AITUC leadership in S. E. Railway accepted insulting conditions of opposing every spontaneous strike in future. The rail workers carried forward their struggles despite such hurdles and achieved some gains which have strengthened their confidence in organised movement.

The last one year witnessed increasing use of Essential Services Maintenance Act during strike struggles. Every State Government used it during the strike of State Government employees. It was recklessly used in strikes of port and dock workers, electricity workers, railway workers, Indian Explosive workers and during several strike struggles. As if this was not enough, army personnel was brought in to act as black-legs during the strike. The use of armymen in Indian Explosives workers' strike and running air services with the help of IAF pilots during the IAC pilots' strike have been widely condemned by the T. U. movement. Efforts were made to run the Calcutta Telephone Exchange during the West Bengal Bandh with the help of the army. In West Bengal, army was posted at strategic points during all strike struggles and hartals to intimidate not only the workers but the entire population in the localities. The workers have been able to organise complete strikes despite such show of arms only because of growing urge for unity among the ranks and wide support they have been getting from the democratic movement.

Encouraged by the patronage of the Government, the employers have devised a method of resorting to closure after

strike call given by a union. The Bata Shoe Co. at Batanagar in West Bengal resorted to such blackmail to force the workers to accept the terms dictated by the management. The Annapurna Textile Mills (West Bengal) despite its high profitability was closed down by the management to impose reduction in the number of workers in the factory. The management of Indian Explosives Ltd., Kanpur, also resorted to closure to compel the workers to accept victimisation and retrenchment. These closers are really lock-outs without the legal obligation of lock-out payments.

In West Bengal, several engineering works have been closed down on the plea that the employers were unable to meet the demands of the workers. The workers, however, have been resisting these efforts of the managements and in some cases have forced them to reopen the closed units through persistent struggles and pressure from other sections of the people. Last year also, saw solidarity actions by the working class and middle class employees on a number of issues. However, it must be pointed out that such actions were confined mostly to West Bengal. If some of the protracted struggles ultimately succeeded in their objectives, it was because of the solidarity action by the other workers. In the coming period, this must become a common feature in every State if the offensive of the employers is to be successfully resisted.

The General Council and every member of the unions affiliated to the CITU can be justly proud that most of the struggles during this period were either directly conducted by our unions or our unions have taken the initiative in bringing about united struggles and played the most dominant part during the course of such united struggles. Our selflessness and indefatigable will to pursue the class struggle have been recognised both by our enemies and those workers who are not affiliated to any trade union centre. The result has been that many of the federation of unions unattached to any All India trade union centres have often sought our help, guidance and intervention when they themselves went on struggles. The leadership discharged these responsibilities to the best of its ability.

To sum up, the events of the past one year since the formation of our organisation, the common mass of people, including the working class has been under constant attack at the hands of the Government and the business bosses who sought to improve their position at the expense of the toiling masses. These attacks did not go unchallenged and were met with stiff and heroic resistance from the working class.

Needless to say, the workers had to wage a relentless battle as has already been described to maintain their jobs and standard of living during the last year. The strike wave continued to rise and the workers had to face sufferings and starvation. A measure of the resistance of the working class induced by the attacks on them can be seen from the fact that in 1967-68 the number of mandays lost due to strikes was 17 million. In 1968-69, when the economy was supposed to be getting out of the slough of recession, the number of mandays lost continued to be at the same level. In 1969, when the economy was advertised to be turning the corner, the number of mandays lost rose to 19 million and in 1970 when the achievements of the economy are supposed to have created conditions for a big advance the number rose to 27 million.

The continuous rise in strike wave was due to the fact that since 1964, the real earnings of the workers have been below the 1961 level. In 1968, in spite of continued resistance, they were 5% below the 1961 level. The gains secured during the period were being continuously eroded by the rising price level with the result that the working class discontent continued to mount.

Although in this period especially in the last year or so, sections of working class through their heroic struggles and united actions, secured some big gains, as noted earlier, nevertheless, this did not lead to a rise in real wages for the working class as a whole as compared to 1961.

However, in most cases, the advance that was secured was preceded by unprecedented repression and police terror against the working class. The severity of the crisis of the economy was felt by the working class through police bullets, imprison-

ment and torture, the specific weapons of the ruling class to compel the workers to accept the burdens of the crisis. These reached a peak in the police repression against the working class in West Bengal.

This severe and unprecedented repression faced by the working class only shows that whatever claims are made statistically by the economists, they can only be made at the expense of the workers and toilers, that the advertised easing of the economic situation and recession did not mean an easing of the situation for the toiling masses, but only an intensification of their miseries.

#### P. D. ACT—INSTRUMENT TO SUPPRESS WORKER'S STRUGGLE.

The very first gift of the Indira Government to the democratic movement after the last parliamentary elections is the promulgation of the Maintenance of Internal Security ordinance. It clearly proves that the Government is arming itself to suppress the rising wave of struggles of workers, peasants and other toilers that are bound to burst forth as a result of these policies of the Government.

#### LABOUR CONFERENCE PROPOSALS—FORERUNNER OF COMING OFFENSIVE,

This offensive has already revealed its physiognomy in the agenda proposed by the Labour Minister at the Conference of the Central T. U. organisations which the Government called on May 20 and 21 last. It talked of a strife-free and lock-out free period for industry, of putting restrictions on the right of workers to strike, of linking productivity with wages without, however, any guarantee to hold the price line. In fact, this was the key note of the inaugural speech of the Prime Minister and that of the Chairman, the Labour Minister. In short, it was an entire programme of extorting more work from the workers, of curbing the right to strike, in order to produce more for exports. In fact, some of the State Governments like the Andhra and Maharashtra Governments, have already passed legislation attacking the workers' right to strike on the basis of the recommendations of the National Commission on Labour. The Government of India proposed the same thing in its agenda.

at the Conference. Apart from this, it is well known that spokesmen of the Indira Government had earlier openly advocated wage freeze as a way out of the situation.

This makes it clear that the T. U. movement cannot defend the interests of the working class unless every effort is made to build up the widest possible unity of trade unions in action, and a united front of all central organisations honest to the working class. The T. U. movement besides must combine with the middle classes, the agricultural workers and peasants, with the professional class and the employees to resist the policy of inflation and high taxation. The defence of working class standards, the fight against unemployment, for security of jobs, the defence of wage conditions, is directly linked now with resisting and defeating the economic policies of the Congress Government for initiating a broad democratic front of resistance against this policy. The CITU and other central T. U. organisations must take the initiative in this.

The possibilities of such struggles to defeat the offensive of the Government are there. This is evident from the fact that all the Central T. U. organisations called to the Conference of 20 and 21 May, including the INTUC unanimously rejected the Government's proposal of wage freeze, and a strike-free period. The huge mass struggles that we have conducted during the last one year have had their tremendous impact on all workers in the country. The leadership of all the trade union centres had naturally to take this into consideration. The result was that even the INTUC, which till recently was swearing by adjudication and arbitration, and opposed strikes, took up the position in the Conference demanding the scrapping of the present labour relations machinery of the Government.

The meeting of the representatives of the major trade union centres and Federations held on the May 18 and 19, just before the Government's labour conference, unanimously adopted a declaration rejecting the Government's proposals and putting forward an eight-point programme to get the country out of the morass of deepening economic crisis.

This entire programme is :—

1) Amendment of the Constitution with a view to eliminating the Right to property from the Fundamental Rights so as to expedite implementation of the Directive Principles.

2) Elimination of monopoly capital by nationalisation without compensation.

3) Genuine land reforms in the interests of the peasants and agricultural labourers.

4) A wage policy providing for raising real wages. A national need-based minimum wage with automatic linking of D. A. providing full neutralisation against changes in cost of living at all levels of wages and on this basis complete overhauling of the wage structure.

5) Provision of jobs for all able-bodied adults and in the interim period unemployment relief. Immediate permanent take-over by the Government of all closed units or those threatened with closure. Stoppage of any so-called labour saving devices as lead to retrenchment or freezing of the growth of employment.

6) Public control of all commodities which constitute necessities of life with a view to supply at equitable prices,

7) Moratorium on foreign debts.

8) Change in the financial and industrial policy in order to free our economy from foreign influences or dictates.

It is noteworthy that the General Secretary of the INTUC, which was not represented at the meeting of the trade union centres stated at the Labour Conference that his organisation agreed with this declaration on all but one point. And that was on the question of determining the bargaining agent by secret ballot.

Our organisation presented a note and initiated the discussion at this conference. Although all the proposals made by our organisation were not accepted this declaration is a sufficient basis for rallying the broad masses of workers round it and for bringing about united actions against the policies of Government.

I must point out that though the declaration had appealed to all Trade Unions to ensure for the achievement of these objectives 'through suitable forms of united trade union action',

there was great reluctance among the leaders of certain T. U. Centres to agree to such united action.

The responsibility is therefore, cast on us and our unions to take on this job in all earnestness. We must take the initiative in popularising and explaining the declaration to all workers, fraternise with them and thus create the conditions when resistance to joint actions on the part of any one can be overcome and massive joint trade union actions on local, regional, State-wide and all-India basis can be brought about.

In the background of the present economic situation, the working class and the T. U. movement must express itself on important issue that is already posed on the agenda viz. the growing misery of the people under the present Constitution, the protection that it gives to property, i. e. to exploiters, the free development of monopoly under it. The various court judgments nullifying legislation against vested interests have already exposed the Constitution as an instrument of domination of the upper class. Today, therefore, even the Congress Party is talking about changing the Constitution, Needless to say, the Congress Party has no intention of ending the domination of the Capitalist and Landlord classes. The TU movement and the CITU must express itself on the basic and fundamental changes that are required in the Constitution to ensure real protection of the workers and the democratic masses and discuss the issue with all progressive parties.

It is needless to say that the economic situation in W. Bengal must deserve special attention of our Council. Already large number of factories have closed down and the recessionary trend has exemplified in the cutting down of orders for the engineering industries from the railways, seriously affecting the employment situation in W. Bengal. W. Bengal's engineering industry being for a large part dependent on the orders from Railways, has suffered serious set-backs, the workers being the real sufferers. In other parts of the country, while the engineering industry did recover to some extent after the recession, W. Bengal engineering industry continues to be affected. The

textile mills in W. Bengal also have been facing a serious situation and a large number of them have been closed.

The situation is being further complicated by the provocative actions of the industrial managements and the Government of W. Bengal. The CRP and police terror in W. Bengal will continue to add to the intensification of the situation and W. Bengal's working class will constantly need the aid and support of the working class from other States.

Apart from this, the huge influx of refugees from Bangla Desh is going to complicate the entire situation, almost paralysing the economy and normal functioning. The burden of this crisis again will be thrown on the working class and it will have to wage a dogged battle to defend its interests.

Comrades,

The problem of Bangladesh is not only the problem of the millions of refugees that have poured into India. The heroic resistance that people are putting up against the inhuman and brutal attacks of the heavily armed military forces of W. Pakistan, and the just struggle that they are carrying on for a free Banglaesh must evoke the sympathy, support and solidarity of all workers and the people of our country.

But this is not enough. We must realise that the Government of India is treating it mainly as a refugee problem and has so far refused to recognise the Government of Swadhin Bangladesh. Such recognition alone will enable it to render effective material aid to the fighting people to continue the fight for freedom.

It is the duty of the T. U. movement to continuously mobilise our entire people for the demand for recognition of the Swadhin Bangladesh so that it becomes irresistible and the Government bows to the wishes of the people of our country.

Internationally, imperialism has during the last one year received severe set-back and the forces of freedom and socialism have made big advances. American imperialism's desperate bid to spread the war in Vietnam to the whole of Indo-China has met with greater and greater resistance of the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. A united front of these peoples

in the war against imperialism has come into being and it is scoring victories after victories. The resistance of the people of America against this dirty war is also growing.

Country after country in the imperialist camp is facing a deepening economic crisis and a cut-throat competition for markets is in full swing. U. S. economists are talking of the prospect of another crisis like that of 1929. The strike of the 5 lakh automobile workers of U.S.A which lasted 4 months is symptomatic of the crisis in U. S. A.

On the other hand, the economy of the Socialist countries has been registering continuous advance. The breath-taking advance of People's China standing on her own feet and mobilising its internal resources, has today to be reckoned with by every one concerned. The result is that a growing number of countries have established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and even U.S. imperialism is engaged now in a painful re-appraisal of its policy towards China.

Capitalism and imperialism are fast approaching their doom.

While mobilising the working class, in solidarity campaigns against imperialist attacks and in solidarity with the peoples struggling for freedom, let us realise that objectively conditions are favourable for our movement inside our country.

#### C.I.T.U. ORGANISATION AND Its ACTIVITIES

Comrades,

Before closing my Report, it is my duty to put before you an account of the activities of our organisation during the last one year both at the Centre and at the State levels.

Immediately after the foundation conference of the CITU the General Council met in Calcutta on 31st May, 1970 and chalked out a programme of action to implement the decisions of the Conference.

The General Council decided to establish a Centre in Calcutta and entrusted the office-bearers with the responsibility of making suitable arrangements for it. The office-bearers were able to procure accommodation for the office in a centrally

located area in Calcutta and arrangements for staff was made in co-operation with the W. Bengal Committee of the CITU.

Since the last General Council meeting, the office bearers met 7 times and took appropriate decisions to guide the activities of the CITU. Though it was not possible for all the office-bearers to attend these meetings, members available at Calcutta had to take the major responsibility in this regard.

The Centre issued 20 press statements from time to time on issues facing the working class, and clarified CITU's position. Twenty-two circulars were issued by the Centre to guide and co-ordinate the activities of the CITU unions.

The Central Office has been able to represent several outstanding grievances of workers to the Central authorities during the last year. This was done particularly in connection with railways, coal mines, port and dock, seamen, steel industry, etc. which come within the jurisdiction of the Central Government. The Centre has also submitted memoranda to Government authorities exposing their anti-working class policies, on various questions. The memorandum on interim relief to the Third Pay Commission and on Unemployment situation in W. Bengal are important among them.

The CITU office bearers have been visiting various centres and guiding the activities of the unions. Leading comrades from Centre have been sent from time to time to attend the State Committee meetings.

The Centre has published the proceedings of the CITU foundation Conference and the Jaipur meeting of the Working Committee. It has also brought out a booklet on railway T.U. movement in English and Hindi.

The Centre considered the situation in Rourkela and felt the need to assist the local comrades in developing movement in the steel plant there. Accordingly, Comrade Lakshmidhar Biswal, member, General Council, was sent there to organise a union of Steel workers in Rourkela. A union has already been formed there and is awaiting registration. CITU centre has also taken steps to form a union of steel workers in Bhilai, including Rajhara and Nandini mines under the

Hindustan Steel Limited. Recently a conference of the Hindustan Steel Employees' Union, Bhilai, was held and elected Com. P. Ramamurti as President.

### CITU CONSTITUTION

The Draft Constitution submitted before the All-India Trade Union Conference was not found suitable by the delegates as it contained many of the defects of the former AITUC Constitution. The Conference therefore decided that the General Council should be authorised to adopt a new Constitution of the CITU.

The last meeting of the General Council had authorised the Working Committee to adopt the Constitution. It further decided that the office-bearers should function as a Drafting Committee for the purpose.

The office bearers prepared a draft which was placed before the Working Committee meeting held at Jaipur in October last. The draft emphasised the democratic functioning of trade unions, it guaranteed adequate representation to minorities at all levels through system of voting by proportionate representation and provided for adequate functioning of State Committees which had become formal bodies in the AITUC. The Constitution further laid down clear-cut objectives of the CITU. The Working Committee discussed in great detail the provisions of the Constitution and adopted it with some amendments. Com B. T. Ranadive in his prepared speech explained the provisions of the Constitution and emphasised the need for a break from the past AITUC practices in the matter of formal functioning of unions. The Central office has brought out English and Hindi editions of the Constitution in a booklet form.

The last General Council meeting decided to take immediate steps to form State Committees to carry out CITU activities in different States.

In W. Bengal overwhelming majority of the former AITUC State Committee members had joined the CITU. It was therefore, decided to re-organise the Committee and recons-

stitute it, as a CITU State Committee. In U. P., and Karnataka, rival State Committees were already existing prior to the All-India Trade Union Conference while in Goa the entire State Council of the AITUC had joined the CITU. In Kerala, a State Committee was elected by the State Conference held at Calicut on May 9-10. It was decided that these Committees should be authorised to function as the State units of CITU.

In Tamilnadu, the General Council members together with some leading comrades from the State were to constitute an interim State Committee and Com. R. Umanath was entrusted with the responsibility to constitute such a committee within a month. Similar responsibilities were given to Comrade N. Prasad Rao, S. Y. Kolhatkar and Mohan Punamia to form Committees in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan respectively.

According to the decision new Committees had been formed or earlier re-organised in the States. Committees were also formed in Punjab, Assam, Bihar, Tripura and Delhi.

Following the decision of the General Council to hold the State Conferences before the end of December 1970, Conferences were held in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra, Bihar, Karnataka and U.P. Com. B.T. Ranadive attended the conferences of Maharashtra, Andhra, Bihar and U. P. while Com. P. Ramamurti of Karnataka and Rajasthan, on behalf of the Centre and guided their deliberations.

In Kerala, since the State Conference was held just on the eve of the All India Trade Union Conference no new Conference was held in that State. In W. Bengal, the State Committee earlier decided to hold the Conference in Asansol-Durgapur Raniganj belt in November 1970. However due to subsequent developments in the region and overall situation in the State, it was decided by the State Working Committee to postpone the Conference. In a recent meeting it has decided to hold the State Conference in the middle of September this year.

In Tamilnadu, the State Conference was fixed in the last week of December 1970. However due to Municipal elections

and later on, mid-term elections, it had to be deferred. The Conference has now fixed up for middle of July next.

By and large, the State Conferences were good rallying points of CITU Cadres. Most of the delegates' sessions were well planned and written reports were prepared which clearly indicated the progress made by the CITU in these States. In all the Conferences new committees were elected to guide the activities of the CITU in these States. Another welcoming feature of these Conferences was that some non-CITU unions also participated in them as observers.

The Assam State Committee has now decided to hold the State Conference in the last week of June. State Committees in Goa, Punjab and Delhi have not yet fixed any dates so far. It is necessary to hold the State Conferences in the States where they have not yet been held so far in order to elect properly constituted committees in these States as per decision of the General Council.

The last General Council called upon all the affiliated unions to observe Unity of Action week from 13th to 19th July, 1970 to popularise the decisions of the Foundation Conference of the CITU. It was decided to sell in thousands copies of resolution on Unity of Action and to organise sale of CITU flags during the week. Half of the sale value of the flags was to be remitted to the Centre while the balance was to be kept for the activities in the State.

The General Council decided to observe one day during the week as Vietnam Day. In view of the brutal repression let loose by the Government of W. Bengal and Kerala, on the people of these States the CITU Centre asked all the unions to observe July 17 as Bengal-Kerala Day during the Unity of Action week to express solidarity with the working class and democratic movements in these two States.

In all the major industrial centres, where CITU has unions the day was observed and the programme of united action drawn by the Calcutta Conference was popularised. Sale of flags was also organised and the Resolution of the Conference on the United Action of the working class was circulated on a wide scale.

The working Committee meeting held at Jaipur decided to observe Durgapur Day on November 1, 1970 all over India. It was further decided that every union should contribute to the Durgapur Fund and money should be remitted to the CITU Centre directly. It was agreed that pamphlet should be brought out as soon as possible.

Five State Committees have taken steps to publish pamphlets on Durgapur. The W. Bengal State Committee brought out booklets in English (3000), Bengali (20,000), and Hindi (5,000). The other State Committees which published the booklets in regional languages are Kerala (5,000), Tamilnadu (3,000), Andhra Pradesh (1,000) and U.P. (2000).

The Durgapur Day was observed all over India by the CITU Unions by holding public rallies and demonstrations and issuing leaflets. The total collection of Durgapur Fund by the CITU unions till the end of May 1971 stood at Rs. 33,783.80.

In W. Bengal, the State Committee organised a special sale of coupons of 50 paise each to popularise the campaign and collect funds from the workers. The total sale of such coupons amounted to Rs. 8,908.50. Besides, the State Committee contributed Rs. 1,000/- from its fund. Two hundred and twenty unions in the State contributed a total sum of Rs. 11,317.51 as per records of the State Committee.

In addition to this, some unions in groups deposited Rs. 1,885.43 with the State Committee. The total collections of the W. Bengal Committee amounted to Rs. 23,131.44.

Thirteen unions in W. Bengal contributed Rs. 1,126/- directly to CITU making a total collection on account of Durgapur Fund Rs. 24,257.44.

Unions in Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Assam, and Maharashtra have done well. In Goa, the unions for the first time arranged box collection in the State and got good response from the workers. Thirty unions from Andhra paid contributions while all the CITU unions in Assam gave donation to Durgapur Fund. Four non-CITU unions from Jammu Kashmir contributed Rs. 50.00.

On a rough estimate nearly 700 unions affiliated to CITU have paid contributions to the Durgapur Fund.

The following statement gives in a nutshell the efforts made in various States for the Durgapur Fund :

Name of the State	Total amount	
	Rs.	P.
Kerala	1,017.15	
Andhra	1,507.65	
Rajasthan	300.00	
Karnatak	631.35	
Tamilnadu	291.65	
Haryana	30.00	
<b>Assam</b>	<b>925.00</b>	
Bihar	307.44	
Punjab	353.00	
Tripura	200.00	
Maharashtra	980.00	
U.P.	290.00	
M.P.	151.00	
Goa	1,126.00	
Orissa	79.60	
W. Bengal (directly paid)	24,643.96	
J. & K.	50.00	
The amount directly paid to Durgapur Co-ordination Committee by Bhilai Steel workers		900.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>Rs. 33,783.80</b>

The President, General Trade Union Confederation of Rumania in the middle of January last extended invitation to the CITU to send a representative as a fraternal delegate to attend their Sixth Congress to be held in Bucharest on March 23-27, 1971. The office-bearers nominated Com. Kamal Sarkar, Treasurer of CITU, to participate in the Congress after consulting the Working Committee members. We could utilise this opportunity to develop fraternal relations between the CITU and GTUCR. It was also possible to discuss with various other fraternal delegates attending the Congress and explain them the position of the CITU. The office-bearers

heard the Report of Com. Kamal Sarker and expressed their appreciation at the works done by him during his Romanian tour.

The need for the CITU journal has been strongly felt of late and many unions and State Committees had suggested to the centre that it should be brought out as early as possible. The Working Committee meeting at Jaipur therefore decided to publish the journal at an early date. The Centre however could not take immediate steps to implement the decision due to some technical difficulties. The Centre is now in a position to publish a monthly journal and application for the declaration of the title "The Working Class" has been submitted. The Registrar of newspapers has granted the title to us and the priority will be given to bring out the journal at an early date.

Comrades,

We can be justly proud of our achievements since our organisation was formed one year ago.

We stand for the unity of the T.U movement. Despite that we had to split away from the AITUC, because the dominant leadership of the AITUC with the office in its hands managed to keep out the fighting and militant unions, work up a fake majority and with that imposed the line of class collaboration and disruption, on the working class.

Our decision to found the CITU has proved correct. During the last one year, the CITU has become the rallying point of fighting and militant workers.

Our line of carrying forward the class struggle and fighting the line of class collaboration has won many victories, while the line of the class collaborators has suffered defeat after defeat. The very fact that at the last conference of T. U representatives, all of them had to repudiate the recommendations of the National Commission on Labour, to which some of them had been earlier parties proved this.

The fact that the AITUC, UTUC, HMS, and HMP today agree in principle with the method of recognition of unions by means of secret ballot and association of unions with sizeable minorities with the bargaining agent in principle is a further vindication of our stand.

The struggle for united action that our comrades have carried on in many States and Centres had compelled many of them including the INTUC unions to come into common and united struggles.

With still greater persistence in this line, with proper and fraternal approach to the rank and file of all unions who are after all our class brothers, and with the prospect of further offensive by the employers in the offing, our line of unity and struggle is bound to win greater victories.

With a total membership of over a million fighting workers we are looked upon by our enemies as the most formidable force to reckon with, and by the common mass of workers even belonging to other T.U. Centres as the most doughty and uncompromising defenders of their interests.

Let us carry forward these traditions, overcome weaknesses and obstacles and we will march forward towards the creation of the most powerful united All-India trade union centre.

**FORWARD TO UNITED STRUGGLES AT ALL LEVELS !  
FORWARD TO UNITY OF THE INDIAN WORKING  
CLASS !**

**FORWARD TO UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS  
WITH PEASANTS, AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AND  
ALL TOILING MASSES !**

**CITU ZINDABAD !!!**

# RESOLUTIONS

## I. ON MARTYRS

The General Council of CITU pays its homage to the martyrs who laid down their lives heroically during the last one year for the cause of the toiling masses.

This meeting strongly condemns the heinous and planned attacks perpetrated by ruling classes with the help of police, CRP, naxalities and anti-social gangsters to kill the leaders and workers of trade unions, political parties and democratic movements. In West Bengal alone hundreds of trusted leaders and workers were brutally murdered by these semi-fascist marauders during the last one year.

While cherishing the memory of these valiant comrades the meeting takes a solemn pledge to carry forward with firm determination the task left unfinished by them.

The meeting calls upon the working class and other section of the people of India to resolutely face the challenge of reactionary forces and take effective steps to defeat their conspiracy against the trade union and democratic movement.

## 2. ON BANGLA DESH

The General Council of the CITU sends its warm fraternal greetings to the gallant freedom fighters of Bangladesh and extends its warm support to the heroic people in their struggle for democracy and independence against the all-out offensive of the military junta of Pakistan.

This struggle has been deliberately imposed on the people of Bangladesh who have been demanding ever since the army usurped power in 1958, democratic freedom and transfer of power to a representative Government elected by the people.

They also demanded along with the people of other parts of Pakistan autonomy for all the States within the Federal structure of Pakistan. The military regime tried to submerge the rising revolt of the entire people of Pakistan in blood. When this attempt utterly failed and it was no more possible to suppress the people, Yahya Khan, who succeeded Ayub Khan, had to concede the demand for elections. The Awami League secured absolute majority in the elections and thus got the mandate from the people to form a representative Government. But the military regime trampled upon the verdict of the people, and from the night of 25th March 1971 let loose the army marauders to attack the people. The army immediately resorted to mass killing and wanton destruction of properties in towns and villages. In Dacca city alone, tens of thousands were killed during the first two days of the attack. Unarmed people including women and children were indiscriminately slaughtered all over Bangladesh. Many villages were completely burned and destroyed. The army ultimately occupied all the vantage positions and lakhs of people were butchered by them. Millions were uprooted from towns and villages, and millions trekked long distance and crossed into India.

The General Council of CITU takes a serious note of this situation which compelled the people of Bangladesh to resist this onslaught with whatever they could lay their hands on. A section of Bengal Regiment, Eastern Pakistan Rifles and Police joined the people in their resistance struggle. The workers, kisans and students, employees came in thousands and gave effective resistance to Pakistan Army. It was in the midst of this resistance struggle that independence was declared in Bangladesh and the Awami league formed a sovereign Government. The struggle is still continuing and all parties and groups are uniting together to achieve victory. All available informations indicate that it is going to be a prolonged and arduous struggle. The General Council of CITU records its strong condemnation the Army junta of West Pakistan, who have surpassed all known limits of brutalities and demands immediate withdrawal of Pak Army from Bangladesh.

The Army Junta of Pakistan has organised the die-hard communal and anti-social elements and are encouraging them in committing loot and arson in order to create communal conflict, to create confusion and disruption in the great unity of the fighting people of Bangladesh. They are trying to depict the struggle of the people of Bangladesh as a fight against the people of W. Pakistan. This meeting strongly condemns this deliberate attempt to confuse the people of W. Pakistan, who are also victims of the same Army Rule.

The General Council of CITU is confident that despite all difficulties, the growing unity of workers, kisans, students, employees and democratic people of Bangladesh and their increasing participation in the resistance struggle, will finally defeat the autocratic army clique and establish before the world the glorious victory of the people of Bangladesh.

This meeting takes serious note of the docile attitude of the Government. of India in the matter of giving recognition to the Government. of Bangladesh. The large number of people who have already come over to India have taken shelter in open places without any protection from sun and rain and thousands of them have already perished due to exhaustion, hunger and disease. The required relief to these people cannot be arranged by merely collecting donations from the people of India who are already impoverished. The Government has still not arranged for proper reliefs. The provisions made in the Indian budget for relief to Bangladesh people is just token. The Government of India is paying lip service to the struggle while making no effective arrangement to ameliorate the sufferings of Bangladesh people. The General Council of CITU condemns the attitude of Government of India and demands immediate recognition to Bangladesh Government, all possible assistance including arms to the freedom fighters and effective arrangement of relief to the people of Bangladesh who have crossed over to India.

The struggle of the people of Bangladesh will have far-

reaching consequences for democrats and fighters for freedom everywhere. Their struggle will inspire the Indian people who value democracy and are against imperialism. The General Council of CITU, therefore, calls upon the Indian working class to support the struggle of the people of Bangladesh by organising massive solidarity actions and giving donations to BANGLADESH SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE ( 80, Acharya Jagadish Bose Road, Calcutta-14.) in aid of Bangladesh people. This meeting further calls upon the working class of India to organise massive protest demonstrations in order to force Government of India to recognise the Government of Bangladesh and to give all material help including arms to the people of Bangladesh.

This meeting wholeheartedly endorses the call issued by joint conference of the Central Trade Union organisations and calls upon the entire working class of India to realise their responsibility in defending the cause of democracy and freedom in Bangladesh and observe Bangladesh Solidarity day on the 19th June, 1971.

### **3. The Centenary Of The Great Paris Commune**

The Genral Council of the CITU pays homage to the proletarian heroes—the Communards of Paris who laid down their lives, fighting a hundred years ago for the cause of the world proletariat. Paris Commune is the first practical realisation of the workers' state. Unlike all previous revolutions, for the first time in the history state power was transferred not from one exploiting class to another but from all the exploiting classes to the exploited. It salutes the memory of the great Paris Commune, the first state of the working class in history whose Centenary has just been celebrated all over the world.

The abortive and unsuccessful war with Germany, the national humiliation and betrayal at the hands of the bourgeoisie, the pinching poverty of the working class, the unemployment among the youth, the ruin of the lower middle classes, the hatred against the exploitng upper strata—all had led to the

war cry of Viva la Commune on the dawn of the 18th of March, 1871

The Commune revealed to the working class all over the world the betraying role of the capitalist class and the nature of its exploitation. It proved once again the historic observation of Marx that the state is a coercive machinery and is used by the ruling class to suppress the desires and aspirations of the ruled. It taught that without revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist Government and smashing of bourgeois state apparatus, there could be no emancipation of the working class. Thus, the Commune which was the first attempt for the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers became immortal and its history has inspired and continues to inspire the international working class movement throughout the world.

The Commune raised the banner of proletarian internationalism. The Hungarian, Belgian, Polish and the Russian workers participated in the struggle to defend the sacred interests of Communards in Paris. Thus, the foundation of the Commune and its actions built a new historic landmark in the international working class movement.

But the Paris Commune committed some lapses because of the immaturity of its participants. As Lenin wrote, "The class-conscious proletariat (and only more or less class-consciousness at that) the members of the International were in minority. The majority consisted of representatives of petty-bourgeois democracy." Moreover the Commune failed to establish union with peasantry without whose help a real triumph was impossible. The Communards did not realize that without taking possession of the economic levers the proletarian state cannot function. And lastly, the Communards failed to build its own military strength.

Thus, while the Communards perished in an uneven battle, the succeeding generations came to learn certain valuable truths. These are, that the slightest vacillation, indecision or liberalism would have a disastrous effect upon the working class fighting against the exploiters. Imbued with the spirit

of the Communards and learning from experience of the Paris Commune the proletariat all over the world drew lessons and led successful revolutions in Russia, China and several other countries, thus liberating one third of humanity from the rule of capital. The Indian working class also has drawn immense encouragement from the heroism of the Communards in Paris.

The Indian working class who has been fighting against the repression of the Bourgeois-Landlord regime is also facing a similar offensive from the ruling classes and their party, the Congress. The 24 years' rule of the Congress led the country to a horrid condition of massive unemployment, soaring privation and humiliation on the part of the people. Thousands of workers have been thrown out of employment under various pretexts, depriving them of their only source of livelihood. Automation and other job-saving devices are constantly haunting the working class. In this way, the capitalists are trying to shift all burdens of the economic crisis upon the shoulders of the working people. And whenever the workers, the peasants or other sections of the people launch democratic struggle against such repressive policies of the Government, capitalists and the landlords, the ruling class takes full use of the apparatus of repression in the stock which consists of the army, the police and other organs of violence.

This meeting while congratulating the working class of India on their massive struggles and magnificent victories in spite of these brutal attacks let loose by this Government, calls upon them to organise these struggles with greater determination and carry forward the glorious heritage of the Paris Commune. The task of the working class is not confined to economic struggles, but they have to play increasing role in political struggles. The working class should be prepared to lead the struggle against capital and, in doing so, they must remember that the peasantry would be their most faithful ally. So the CITU calls upon the working class of India to forge ahead in building revolutionary alliance of the working class and peasantry to overthrow the Bourgeois-Landlord regime.

#### 4. On West Bengal

The General Council of the CITU notes with grave concern the further deterioration of the situation in West Bengal since its last Working Committee meeting. The State is now not under the President's rule. The politics of murder to behead the democratic movement that was resorted to by the Central Government as a matter of State policy during the President's rule, is being furiously pursued even now, after the mid-term election in March which took place under an abnormal condition of terror and repression. Secret circuiars of Central Intelligence Department and the activitics of a Special Intelligence Wing under the Prime Minister have proved this beyond doubt. The entire state machinery was used at the behest of Central Government and the ruling Congress to commit pre-planned murder, massive arrests and wide campaign of vilification against the democratic forces under the cover of anti-Communism, to change the election results in their favour. In this heinous game, the ruling Congress was encouraged and helped by some of the parties who were partners of the previous United Front Government but who subsequently betrayed. The General Council notes with pride that despite this reign of terror and betrayal, the democratic people of West Bengal have braved courageously the attacks of the ruling classes and gave verdict against the ruling party and the betrayers, though the ruling Congress achieved a sweeping victory in other States in Lok Sabha elections.

Frightened at the result of the mid-term poll in West Bengal both in the Assembly and the Parliamentary seats, the elementary principle of parliamentary democracy to call the first party to form the Government was abandoned by the Governor and as a result of the conspiracy a reactionary Congress-Muslim League Ministry headed by traitor Ajoy Mukherjee and supported by the parties of betrayers was foisted on the people. This action has contributed greatly to the further worsening of the situation.

Since the installation of the new ministry the offensive on the working class, peasantry and other democratic masses have mounted further and more brutal semi-fascistic methods are being applied with the help of Army, CRP, CISF, State Police, and other armed forces. The stationing of the punitive forces of CRP and the Army has become a permanent feature of the West Bengal administration. Far more deeper and heinous conspiracies are hatched for murdering leaders and cadres of the opposition political parties, of the working class and democratic movements. Anti-socials, Naxalites, Congress, Chhatra Parishad and other elements are being freely used for this purpose. All over West Bengal hooligan gangs organised by the Government are spearheading the attacks on the leaders and organisers of the democratic movement and also against the people in general. Encouraged fully by the Central Government, further strengthened with the CRP, military and other armed forces and the draconic black acts like PV Act, and Suppression of Terrorist Activities Act of 1932, the present Government has started virtually an undeclared war against the people and particularly its vanguard. Already the situation has reached such a stage where not only the leaders and cadres of the democratic mass movements and opposition parties are being openly murdered but also the candidates for mid-term and bye-elections were killed. The people of West Bengal now know that the murders of Hemanta Basu and other candidates were engineered by the goonda gangs organised by the Congress.

The figure of murders of the leaders and cadres of democratic movements and CPI (M) has reached above 300 since the fall of UF Government (by 31st, May from 17th, March 1970). It is daily increasing. Warrants of arrests have already surpassed one lakh. Arrests, tortures in the name of "combing operation" have become a regular feature. But all these have failed to break the high morale of the struggling masses. That is why the Central Government under Smt. Indira Gandhi, strengthened in Lok Sabha with new big majority, has come forward to impose the hated PD Act in a new form through

an ordinance in order to start a new round of attacks on the democratic forces of West Bengal and other parts of India.

The nature of repression and the necessity of such black Acts for the ruling class should be judged also in the context of the new General and Railway budgets placed before the Parliament and the situation developed after the declaration of independence of the people of Bangladesh and the huge influx of evacuees. When price of food and cost of living are rising high, when the closures, lock-outs and retrenchments are on the increase, the Railway and General Budget by placing heavy burden of taxation on the common people have further boosted up the price level causing terrible hardship to them. It is on the crest of this, the impact of the freedom struggle of Bangladesh and the huge influx of evacuees have greatly complicated and aggravated the economic and political situation of West Bengal and added a new significance to it. It has placed a new special responsibility of the working class and the people of West Bengal along with the people of India to stand in solidarity with the freedom fighters of Bangladesh.

When the people of Bangladesh are fighting for their independence against the military rulers of Pakistan—the people of West Bengal who are fighting for defence of their democratic rights and economic gains and resisting the semi-fascist repression let loose by the Government of capitalist landlord classes have also taken up the cause of the people of Bangladesh with equal vigour. The struggles of the people of our whole country, are the fight for democracy against onslaughts of capitalist-landlord classes. The people of West Bengal are now acting as the vanguard in this fight. That is why a campaign against brutal repression and solidarity actions in support of the fighting masses of West Bengal should be developed as an all-India campaign. The anti-democratic semi-fascistic methods employed by the Indira Government should be thoroughly exposed, and defeated.

The General Council of the CITU urges upon the working class and the democratic people of India to organise thorough exposures of the anti-democratic character of the Indira Government and to develop an united movement in support

and solidarity with the struggles of the working class and people of West Bengal through meetings, demonstration, posters, handbills and various other methods.

The Council also appeals to all other Central T.U.s and mass organisations to come forward to develop this united movement and calls upon all to raise demands everywhere to stop the politics of murder and semi-fascist method of repression, to withdraw army, C. R. P. and C. I. S. F. to release all arrested in connection with democratic movements and to withdraw all warrants without delay in West Bengal, to withdraw all black Acts like P. V. A. Acts, P. D. Act. etc.

### **5. On the Labour Conference and United Struggle against Government's Policy.**

The General Council is happy to note that the representatives of all the Trade Union Centres who attended the Labour Conference convened by the Government of India on the 20th and 21st May rejected the proposals of the Prime Minister and the Government of India to link wage with increase in productivity and for a strife-free period. They gave a rebuff to the slander that price increases are due to loss of production and due to mandays lost and sharply pointed out that the recession, closure of factories and working of factories under capacity, which are the common features in the industrial sector are the direct result of the Government of India's basic policies and workers can in no way be held responsible. Further, the everrising price increases are due to the fiscal policies of inflationary finance and high taxation on commodities.

In the meeting of the representatives of the CITU, AITUC, HMS and other organisations our representative initiated the discussions in the conference by presenting a case on the problems facing the working class and the Trade Union movement. However our proposals were not accepted in full.

The General Council welcomes the declaration of the meeting of the representatives of the CITU, AITUC, HMS and

other Federations, held on the 18th and 19th May, 1971. It is firmly of the opinion that the 8-point programme of the declaration is a firm base around which the working class can be mobilised.

The General Council endorses the appeal in the declaration for developing united action on the basis of the programme and the draft.

The budget of the Government which had subsequently been placed by the Government clearly indicates that the Government has no intention of departing from its basic policies of robbing the people by inflationary financing and excise duties, it shows that the Government has no intention of attacking the monopolists, both foreign and Indian. The fact that the Government has sent a team to the Aid India Consortium to plead for an annual aid of Rs.900 crores for the next three years shows that it has no intention of relaxing its dependence on foreign loans and collaboration with foreign monopolists despite the bitter experience of such policies since independence.

It is clear that the working class and the common people will have to face increasing attack of high prices, increased work load, retrenchment and unemployment.

It has, therefore, become, urgent to fight unitedly against these policies. United trade union action, on the widest scale is absolutely essential to get these policies reversed.

The CITU, therefore calls upon all the trade union centres and trade unions to immediately bring out such united actions on local, regional, state-wide and all-India level.

Experience has amply demonstrated that such united actions are not only possible, but they have compelled the Government and employers to concede the demands of the workers.

The General Council calls upon all its affiliated trade unions and members, to take the initiative and make fraternal approaches to other trade unions and their members, popularise the programme of the declaration, independently mobilise the workers and bring about united trade union action

on the basis of the programme of the declaration and against every attack on the working class standards.

The General Council is confident that in the coming months, the working class will by such united trade union action, stop the offensive that has already been started by the budget.

## 6. On Employees' Family Pension Scheme

The General Council of the CITU, after having considered the Employees' Family Pension Scheme, is of the opinion that will not be beneficial to the workers if implemented in its present form.

The family pension offered by the scheme to the family of a worker after his death while in service, is a paltry amount and several restrictions have been imposed for obtaining the pension. The quantum is gradually brought down if the worker joins the scheme after 25 years of age. If a worker dies before reaching 60 years and is not in service due to reasons beyond his control, his family will not get any pension whatsoever. The definition of a family does not include parents or other old dependents of a worker which will deprive such dependents of a bachelor or an unmarried woman of any benefits. This has made mockery of the entire concept of family pension.

Further, the scheme is meaningless for the workers who are not assured of any job security. With increasing offensive of retrenchment, victimisation, closure and so-called voluntary retirement, tens of thousands of workers are losing their jobs every day. With non-availability of alternate sources of employment, such workers lose their only source of livelihood and their families are converted into destitutes. This section of workers will be forced to leave the scheme and accept the so-called withdrawal benefit, which is below the contributions transferred to the family pension fund from the Provident Fund account. Many employees have to retire at the age of 58 as per rules, but they are denied full retirement benefit under the scheme. Even if the worker completes 60 years of age and retires, the retirement benefit he would receive is far smaller

than the contributions made from his Provident Fund account.

The employers have been misappropriating the Provident Fund contribution of workers and the Government has failed to take any action against such defaulting employers. The total misappropriated amount has reached the colossal figure of Rs. 15 crores. The workers became victims of these nefarious acts and were denied their Provident Fund payments. There is every likelihood of such malpractices being repeated and the families of workers who die while in service being denied the benefit if the employer misappropriates the fund.

The top-heavy administration of the Provident Fund at present causes inordinate delay in payment of P. F. to the workers. The families of workers will have to repeatedly approach the P.F. authorities every month to obtain the paltry amount of illusory pension,

Though the Government has given opinion for workers who were members of the existing P. F. Scheme on last March 1971 to join the scheme, it is made compulsory for workers who would join service after 1st March 1971. The CITU strongly condemns the compulsion imposed by the Government and demands that the compulsion be withdrawn forthwith.

1) The contribution of the employers and the Government to the pension fund should be increased in order to give increased benefits to the workers.

2) In the case of loss of job of a worker on any ground, the employer should be forced to pay the contribution of both the worker and the employer till the worker gets an alternative job, so that the continuity of his membership of the family pension fund is ensured. The family of such worker should be entitled to benefit in the event of his death while in search of alternative employment.

3) Removal of restrictions of two year limit and other restrictions for entitlement of Family Pension and increased quantum of pension.

4) The family should include parents and other old dependents for the purposes of pension benefits.

5) Non-contributory family pension scheme for workers

drawing less than Rs. 150-per month.

6) The scheme should be voluntary in character.

7) Stringent action against employers defalcating workers' contributions by realising the amount through attachment of the property of such employers, and imprisonment of the guilty.

8) In case of retirement of worker, he should be paid the entire amount of contribution with interest, instead of the lump sum payment offered by the scheme.

9) Increase in rates of interest on the contribution to the Family Pension Fund.

The General Council calls upon the workers not to opt for the scheme in its present form, launch a countrywide movement to force the Government to scrap the present scheme and formulate a new comprehensive scheme which will ensure adequate family pension to the workers without its existing restriction and irritations.

The General Council calls upon all the Central T. U. organisations to join their hands in opposing the scheme and in compelling the Government to draft a new scheme in the light of the suggestions made above.

## **7. On Greetings To Kota Workers**

This meeting of the General Council of the C. I. T. U. conveys its warm greetings to the 3,000 brave workers of J. K. Synthetics Factory of Kota, Rajasthan, who resorted to a stay-in strike in support of their demand for 40 per cent bonus and faced the police shootings rather than withdraw when the management declared a lockout. In this cowardly murderous attack by the Rajasthan police, sixteen workers lost their lives. The General Council pays its homage to these martyrs.

The solidarity strike and hartal in Kota and strike of workers in Jaipur and other centres of Rajasthan ultimately compelled the State Government to intervene and re-open the factory after a partial settlement of demands of the workers.

But the Government still continues the reign of terror. Important leaders and workers of CITU including Com. P. N. Dandha, Joint Secretary of Rajasthan State Committee are in custody under false charges of murder, arson and looting. To assuage the strong feeling of the workers, the Government has been compelled to institute a judicial enquiry into the brutal killing of the workers but hypocritically enough, the leaders are still being kept in prison.

The CITU General Council demands immediate release of all the workers and leaders and withdrawal of charges, punishment of the policemen responsible for killing the workers, and fulfilment of the demands of the workers.

### **8. On Maintenance of Internal Security Bill**

This meeting of the General Council of the CITU strongly condemns the Indira Gandhi Government for promulgation of the black ordinance providing for detention without trial which is now being rushed through the Parliament in the shape of Maintenance of Internal Security Bill to be permanently put on the Statute Book. Despite talk of Socialism, Indira Gandhi Government had always been conspiring to enact such a piece of black legislation. Before the mid-term poll the Central Government tried its level best to enact such a black legislation, but did not succeed for its position of being a minority Government. Now having won a majority in the Lok Sabha it has become bold enough to go ahead, in spite of all promises during the recent mid-term elections.

It is by now well known to the people of India that its previous counter-part, the P. D. Act, was only used to crush the democratic opposition parties. With same purpose they are going ahead with this Black Bill.

The General Council of CITU notes with grave concern that the black Bill is already in operation against the democratic opposition parties and to browbeat the people of religious minority groups.

Over a number of years Government has added several Black

Acts in its armoury of repression, namely, Essential services Maintenance Act, P. V. A. Act, Suppression of Terrorists Outrages Activities Act 1934, Prevention of Unlawful Activities Act, They have raised and deployed large bands of CISF, CRP etc. This Black Bill is another big step forward in the direction of establishment of a terroristic police regime.

The General Council of CITU calls upon all Trade Unions and democratic organisations and forces to raise a mighty voice of protest in order to compel the Government of India to withdraw this Black Bill.

### **9. On the Delay in Submission of the Report of the Third Pay Commission**

The General Council of the C I T U views with grave concern the latest pronouncement of the Government of India to the effect that the report of the Third Pay Commission for Central Government employees would not be ready by this year. This amounts to a clear violation of the earlier assurances by the Government that all steps would be taken to see that the report is completed and submitted by this year.

The Council is of the opinion that the present delay must be viewed in the context of the Government's recent conduct in this regard. Though, as per the recommendations of the Gajendragadkar Commission, the appointment of the Third Pay Commission was due in 1969 itself, the Government did not do so, and it was only after a prolonged agitation and struggle that the Commission itself was appointed. After appointment, there was again delay in declaring even the paltry sum of interim relief. Now, it is obvious that there will be much delay in submitting the final report. Even after submission the Government would take their own time to announce their decision.

The delay hitherto, in the context of continued spiralling of prices, has almost rendered even the paltry sum of interim relief, infructuous. The Council is of the opinion that in the context of the sudden and all-round spurt in prices consequent

to the taxation proposals made in the Central budget, coupled with the prospects of further price rise that would result from the deficit financing that is proposed to be resorted to, the continued delay in completion of the work of the Third Pay Commission, poses a serious threat of further depression in the real wages of the Central Government employees to an alarming extent.

The General Council considers that, in the circumstances the stand of the Central Government employees, for the enforcement of their demands with retrospective effect from the date of appointment of the Third Pay Commission is most justified.

The Council reiterates its stand that the mechanism of the the Pay Commission and similar wage-fixing machinery, is nothing short of an instrument to enforce the Central Government's policy of wage freeze and attack on real wages.

The CITU General Council views with grave concern, the conspiracy of the Government of India directed against their basic demand for a need-based minimum wage. It is not for nothing that the Prime Minister of India of late, are repeatedly coming out with public pronouncements, advocating linking of wages with productivity, just at a time, when the demands of the Central Government employees for linking their minimum wage with the needs of their families, are pending before the Pay Commission. It is clear that the Government of India, by means of these pronouncements and by other means, is carrying on a virtual campaign, with a view to influence and indirectly compel the Pay Commission to reject the demand for need-based minimum wage under flimsy pretexts.

The General Council of the CITU, while condemning such nefarious conduct of the Government, demands that :

- 1) The demand for need-based minimum wage be conceded ;
- 2) The final report of the Third Pay Commission be submitted within 3 months.

The Council assures the Central Government employees of its wholehearted support to their just struggle, in any form they decide upon, to achieve these just demands.

## 10. On the Strike of Andhra Pradesh Government Employees and Workers

The General Council of the C. I. T. U. sends its warm greetings to the four lakh fifty thousand Andhra Pradesh N. G. Os, municipal and panchayat raj employees, Highways employees, teachers and others who went on a protracted strike for 56 days to win their just demands for interim relief on par with Central Government employees, H.R.A., C.C.A., Security of Service etc, and faithful implementation of previous agreements and pledges. This strike was sought to be suppressed by the State Congress Government by resorting to brutal repression. Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance was promulgated, lathi charges had become the order of the day, thousands had been arrested of whom several have been sentenced, thousands of temporary employees were dismissed and even unprovoked police firing was resorted to resulting in one Tirupati Devasthan bus driver and one N.G.O. being killed. The General Council condemns this brutal repression and demands judicial enquiry into the police firing in Tirupati causing these two deaths and liberal compensation to the bereaved families. The General Council pays its homage to the martyrs who fell in this police firing. This massive repression let loose on a democratic trade union struggle thoroughly exposes the anti-people character of the State Congress Government.

The General Council appreciates the unity and solidarity achieved by these employees and workers, overcoming general regional feelings and the indomitable spirit of resistance exhibited by them facing great privations and hardships caused by this protracted strike.

The Council notes with satisfaction that this strike won the sympathy and support of the public in general and the working class in particular, which was expressed in the State-wide hartal and general strike, on May 12th, an unprecedented action in the recent period.

The General Council hopes that the calling off of the

strike without any of the demands being conceded by the Government will not deter the determination of the workers and employees to fight for their just demands and that they would draw proper lessons from the experience of this strike and prepare for inevitable future struggles.

The General Council strongly condemns the repressive measures adopted by the Andhra Pradesh Government and demands that all temporary employees discharged should be reinstated, all criminal cases be withdrawn, wages and salaries for the strike period be paid and the main demands of the employees and workers be conceded.

## **II. On Maharashtra Recognition of Trade Unions and Prevention of Unfair Labour Practices Bill**

This meeting of the General Council of the CITU strongly condemns the Maharashtra Government for the enactment of the "Recognition of Trade Unions and Prevention of Unfair Labour Practices Bill," now awaiting the assent of the President of India.

The Bill while apparently laying down a procedure for recognition of Trade Unions through judicial process, actually provides for withdrawal of recognition of militant Trade Unions under the pretext of their association with an illegal strike or adoption by them of the so-called unfair labour practices which include among other things demonstration, dharnas inside the factory or in front of the residences of Managers or Labour Officers or employers. The Bill also provides for machinery to declare strikes illegal and unions abetting or associating with such strikes are to be held guilty of illegal acts. The Bill also provides that any person engaged in the so-called unfair labour practices can be sentenced to three years imprisonment and fine.

The Bill while making it obligatory for the trade unions to hold secret ballots before going on a strike, refuses to provide for a secret ballot for recognition of trade unions.

Thus it is clear that the Congress Government of Maha-

rashtra rushed through this Bill in both the Houses of Legislature with the objective of crushing the militant T. U. movement and to foster 'company unions' which will help the capitalists to impose the burdens of the economic crisis on the shoulders of the working class.

This meeting of the General Council is of the firm opinion that the Maharashtra Government was emboldened to introduce this anti-labour Bill because it was supported by the reformist representatives of A. I. T. U. C., H. M. S., H.M.P. and INTUC. The leadership of these organisations not only supported the anti-working class provisions of the Bill in the unfair Labour Practices Committee but also welcomed it as a progressive piece of legislation on the floors of the Legislature.

This meeting of the General Council congratulates the working class of Maharashtra led by the state unit of the CITU who mobilised the working class against anti-working class measures as a result of which even the reformist leadership of other T.U. Centres were compelled to express opposition to this Bill.

This meeting of the General Council further welcomes the united declaration of the major T.U. Central Organisations at Delhi to the effect that the democratic way of deciding the choice of bargaining agent was through secret ballot of workers, and calls upon all sections of T. U. movement to bring pressure on the Maharashtra Government to withdraw this anti-working-class Bill.

In view of the united stand of the major Central T.U. Organisations for recognition of unions through secret ballot of workers and for non-interference by Government in the matter of determination of bargaining agents, this meeting of the General Council of the CITU strongly urges upon the President of India to withhold his assent to the reactionary Bill proposed by Government of Maharashtra. The General Council however has to warn in all seriousness that despite the democratic pretensions of the Central Government, the Maharashtra Bill is likely to get the assent of the President of India and that this anti-labour piece of legislation will probably be the forerunner of similar legislation in other states also. This meeting of the

General Council therefore calls upon all sections of the T. U. movement in all the states to prepare their working class to fight to defeat the vile design right from the beginning.

## 12. On Closure

The General Council of CITU notes with grave concern that the Indian economy in the grip of a severe crisis, is having its direct reflection in closure of hundreds of factories and enterprises throughout the country and the burden of the entire crisis is being shifted on the workers by throwing tens of thousands of them out of employment.

The most devastating effect of closure is seen in textile and Engineering industries in all the States. In Maharashtra 8 textile mills are still closed affecting 15,000 workers ; in West Bengal 26 mills out of 44 affecting 28,000 workers ; in Tamil Nadu 22 mills covering 7,000 workers, in Kerala 4 mills affecting 5,000 workers, in M. P. 3 mills, in U. P. 6 mills, in Rajasthan 1 mill, and in Ahmedabad proper about 22 mills are still closed. It is significant to note that taking over of some mills by Textile Corporation led to reduction in wages, increase in workload and reduction in staff strength and the workers had to fight bitter struggles for restoration of wage cuts and reduction in manpower.

In Engineering industry, closure played havoc and intensity of the problem is increasing every day. In West Bengal, alone 298 engineering factories are closed, many of them since 1966, affecting about 40,000 workers. Lack of orders for railway greatly affected wagon building factories, the principle base of engineering industry of West Bengal, with its corresponding effect on ancillary and subsidiary industries. Closure of Martin Light Railways has already affected about 20,000 workers of small engineering units of Howrah. In Tamil Nadu, 6,000 workers and in Maharashtra about 10,000 workers of engineering industry are idle due to closure. In Kolhapur, all the 4,000 workers engaged in manufacture of diesel pumping machines are out of employment due to closure.

The situation is equally alarming in the coal mines. In Bihar, 25 collieries are closed affecting 40,000 workers and in Rani-gunj 16 collieries affecting 20,000 workers. In Calcutta Basu-mati newspaper is closed for a long time affecting about 500 workers.

Under Achutha Menon's Government in Kerala and Ajoy Mukherjee's Congress-Muslim League Coalition Government in West Bengal the employers are resorting to closure more frequently.

About 2½ lakh workers have been rendered unemployed throughout the country including sugar, cashewnut and other industries during the last one year while in West Bengal alone 1,28,000 workers are affected in 463 closed units of various industries. In Kerala, in 60 closed cashew factories about 40,000 workers were rendered unemployed.

The General Council of CITU notes with concern that these closures are taking place when thousands of workers have already been retrenched in various industries and unemployment problem has reached a most alarming stage.

The General Council of CITU also notes that when most of the factories and establishments are being closed on reasons completely unrelated to industrial relations, the Government in order to cover its failure and misdeeds are trying to blame the workers, alleging that closures are due to industrial unrest.

The General Council of CITU further notes that following the Supreme Court decisions to the effect that management's right to resort to closure cannot be challenged, the employers are using it to deny the workers their rights as embodied even in the Industrial Disputes Act and other labour laws earned through years of struggle. They are also converting the lock-outs into "closure", without payment of earned wages and other legal dues to the workers. Closure is also being used to coerce and blackmail the workers to accept partial retrenchment and reduction in wages. In Sen-Raleigh cycle factory at Asansol, closure was declared affecting 4,000 workers on the plea that the factory cannot be run as a viable unit if workers do not agree to retrenchment of 600 workers and reduction in wages.

In Ranigunj coal belt, colliery owners recently declared closure of 8 mines without payment of wages ranging from 4 to 8 weeks and thereafter openly declared before the Regional Labour Directorate officials of Central Government that closure would be lifted if only the workers agreed to accept lesser wage far below the Wage Board's recommendation. In Bata Shoe Factory closure was declared affecting 12,000 workers on the plea that 250 temporary sweepers demanded permanency and/or retaining allowance of Re.1 per day for the period of 'no work'. This sort of closure is resorted to crush the growing strength of militant workers. In many places closure is being resorted in order to evade payment of lay-off compensation to the workers.

The General Council of CITU condemns the Government for its utter neglect and failure to take any effective measure for re-opening of the closed units while holding lofty promises of creating new employment under the Fourth Five Year Plan.

The General Council of CITU demands of Government of India to declare a ban on closure and lockout with corresponding amendment of the Constitution to put it through and take immediate steps for re-opening of all closed factories and enterprises and payment of retaining allowance to the workers for the period of closure.

The meeting calls upon the working class of India to realise that closure is a weapon to attack the growing consolidation of militant workers, and therefore, efforts should be intensified to build up united struggles at all levels to fight against this attack throughout the country and demand re-opening of all closed units and payment of unemployment benefit.

The General Council of CITU urges upon all Central Trade Unions to come forward in united action to fight against this serious problem of closure to ensure retention of existing job potential and to arrest increasing unemployment.

### **13. On DMK Government's Anti-Labour Policy**

This meeting of the General council notes with grave concern the fact that the pro-employer and anti-working class labour policy of the Government of Tamilnadu, has shifted

further in the reactionary direction, particularly after the recent mid-term elections.

The State Government, through the repeated pronouncements of its Chief Minister for postponement of the workers' demands, is carrying on an open campaign for acceptance of wage-freeze by workers.

The solemn written assurance signed by the late Chief Minister with the representatives of all trade unions, to re-open the closed mills or give relief to the affected workmen is observed more in its breach than in implementation with the result that more than 22 Textile Mills continue to remain closed. More than 140 suicides and starvation deaths have taken place among the closed mill workers. The DMK Government under its present Chief Minister, has been adopting a policy of encouraging the private employers to run the mills on the basis of wage-cut, extremely high work-loads ; or selective take over by the Corporation on the same terms.

Faced with the struggles of the workers compelling the Government to restore full wages in three of the mills run by the Corporation, the Government is resorting to the most inhuman policy of creating such conditions of starvation among the closed mill workers, under which so-called 'voluntary requests' to the Government are extracted from the workers and their unions, to declare the closed mill as a 'relief undertaking', depriving the workers of their normal wages, past arrears and future benefits under any labour enactment. With this end in view the Government did not hesitate even to prevent the workers of Pudukottai Textiles securing loans from their own P F.

The State Government rushes to the rescue of the employers who have misappropriated workers' contributions to the PF & ESI, by refusing to arrest and prosecute them, under the false pretext and threaten the workers that the mill owners would retaliate with closure, if they do so. This has resulted in more employers going into default, threatening to throw the very schemes of PF and ESI, out of gear.

The most shameless pro-employer policy of the DMK Government was exposed in its recent handling of the wage

dispute in the sugar industry. Following a general strike, while the sugar magnates had signed agreement in 1969 committing themselves to negotiate outside the framework of the Wage Board for sugar industry, and while the Tripartite called by the State Government in February 1970, had decided to constitute a committee to negotiate to settle the workers demand outside the Wage Board, the DMK Government, after the recent elections, openly favoured the employers by constituting a committee "to implement the recommendation of the Wage Board", which was precisely what the employers have been demanding all along.

The policy of abusing Government machinery and powers to prop up DMK unions and to weaken the fighting CITU unions has become more and more open. In the case of Rajapalayam Transport dispute, and Cauvery Mill dispute, in which the Collectors of Ramnad and Tiruchi respectively, had committed to intervene to settle, later backed out at the instance of Government, so as to prevent any settlement whatsoever. In contrast, in Vadalur Ceramics, which was under lock-out for 2 months, when the CITU union which was the most powerful union, forced the management to settle the dispute and appeared before the Labour Commissioner to sign the settlement, the Labour Commissioner, at the instance of the DMK ministers, betrayed extreme eagerness to intervene on behalf of the DMK "paper" union in the factory and to revise the agreement in some respect, so as to give a prestige boost to the ruling party's scab union.

In the matter of recognition of unions also the State Government and its labour department resort to open discrimination. While claims of CITU unions are put into cold storage for more than a year or two, urgent and expeditious reports are called for by the Labour Commissioner, where ruling party's unions make their claims.

While all the unions claiming recognition are directed by the Government to submit to the procedure laid down by the Code of Discipline, the Chief Minister announced at a function recently that in the State Electricity Board, ( where there is a

recognised union already in existence) he has given green signal to the electricity minister to recognise the DMK union, thereby confirming that all procedures for deciding on recognition as applicable to all unions, was to be brushed aside in case of DMK unions.

The General Council notes with serious concern the situation prevailing in Tamilnadu where rules, procedures and law are looked upon by the DMK Government, as the private property of its own party, to be observed or discarded at will, to suit to anti-working class and pro-employer ends.

The Labour Department and services of its officials, are regarded as the exclusive possession of the DMK party, that it has become almost impossible for the workers to get access to this deptment for a intervention, unless they are approached through this DMK party office-bearers.

Even on a democratic demand like automomy and more power to states, the DMK Government is not consistent in so far as it runs away from the question of struggle against the bourgeois-landlord Government at the Centre, to enforce the demand. The DMK Government has now resiled from even campaigning for more powers, under the false pretext of the 'situation on the borders.' It is not without significance, that the DMK Government, even while it raises the demand for power to give industrial license to big business, refuses to exercise its existing power to legislate on gratuity to industrial workers, but appeals to the Central Government to enact such a legislation, thereby delegating its existing power to the Centre.

The General Council notes that notwithstanding this reactionary shift in the DMK Government's labour policy, united actions of the working class including those belonging to DMK unions, are increasingly taking place even after elections in Tamilnadu, against one or the other manifestations of the anti-working class policy of the Government.

The General Council wishes to draw the attention of the workingclass in Tamilnadu to the fact, that with a view to prevent further development and extension of such united actions, the State Government have launched a policy of repression, disrupt. —

tion, diversion and violence against the Trade Union movement, particularly against the section represented by CITU.

With a view to disarm the workers by depriving them of the right to strike, the Government is contemplating to give statutory basis to the recommendations regarding industrial relations, made by the National Labour Commission.

The DMK Government's intention to attack the rising Trade Union and other democratic movements is betrayed by its welcome to the Preventive Detention Ordinance. The recent arrests of more than 50 CITU and Kisan activists under the false pretext of suspected Naxalism and their detention in unlawful police custody without being produced before the magistrate for remand, for days together, is indicative of the modus operandi by which the DMK Government seeks to attack the Trade Union movement in future.

To disrupt and divert the united actions, and to blunt the rising class consciousness, the Government is resorting to various manœuvres. May Day 1970, a day of international and national solidarity of the working class was sought to be converted into a mere 'Salem Steel Plant Victory Day'. The unemployed are sought to be impressed that the problem of unemployment is one of Brahmin Vs Non-Brahmin, Backward Vs forward classes, employed Vs. unemployed. In his recent pronouncement at the Thanjaver Teachers' Conference, the Chief Minister has hinted that the government would not hesitate to use educated unemployed as black-legs, to break the struggle of teachers.

The Council wishes to go on record that it is this anti-labour character of the DMK Government that led to the representative of the DMK at the recent conference of the Trade Unions convened by Prime Minister at Delhi, to become the solitary representative who completely and unashamedly identified himself with the reactionary labour policy of the Indira Congress and Central Government, by advocating the enforcement of the anti-labour recommendations of the NLC which stands condemned and discarded by the fighting workers and their Trade Unions.

The most disturbing trend after the election, to which the General Council wishes to draw the attention of the working class in Tamilnadu is the resort to violence by DMK men under the inspiration of its leaders and the police, to capture the workers' democratic organisations.

The DMK men mercilessly beat up the union executives and workers of the Sampson Group union, Madras, in broad day light at the company gates, in the presence of the police, and thus forced nomination of DMK men as Secretary and President.

The CITU General Council views with grave concern the recent beatings and assaults by DMK men on activists of CITU in the S. F, Labour Union, Nellikuppam, an affiliate of CITU with a view to capture it with violence. The council takes serious note of the fact that the police, while refusing to take action on complaints made by our union cadres, is engaged in resorting to indiscriminate arrests of CITU cadres on false complaints of the ruling party.

The CITU General Council strongly condemns these Government sponsored semi-fascist attacks on the Trade Union movement and calls upon the working class to unite and defeat their enemies at any cost. The Council calls upon its affiliates to rouse all sections of workers against the anti-labour policy of the Tamilnadu Government and strive to forge united front of our class and united action to halt and defeat this offensive .

#### **14 On certain anti-working Class Practices of Public sector Undertakings**

This meeting of the General Council of the CITU condemns the continued prohibition of the employees of various public sector projects, from participating in political activities, including elections campaigns.

The conduct of the management like that of the Bharat Heavy Electricals, Heavy Boiler Plant, Tiruchirapalli is highly objectionable, illegal and unconstitutional, in so far as they have introduced provisions in the standing orders, prohi-

biting the employees from participation in any activities which the General Manager considers to be 'political'. Even purchases of Radios, Cycles etc. by workers is made subject to the permission by the General Manager under standing orders. Any such offence by workers is attracted by provision of dismissal. The whole scheme in such public sector undertakings presume the employees to be slaves of the management.

The CITU General Council while condemning the conduct of such management demands of the Government of India to take immediate steps to see that the managements withdraw such provisions, prohibiting or restricting the democratic and personal rights of the employees.

### **15. On Jute Industry and Workers' Demands**

This meeting of the General Council of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions notes the development of the Jute Workers' movement in West Bengal and other States since the last session of the All India Trade Union Conference held at Calcutta in 1970. Since then, for the second time the two and half lakh jute workers of West Bengal waged 18 days' continuous general strike unitedly and wrested substantial part of their demands from the unwilling hands of the jute magnates and a wage committee has been formed to finally settle the demands for further wage increase, fixation of gratuity, retaining allowance to "badli" workers and other issues.

This meeting also notes that following the path of West Bengal the jute workers of other States such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have also gained substantially either through strikes or by other means of united struggles.

This meeting of the CITU conveys its warm greetings to the jute workers for their magnificent and heroic struggle which has opened up further scope of carrying on united struggle in advancing the cause of the Indian Trade Union movement.

This meeting of the CITU condemns the attitude of the

Government of India in scuttling the Jute Enquiry Commission set up by the United Front Government of West Bengal to unearth corrupt practices in jute industry in order to safeguard the interest of jute workers and jute growers. By winding up the work of the Enquiry Commission the Government of India have actually shielded the monopoly capitalists of jute industry. The Enquiry Commission in its preliminary report unearthed many facts which were hitherto unknown to the people of India. On the question of raw jute, they have shown how the jute growers are deprived and exploited by the landlords and jute mill owners and fixed the minimum price of raw jute at Rs.60 per maund.

The first strike struggle of jute workers in August, 1969 had changed the extremely low wage-structure in jute industry which was the basis of industrial wage structure of West Bengal. And in the second strike the gratuity scheme was introduced and the minimum bonus formula under Bonus Act became a nullity, forcing the jute employers to pay minimum 6 percent for 1970 and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent for 1971 and 7 percent for 1972. It is significant to note that the jute strike introduced a gratuity scheme for the entire industry and the scheme is to be improved by the Wage Committee.

The question of substitute or 'badli' workers was a vital one in the country, particularly in the jute industry. The British jute magnates introduced the 'badli' system to keep an army of unemployed to feed the market in times of any strike, etc. And since then the system has been carried on. The system of substitute or non-permanent was introduced in other industries also. The second jute strike for the first time seriously challenged the system and demanded relief to 'badli' workers in times of no work. The matter was referred to the Wage Committee for settlement.

This meeting notes that a new situation has arisen in jute industry following the recent developments in Bangla Desh. On March 25, 1971, Yahya administration launched an undeclared war against the people of Bangla Desh resulting in collapse of all industries, including the jute. The jute barons

of West Bengal while shedding crocodile's tears for the genocide in Bangla Desh are actually elated to exploit the situation. They have now been purchasing better variety of raw jute at much lower prices coming from Bangla Desh through various ways. To utilise these vast raw materials in their full capacity, the jute mills of West Bengal are now being run not only in three shifts but attempts are being made to run on all the 7 days in a week, thus depriving the mass of the workers from enjoying any weekly holiday. The Government of India in the past had granted huge tax concessions to the jute mill owners for modernisation and proposed to open four modern mills outside West Bengal.

While Indian jute mill owners with help of Indira Government are earning huge profit—and their profits in 1970 was unprecedented since the Korean War—they are now trying to bog down the workers in Wage Committee without paying anything for the present. The workers have, therefore, become restless and want to settle all disputes now and immediately.

This is a period which is a different one from that of the last two strikes and the agreements. The Indian jute magnates have never experienced such a boom. The slogan of 'competition from Pakistan' and 'competition from synthetic products' were used so long by the jute employers to deny the workers their legitimate wage rise. The jute mill owners consistently tried to put pressure on the India Government for tax relief and other financial assistance. They also followed a policy of wage stagnation and more work-load on the workers. The jute workers all over India fought against these attacks of jute employers. But following the strike struggle on the question of relief to 'badli' workers, now before wage committee the jute barons are backing out from their commitment.

The C I T U notes with concern that if this attitude is continued, there would be no settlement on vital and major demands of jute workers other than through direct struggle. In the meantime, the West Bengal Government has prolonged the period of the Wage Committee from 6 months to 1 year. Therefore, all sections of the jute workers feel that this is high

time to fight the management for realisation of their legitimate demands.

The General Council of the CITU assures the jute workers of firm support in their stand for realisation of their demands and calls upon all central Trade Unions in jute industry to take prompt measures for united action.

This meeting urges upon the jute workers to maintain their unity and take into their realisation that without any trade union action it is not possible to realise their demands.

## 16. On Kerala Government's Anti Labour Policy

The Kerala Government's Labour policy is worsening day by day and with its help, the employees are launching new offensives on wages and jobs of the workers in different industries.

In Cashew industry, the employers resorted to closure in large scale and one and quarter lakh workers were thrown out of employment. This was to pressurise the workers to accept wage cut and to escape from various provisions of the existing agreements.

In Coir industry, the employers are pursuing a tactics of decentralising the factory sector by shifting the manufacture to households, so that they need pay less wages and escape from legal obligations. In the yarn & spinning sector, whenever possible, wages are being reduced.

The demand of the employers for reduction of wages is getting the support of the Government of Kerala. A policy of 'Wait & see' towards agitations and struggles is frequently adopted by the Government with the hope that they may fizzle out automatically. At times, just to help employers, Government resorts to compulsory adjudication.

The Chief Minister Sri Achutha Menon has become one of the spokesmen of wage freeze policy, and in his capacity as the Chief Minister, he is trying to enforce it. In this regard no distinction exists between the Achutha Menon Ministry in Kerala and other Congress Ministries in states or at the Centre.

When 3 lakh Government employees and teachers demanded the implementation of the interim relief recommended by the Pay Commission, the Menon Ministry came out openly and Pleaded for a 'wage holiday.' When the N.G. O.s and Teachers struck work the Kerala Ministers launched a counter-campaign and tried to mobilise the unemployed youth against the strikers under the plea that if their demand is conceded there will be no fund with Government to start new industries.

In the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation, after the wholesale retrenchment of 614 workers they have devised a new system by which the new recruits in the categories of Drivers, Conductors & clerks will get Rs. 40 less than the existing pay scales, while the qualifications and nature of job to remain the same. This condition is imposed for three years.

When the P. W. D. Engineering workers under the leadership of U. T. U. C. and A. I. T. U. C. demanded that the benefits given to a section of the establishment should be extended to all. The Government refused and the workers went on strike which continued for more than three months. Finally compulsory adjudication was imposed.

The Government Dairy employees of the Ernakulam unit demanded the implementation of the wage structure and other fringe benefits, prevailing in the Trivandrum Dairy, under the same department. There too, the Government refused and the workers had to strike work for 3 months to get this conceded.

In private Transport Industry, the Government of Kerala brought the 'fair wages ordinance' to implement the wage board recommendations, only after a state wide strike of the Private Motor workers which virtually paralysed bus traffic in urban as well as rural areas through out the State for 11 days. But even though they were forced to bring the measure before the legislature the Government refused to implement it, and the Private Motor workers had to resort to another statewide strike from May 22nd onwards, which lasted for 15 days,

Emboldened by the Anti-labours policies of the Government

of Kerala, the private industrialists too are putting up stiff resistance against the demands of labour and launching new attacks.

In the Alwaye industrial belt, strikes in certain factories dragged on for months, which ultimately roused the entire 25,000 workers in forty two factories to rally behind the striking workers in a solidarity action of one day's token strike on 24th May.

The Kerala Government gave permission to bring the Central Industrial Security Force to Kerala, and now it is posted permanently in F. A. C. T. (Cochin Division) and in the Cochin Port.

The Essential Services Maintenance Act was invoked against the Government Employees Teachers' and the Electricity workers,

Against the militant Agricultural workers, thousands of police force are posted in the Kuttanad area and lock up tortures are frequently resorted to. Lock up killings too are taking place.

The General Council of the CITU strongly protests against these Anti-labour repressive policies of the Achutha Menon Ministry, and calls upon all the unions to rally around the fighting workers of Kerala to defeat this policy.

## **17. On Railway Trade Union Movement**

The Centre of Indian Trade Union conveys its warm greetings to the thousands of Indian Railwomen who have been bravely fighting for their democratic demands despite growing repressive policies of the Indira Government. The CITU also notes that a newer sense of unity and determination witnessed through all the struggles during the last year. The railwaymen in Siliguri, Alipurduar, New Jalpaiguri, New Bongaigaon, Maligaon (N. E. Railway), in Dhanbad division and other places in Eastern Railway, Adra Kharagpur, Chakradharpur, Bilaspur, Nagpur and Khurda Road (S. E. Railway) and in Garhara-Barauni (N. E. Railway)

waged massive strike struggle for their genuine demands and against increasing police and CRP atrocities. The casual labours in the Haldia Link and Railway Electrification Project have been agitating for a long period over their demand for abolition of the casual labour system and absorption in the permanent department. This meeting expresses its deep concern at the policy of the Government against strikes under the E. S.M. Act. It also condemns the brutal lathi-charge and police persecution in Bilaspur and Garhara-Barauni area in which even the women were not spared.

This meeting also notes that the Government, have been persistently refusing to negotiate with the leaders of the movement in an attempt to foist the recognised Unions and Federations which do not represent the railway workers. During the strike, it was seen that while the railwaymen have acted over the heads of the so-called leaders, the recognised Federations have actively engaged themselves in strike-breaking activities. The policy of recognition pursued in the railways is an attempt to foist company unions over the railwaymen, which is seen from the denial of recognition to most representative unions like CLW Labour Union or the Dakhin Railway Employees' Union, etc. This meeting demands that recognition should be determined through secret ballot.

This meeting extends its fraternal greetings to the railwaymen of Eastern and North Frontier Railways who have tried to create a united platform to fight out the policy of victimisation. It also greets the Loco Running Staff who have also been moving with determination to fight out victimisation along with other demands relating to their category. This meeting urges upon all railwaymen to build up a united movement to defeat the anti-working class policy of the Government, on the basis of the joint declaration of the Central Trade Union Organisations adopted in the meeting held on 18th and 19th May 1971.

The General Council further draws the attention of the Railwaymen to the declaration of the Railway Minister that hereaf-

ter promotions at all levels will be based not on seniority but on merit alone. Experience had shown that such promotions based on so-called efficiency have never improved efficiency but have only led to bribery and corruption of officials, to get promotion. The workers, after prolonged and bitter struggle had put an end to this pernicious system and won the right of promotion on the basis of seniority. The General Council is confident that the railway workers will give a fitting rebuff to the declaration of the Railway Minister and make it a dead letter.

The CITU once again extends its fraternal greetings and pledges all support to the struggle of railwaymen for winning their just demands.

### 18. On Unemployment

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses its deep concern at growing unemployment in the country which has assumed serious proportions during the recent past. The number of registered unemployed has exceeded four million which has surpassed all previous records. The actual unemployment however in the urban areas is estimated to be about one crore fifty lakhs. The growth of unemployment in the rural sector is still more serious.

The alarming rise of unemployment in the country is not an accidental phenomena as is being claimed by the spokesmen of the Government. The CITU considers this as a direct result of the policies pursued by the Congress Government of building capitalist economy in the country. To further the cause of capitalism, the Government took measures to increase their profitability by increasing the workload of the workers. The measures of rationalisation, modernisation and automation have been given green signal by the Government resulting in large scale retrenchment of industrial workers. As a result of slow rate of economic growth enough job opportunities could not be created for the new entrants in the employment market.

The Government's miserable failure to introduce genuine

land reforms has only intensified the agrarian crisis in the country. Despite lip-sympathy for the cause of landless poor the Government failed to implement any meaningful programme of land distribution. Moreover, introduction of tractors and other mechanical devices has brought down considerably the job potential in the rural areas. As a result of these bankrupt policies we see a sorrowful spectacle of rural youth hungry for jobs while the Government was indulging in import of food-grains and cotton under PL-480 and other schemes of imperialist Governments, wasting crores of rupees of foreign exchange.

Despite tall talk of planned economic development the Five Year Plans witnessed substantial rise in unemployment. The use of labour-saving machinery has resulted in boosting the profitability of big business houses which have thrown out on street lakhs of workers. So long the Government continues to doggedly go ahead with this path, the unemployment question in the country is bound to become more and more serious with every passing year.

The seriousness of the unemployment problem is not only confined to the factory workers but has taken a alarming shape with regard to the educated persons also. The stiff rise in the educated unemployment during the last 5 or 6 years has only pointed out the inability of the capitalist system to provide adequate job opportunities even to qualified and technical personnel. Nearly 25 per cent of the registered unemployment constitutes unemployment of those who are matriculates or above matriculates.

In the light of this experience the CITU considers the Government's announcements of "tackling unemployment problem on war footing", and providing new jobs to 5 million people by spending Rs. 50 crores is just an attempt to hood-wink the masses. Such token measures do not create sufficient employment but in the name of boosting employment, force the unemployed persons to work on paltry wages on the so called public works.

The swelling army of unemployed is being systematically used by the employers to keep wage level of the workers low.

Attempts are always being made to use the unemployed persons as strike-breakers. Various chauvinistic slogans are given to side-track the attention of the workers and create a gulf between them. For instance, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra has raised a clamour for jobs only to the Maharashtrian workers in Bombay. The Government of Maharashtra has issued a circular providing jobs only for the local people and the Government of M. P. and Bihar have followed suit. The CITU considers that such measures will only disrupt the unity of the country.

The Employment Exchanges organised by the Government throughout the country have failed miserably to provide any jobs to the workers. The employers are free to reject persons recruited through Employment Exchanges which is thus losing the faith of the vast majority of the unemployed workers.

The CITU notes the spectacular achievements in People's China where despite big population the Government has abolished unemployment in a remarkably short period. This was possible mainly because the Government of People's China built a self-reliant economy, abolished landlordism confiscated the assets of foreign monopoly capital and their local agents. In India too unless radical steps are taken to abolish the grip of foreign monopoly capital and Indian big business houses and remnants of feudalism in the rural side, no sound basis could be created for generation of big employment opportunities in the country.

The CITU calls upon the working class and trade unions to fight for these measures and build a powerful movement throughout the country for the implementation of such a radical programme. The CITU also calls upon the working class to fight for the following immediate measures to reduce the seriousness of the unemployment problem.

1. Immediate grant of unemployment allowance to all the unemployed workers and compulsory recruitment through the Employment Exchanges.
2. Ban on automation and further introduction of labour saving devices.
3. Immediate step to re-open all closed factories, esta-

blishments and mines.

4. Steps to ensure full-utilisation of the factories which are under-utilised.

5. Distribution of land to landless labourers and immediate introduction of land reforms.

6. Ban on retrenchment and closures.

The CITU calls upon the unemployed workers to form their organisations and struggle for more job opportunities on the basis of these measures.

# C I T U PUBLICATIONS

1. **Forward To Unity And Struggle**  
Proceedings and Documents of the All-India  
Trade Union Conference, Calcutta, May 28-31, 1970.  
Rs. 3.00
2. **Durgapur Workers Fight Back Repression**  
An Account of the Heroic Struggle of the  
Working People of Durgapur against  
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3. **Fight Against Repression And Disruption**  
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