

The Working Class



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Against Closure And Rising Prices For Higher Bonus and Gratuity Observe A Day Unitedly During December 5-12

The CITU, HMS and AITUC have jointly given a call to observe a day during the week December 5-12 throughout India and raise a powerful voice against the anti-working class provisions of the Ordinance on closures, against rising prices of essential commodities, for minimum bonus of 8.33 per cent and one month's gratuity to all the workers without any preconditions.

The call was given on November 11 at a meeting of the Convening Group constituted by the Trade Union Convention held in May last. It was repeated on November 19, in a Press Conference held jointly by the three organisations.

The Ordinance on takeover of closed units contains an obnoxious clause, of exempting the factories taken over by the Government from all the labour laws. This is in clear violation of the decision of the 27th Indian Labour Conference held in New Delhi on October 22 and 23, in which it was clearly stated, "Legislative provisions and Governmental machinery for takeover should ensure continuity of employment and production. Consequent upon the takeover there should not be any reduction in employment or emoluments, nor should there be any adverse effect on service conditions."

Apart from insisting on the implementation of the tripartite decisions, the trade unions should also demand that the Bill being brought before Parliament should make it obligatory for the Government to take over every closed factory and the law should be made applicable to the units which have already been closed down. Units once taken over should not be handed back to employers, and liabilities of the factory to the workers, such as arrears of Provident Fund, wages, bonus etc., should not come under the freezing clause but should be discharged on priority.

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Though the Government has announced that a Bill would be brought in Parliament on Gratuity, it is essentially based on the legislation in Kerala and West Bengal. Both these laws provide for gratuity at the rate of 15 days wages per year of service, and it imposes ceiling on payment of gratuity. These laws further make gratuity payment conditional to apply only to workers with a period of service of 5 years and not to all the workers irrespective of the length of service. If a worker participates in illegal strikes or is victimised by the management, he loses his right of gratuity.

It is therefore necessary to condemn the provisions of both these gratuity measures, of Kerala and of West Bengal and demand an all India legislation based on the following lines :

1. It should apply to all establishments irrespective of the number employed and all wage earners including those in hospital educational institutions, without any salary limit.

There shall be no ceiling on gratuity and no qualifying period for service for entitlement to gratuity.

3. Gratuity should be payable at the rate of one month's total wages for every year of service. In case of death or disability while in service the rate of gratuity should be higher.

4. Dismissal and victimisation should not act as disqualification for entitlement of gratuity.

5. Service should not be deemed to have been broken on account of a strike legal or illegal.

The recent Indian Labour Conference decided to form a Committee to go into the question of gratuity and report within six months.

However, unless workers are mobilised in large numbers for the rejection of the so-called Khadilkar formula and agitate for payment of Bonus on the basis of following demands, the outcome of the committee may not be favourable to the workers.

1. Bonus should be payable to workers of all establishments irrespective of the number employed in public and private sectors.

2. No exemption to be granted to any factory including the closed units taken over by the Government.

3. Minimum bonus of 8.33 per cent without any ceiling.

4. Bonus calculations after deducting actual depreciation from the gross profits and no other prior charges to be taken into account.

5. Unions should have the right to scrutinise and challenge the Balance Sheets of a Company.

6. Drastic punishment including imprisonment for non-payment of Bonus.

The steep rise in the prices of essential commodities is depressing the real living standard of the workers. Since the last budget the price index between May and August shot up from 224 to 236, taking 1949 as the base year.

The position of the CITU was correctly stated in the General

Secretary's report to the Coimbatore Session of the General Council held last June. It draws attention to the rise in prices resulting from taxation measures and then turns to deficit financing. "The trade union movement has to take up a consistent fight against inflationary finances which are nothing but instruments of class exploitation of the working class and other toiling masses and transferring part of their dues to the capitalists and the 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 the 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 the toilers."

Let the working class of India raise its united voice on the Day for these just demands of the workers. A joint observation of the Day will further pave the way for bigger united struggles against the attacks on their living standards by the employers and the Government.

Lock-out in Tile Factories in Kerala

More than one hundred tile factories in the Trichur region of Kerala were closed down on November 15 by the owners to avoid payment of higher wages to the workers under the Minimum Wages Act which came into force on that day. As a result of these large-scale closures, 25,000 workers of these factories have been thrown out of their employments and the livelihood of thousands of others connected with the industry have been affected.

An Action Council, comprising representatives of CITU and other working class organisations, has been formed to conduct the struggle of the workers against these unjustified closures. The programme of struggle includes—intensification of the Satyagraha being conducted in front of the factory gates, holding of meetings and demonstrations in different areas, such as Karuvannoor, Mauali, Pudukkad, Ollur etc. and Trichur Collectorate on November 22.

The Government Employees And The People

The Central and State employees' movement have been suffering from a basic weakness since their inception—a weakness that is now having dangerous consequences for the employees. These movements, with all their just demands and claims of justice in their favour, are conducted in a manner which more or less completely divorces them from the people, and from the democratic movement conducted by them against the present regime. They are conducted in isolation from the trade union struggle of the working class, and even from the struggle of the employees in the private sector. The 12th July Committee in West Bengal is serving a vital need by bringing the central organisations into contact with the people.

This isolation, this complete surrender to their own economic demands, was in the beginning imposed on them by the conditions under which they were working during the British regime. The Congress regime perpetuated the main condition—under service rules, preventing participation in political activities and association with other unions or organisations. What this means in practice must be realised.

The struggle for better economic conditions for the Central and State employees is an integral part of the struggle for better living conditions, for democracy and socialism conducted by the working class and our people. It is part of the great struggle of the Indian toilers against property, unemployment and impo-

verishment accentuated by the heavy burdens of foreign loans. It is clear that the growing unemployment among the educated which makes jobs scarce for the sons and daughters, brothers and sisters of the employees, cannot be fought, cured or lessened on the strength of the Central employees, that retrenchment cannot be prevented under these conditions and security of jobs maintained unless the democratic struggle defeats the policies leading to

B. T. Ranadive
President, CITU

unemployment. The rising price spiral cannot be controlled on the strength of the Central employees. The latter at best only fight for the D.A. which is never adequate. Once again, the people must defeat it. Even the partial demands of the employees are part of the democratic struggle of the people.

Today, vast masses in India listen to the talk of socialism. Even the ruling party has to indulge in this talk. There is growing realisation that without socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, without real power in the hands of the people, poverty and unemployment cannot end, living conditions cannot improve radically. Only the Central and State employees and their organisations are supposed to avoid all mention of socialism lest they might be accused of talking politics.

Second Grade Citizens

The Central and State employees are virtually reduced to the ranks

of second grade citizens by depriving them of the right of political expression and action.

This is having harmful consequences for their immediate movement. They have been forced to keep themselves away from the main trade union organisations and plough lonely furrow. They cannot join a common central T. U. organisation. In England, the civil servants' union is affiliated to the British T. U. C. But in Congress India, this is virtually prohibited. So much is the fear of political contamination that in one of the most well-organised strikes of State employees in one State, I found the leadership of the employees disinclined to address meetings called in their support, by the political parties.

Apart from isolating the Government employees this situation leads to absurd results. The demands of the employees are addressed to the Government. Government policies are responsible for their plight. And yet, in the name of avoiding politics they are not supposed to analyse the basic Government policies dealing with economy, foreign policy, taxation, prices. The Government refused D. A. or need-based wage to the employees but spends Rs.1000 crores annually on military expenditure which is necessitated by its wrong foreign policy. If the employees counter the Government's refusal in this way, then it becomes politics. The Government goes in for deficit financing to finance the capitalist path and raises prices. But the employees cannot demand a change in this basic Policy without inviting the charge of politics or Communism.

The employees are therefore forced to voice their economic demands only, and avoid all politics.
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West Bengal Day Observed Through-out India

Blacked out by the monopoly press, November 5 was observed as "West Bengal Day" by State Government employees all over India in pursuance of the programme laid down by the National Executive of the All-India Federation of State Government employees at its meeting held in Calcutta on October 9 and 10 last. Wearing badges, and through demonstrations, rallies, and cease-work in some States, they registered their firm protest against the absolutely arbitrary dismissal, under Sections 310 (1) and 311 (2) of the Indian Constitution, of prominent leaders and functionaries of the State and Central Government employees' movement in West Bengal. In one voice they demanded, "REINSTATE THE DISCHARGED EMPLOYEES, SCRAP SECTIONS 310 (1) and 311 (2)," and sent resolutions to that effect from hundreds of meetings all over India to the Rashtrapati, the Prime Minister and the Rajyapal, West Bengal.

The widespread protest, according to incomplete reports received so far, evidenced a new awareness among Government employees of the need for united resistance against this planned and semi fascist attack against trade-union rights and the rising tempo of democratic movement in West Bengal as the first step towards launching a wider attack on an all-India scale. Brief reports of the observance of the "West Bengal Day" in States outside West Bengal are given below :

BIHAR. From secretariat at Patna down to every block State Government employees participated on a very wide scale to make the programme a huge success. Every

unit of the of the Railwaymen's Union, every Central Government office, at the 'call of the Bihar State Branch of the Central Government Employees' Co-ordination Committee, every Life Insurance Corporation office, at the call of the Jamshedpur Division Insurance Employees' Association, came forward and joined in the programme. The highlight of the Day was convergence of numerous rallies and demonstrations into a huge assembly before the Chief Minister's residence at Patna where speaker after speaker denounced the arbitrary dismissals and exposed the hypocrisy of Mrs Gandhi's "Garibi Hatao" slogan.

UTTARPRADESH. Different departments of the State Government, led by the Rajya Karmachari Samyukta Parishad, held rallies and demonstrations, demanding reinstatement of the dismissed employees and abrogation of the anti-people Sections 310 (1) and 311 (2) of the Constitution. The same programme was observed in the Central Government offices in the State. Railway employees, Life Insurance Corporation employees, U.P. Ministerial Staff Association and several other fraternal organisations also participated.

ASSAM: Central and State Government employees, bank employees, Life Insurance Corporation employees observed the Day jointly.

TRIPURA: The day's programme was carried out under the joint auspices of the State and Central Government Employees' Co-ordination Committee in Manubazar, Kalyanpur, Amarapur, Sambrum and all other parts of the State. Besides

rallies, demonstrations, badge-wearing cease-work also was observed in the offices. A joint demonstration of workers, employees, and teachers, held on November 6, brought ample and convincing evidence of the broad-based character and the wide sweep of the protest movement in Tripura.

ORISSA: Despite the incalculable cyclone ravages, heavy loss of lives, and the immense problems of relief and rehabilitation, the response of the State Government employees in Orissa, limited as it was, showed clearly the high level of militancy and consciousness of the Government employees' movement in the State.

TAMILNADU: The day was observed with remarkable response in every district and sub-division. There were numerous rallies, demonstrations and meetings of State and Central Government employees, and the programme evoked immense popular support. Countless demonstrations culminated in a historic meeting at Tiruchirapally in which Life Insurance Corporation employees' Union, Students' Federation of India and workers' unions, led by the CITU, also participated.

MADHYAPRADESH: The day was observed all over the State with joint demonstration and rallies by State and Central Government employees, Life Insurance Corporation employees, bank employees, Railway employees and others. A big meeting was held at Gwalior where a resolution was adopted warning the Government of the disastrous consequence of not invoking provisions of the Constitution against black-marketeers, hoarders and profiteers while using the Constitution arbitrarily to attack the democratic movement in the country, The
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The Government Employees and the People

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cal contacts with other sections fighting the Government's basic policies except perhaps in West Bengal. Nowhere do the State or Central Employees show much concern for the common movement of the people against economic misery, against the Government. They thereby create a gulf between themselves and the people from whose ranks they come—an estrangement which is exploited by the Government to beat down the resistance.

Don't Alienate the people

Every demand of the Central and State employees has to be met from public treasury. This fact the Government utilises to tell the people that the employees want to advance their demands at the expense of the people. And the Government often succeeds in creating apathy in the minds of the people because the latter hardly find the employees taking interest in protesting against taxation on the common man or the rise in prices, or joining popular protests any time. They appear before the public only with their demands. Besides, the employees do not realise that they stand in special need of cultivating the friendship and understanding of the people as it is through a large number of them that the misdeeds of the administration and the social system are passed on to the people. They are the innocent vehicles of all that is bad in the administration. Some of them instead of cultivating public sympathy, actually alienate it by their behaviour. The rupture of the link with the people, the lack of common bond through common suffering and struggle is likely

to prove costly to the employees' movement.

The Central and State employees' organisations must overcome these weaknesses. How the trade unions and political parties are able to rally the people in their support, how people respond in sympathy with them, has been shown in the last bundh in West Bengal, on October 13. There are now unmistakable signs that this isolation is likely to have disastrous consequences. A Government faced by economic recession, by the influx of refugees, will resist all demands. All these months it has refused to revise D. A. though it was bound to do so under an agreement. Now finding no other excuse, it has referred it to the Pay Commission to kill time.

Join the People's Movement

What it will do under present circumstances was clearly seen during the course of the last Bundh in West Bengal. Goonda gangs headed by the police took charge of central establishments, and at the point of

knife or revolver forced the striking Central or State employees to go back to work. Houses of some post masters were raided with the backing of the police, they were threatened with immediate murder and forced to work. In some places, keys of the building were forcibly seized, the building was occupied and systematic strike-breaking was organised. Gangs of hoodlums now invade the office of Central and State employees, LIC, occupy chairs and intimidate the workers.

Who will protect the minimum rights of the employees if they do not get the protection of the people?

Big struggles are looming ahead. They are part of the entire people's battle for livelihood. The employees will be successful in so far as the people are successful. In the new situation, neither old form of organisation, old level of unity, nor old outlook of economic aloofness is sufficient. In fact, it is suicidal. Let the Central employees break through the shackles of the past, forge their unity, create public sympathy for their cause and regard themselves as one of the sections of the democratic and popular movement marching forward to Socialism.

S. E. Railway Loco Running Staff Meet

The annual convention of the S. E. Railway Loco Running Staff Association was held at Khargpur on November 20 & 21, under the presidentship of S. C. Rudra, Driver, Santragachi. About 150 delegates and 12 visitors from all over the railway participated in the conference. S. K. Dhar, General Convenor, submitted a report, which was accepted unanimously after discussion. The Constitution and the accounts were also passed. The convention elected a Committee of eleven office-bearers including S. C.

Rudra, as president, B. G. Sinha as Working president, and S. K. Dhar, as General Secretary. Resolutions demanding reinstatement of State and Central Government Employees in West Bengal was adopted by the Convention.

The open Session, attended by five thousand railwaymen, was held on November 21, under the presidentship of N. Sarker, Working president of the all India Loco Running Staff Association. Mohd. Ismail M. P., Vice-president CITU, was the main speaker.

West Bengal Jute Workers Prepare For Another Strike

The 33rd Annual Conference of Bengal Chatkal Mazdur Union expressed its firm determination to prepare for united struggle of jute workers to settle the longstanding demands of over two and a half lakh jute workers. With 106,063 members on its rolls the BCMU is now more confident to enter the arena of united battle than ever before.

The Conference was held on October 29-31 in Kamarhati, 24-Parganas. About 700 delegates and 300 observers attended the Conference representing 45 Branch Unions. The Conference in a resolution observed that in spite of clear stipulation in the agreements arrived at following two struggles to the effect that the Wage Committee would settle the Charter of Demands within six months, nothing has been settled even though ten months have passed since the second strike. The jute mill owners persistently show most adamant attitude even after 27 sittings of the Wage Committee, rendering it impossible to arrive at a reasonable settlement.

A Great Boom for the Jute-Barons

On the other hand, the jute tycoons have been earning huge profits in this period due to the fact that the political upheaval in Bangladesh have made the jute industry in East Bengal virtually inoperative and West Bengal has acquired a near-monopoly position in the international jute market. Moreover, the Government of India guaranteed considerable exemption to the jute barons in regard to export duty etc. as a result of which the foreign exchange earnings of jute goods in 1969-70 were Rs. 180 Crores. The

earnings increased to Rs. 250 Crores in 1970-71 and will be more than Rs. 300 Crores in 1971-72.

Thus while jute employers garner super-profit, the wretched conditions of workers of the industry continue. The jute growers have been equally affected as they are being compelled to sell raw jute at Rs. 20/-per maund due to inflow of raw jute from Bangladesh. And Government has not taken any action so far to safeguard the interest of the jute growers.

The Charter of Demands

In these circumstances the jute workers raised some basic demands which included among others a minimum wage of Rs. 300.00, uniform rate of D.A. Gratuity, retaining allowance to the Badli workers in the period of no work, night work wage, festival holidays, casual leaves and other leaves, permanency, housing or house-rent allowance, wage dues for the strike periods in 1969 and 1970, cheap canteen, 8.33 per cent minimum bonus at present and 20 per cent from 1973.

The Conference therefore appealed to all the unions in jute industry to prepare for another industry-wise strike if the jute millowners fail to see reason and settle all their outstanding dues at an early date. It called upon all the jute workers to respond magnificently when the united decision will be announced by the Trade Unions.

The Conference was inaugurated by B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU which was presided over by Niren Ghosh, M. P., Secretary, CITU. Kamal Sarkar, General Secretary, BCMU submitted his

report of activities of the Union which was accepted unanimously after discussion. The Conference also adopted resolutions on unemployment, Bangladesh, Worker-peasants unity, Semifascistic terror in West Bengal etc.

The Conference elected Indrajit Gupta, M.P. as President, Niren Ghosh, M.P. as Working President and Kamal Sarkar as General Secretary.

A big public rally was held despite storm and torrential rains on October 31 which was addressed among others by B. T. Ranadive, Jyoti Basu, Niren Ghosh and Kamal Sarkar.

On November 11 the representatives of the CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, UTUC and UTUC (Lenin Sarani) in a joint statement outrightly rejected the Jute mill Owners' paltry offer of Rs. 195-as minimum wage. They characterised the IJMA's offer as nothing but a mockery of the workers' demands which does not provide even a basis for further negotiations'. The Central Trade Unions further called upon the Government to intervene and impose rigid controls on the industry.....and satisfactorily settle all the outstanding demands of the workers.

Hooghly Teachers' Protest Against Police Repression

The All Bengal Teachers' Association, Hooghly in a representation to the President of India has protested against the reign of terror let loose in West Bengal by the police and the anti-social elements nurtured by the ruling class. So far seven teachers in Hooghly have been arrested under the PVA Act and three others under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act alone while at least two cases of murder of the teachers by the police have been reported.

Former HMP Leader's Treacherous Agreement At East Nimcha Colliery

Colliery Mazdoor Congress led by a section of HMP leadership has made an anti-labour agreement with the management of The East Nimcha Colliery to defraud the workers of lacs of rupees of unpaid dues and to sabotage the organised movement of the colliery workers under the leadership of the CITU, in gross betrayal of the interests of the workers. Colliery Mazdoor Sabha (CITU) decided to launch a determined and united struggle to foil this treacherous agreement.

The management of the Nimcha Colliery has been the most notorious employer. Before 1969 trade union activities were not allowed in the Colliery. A puppet union controlled by HMP with a small membership was given recognition by the management.

Colliery Mazdoor Sabha (CITU) Formed

Naturally the management became frightened when the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of Raniganj organised a strong union with a large membership and started a movement for the realisation of several long-standing demands. So the management went on hatching up conspiracies to crush the CITU-Union with the aid of the local police and anti-social elements.

The management took the offensive after the formation of Congress dominated Coalition Ministry in West Bengal in 1971. The workers were immediately denied payment of their wages and all other legal dues. They were thus forced to launch a movement. They stopped loading of wagons, filed a claim case and at last they had to give a strike notice.

The Police then came to play the role of saviour of the management and innumerable criminal cases were started against the workers. Nearly 700 workers were evicted from their quarters. Then militant leaders were severely beaten and even the women were not spared. Three workers were killed.

Lock-out at last

All these matters were duly reported to the Central Government but no action was taken and the unscrupulous management finally locked out the Colliery suddenly on April 26, 1971, throwing about 600 wor-

Rabin Chatterjee

Secretary, Colliery Mazdoor Sabha, Raniganj

kers out of employment on false pleas of adverse economic conditions of the Colliery and indiscipline of the workers. Yet the facts were otherwise. In spite of the fact that the workers had to work without adequate raw materials and tools, coal raising went upto 8,000 metric tonnes from 6,000 metric tonnes from April '70 to November '71. Workers' dues during the period amounting to Rs. 6 lakhs were not paid to them. The question of lock-out and payment of D.A. were sent to the Central Government Industrial Tribunal, Calcutta for adjudication. The said two tribunal references are still pending.

The management in the meantime hired a large number of anti-social elements from outside and started attacking the workers here and there in broad daylight and in the presence of the local police.

Then Dr. Gopaldas Nag, the then Labour Minister and Iswar

Tirke of INTUC held a closed-door meeting at Asansol in the presence of some other INTUC leaders, Management men, D. M. and the S. P. Here they chalked out a plan to crush the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha (CITU). Immediately afterwards large-scale arrests and murder of the leaders were made.

Anti-labour Settlement

The conspiracy had its final culmination on October 14, 1971 when an illegal bi-partite settlement was arrived at by the management and the HMP-led Colliery Mazdoor Congress. This settlement was made to avoid payment of lakhs of rupees to the workers and to dismiss the old workers who were on roll prior to the lock-out of April 26. The settlement states that the Colliery work will be commissioned absolutely on a temporary and trial basis for six months, with only a few chosen workers selected by the management who will be given fresh employment. The rest of the workers who will not be given employment will get only Rs. 50 as final payment. After six months, if the Colliery ceases to work, the rest of the workers will also get Rs. 50 as final payment and the management will have the right to recruit new workers.

T. N. Sukla, General Secretary of the HMP Controlled Colliery Mazdoor Congress recently issued statement declaring his intention to join Congress (R) with his followers.

Coal Workers resolved to Fight

This has caused a great resentment among the workers and the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha (CITU) decided in its meeting on October 29 to launch a movement of the entire coal workers against this settlement.

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Decisions of CITU Office Bearers' Meeting

The extended meeting of the office-bearers of the CITU held in Calcutta on November 7 strongly criticised some of the retrograde provisions of the Ordinance on take over of industrial units and demanded modification in them when the Ordinance is brought before Parliament for enactment.

The trade union movement in India has been demanding takeover of closed factories by the Government and restore the jobs to those thrown out of employment. Through this Ordinance the Government has belatedly accepted the responsibility in this direction but has loaded it with so many conditions adverse to the interests of the working class.

The Ordinance does not make it obligatory on the Government to take over every closed or mismanaged unit. On the contrary, it enables the Government to suspend implementation of all Labour Legislation and to curtail trade union and democratic rights. It fails to protect the workers from retrenchment measures and from offensive of reduction in wages, D. A. and of increased workload and working hours.

The Ordinance provides the non-payment of liabilities of the companies for 5 years. It however does not ensure that the wages, PF arrears of leave and other claims of the workers will not be affected by this provision of the Ordinance.

In the name of reopening of the closed units and giving relief of the workers the authorities seek to launch unprecedented attacks on the living conditions of the workers which the private sector employers have been demanding all these days.

This amounts to exploiting the miserable conditions of unemployed workers to reduce the cost of labour.

The meeting therefore called upon the working class to campaign unitedly so that the Government is forced to withdraw the retrograde provisions of the Ordinance and modify them in favour of the workers.

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU presided over the meeting. Apart from the office-bearers, the working committee members of the CITU available in Calcutta were invited to participate in the meeting.

The CITU considers the appointment of the HMS leader Sri Bagaram Tulpule by the Government as General Manager of Durgapur Steel Plant as an attempt to corrupt and divide the trade union movement. It is amazing to see a trade union leader accepting a paid job of the Government and confronting the workers on behalf of the employing authority. The CITU is shocked to find that HMS allowed him to accept this position by which Sri Tulpule will be used by the Steel Ministry to carry forward its anti-working class policy.

The CITU office-bearers condemned the murderous attacks on the CITU leaders in Durgapur and called upon the CITU units to campaign all over India against these attacks.

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary gave a report on the unity talks with different trade union organisations. The meeting decided to redouble the efforts to build a powerful unity in various States on the basis of 8-point programme

chalked out by the Convention held in Delhi in May last. The office-bearers however sharply attacked the talks between AITUC, HMS and INTUC leaders behind the backs of workers on the question of recognition of trade unions wherein an attempt is being made to give up the settlement of recognition issue through secret ballot.

The office-bearers wholeheartedly supported the demand of private college teachers in Kerala that their salary should be paid directly by the Government and condemns the Achutha Menon Government for not conceding the just demand. The Kerala Government which accepted this demand earlier is only protecting the irregular

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Agreement at East Nimcha Colliery

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A deputation led by Rabin Sen, M. P., met the Additional D.M. on October 28 and notified him that if the Colliery be opened the workers would go to the Colliery facing all odds and the Union would not allow implementation of such an illegal 'settlement' whether by Central Industrial Relatio nmachinery or by the police.

Shukla Condemned

Raj Narain, M. P., Interim President of Colliery Mazdur Congress in a letter to Union Labour Minister Shri Khadilkar has disowned this anti-working class agreement in South Parasea and Karnani Nimcha collieries and condemned the nefarious role of T. N. Shukla. P. N. Singh, Chairman, Hind Mazdur Panchayat in a press statement on November 12, has denounced this agreement and called up the colliery workers not to accept the agreement.

With the victory of the socialist revolution a total transformation of the structure of society has taken place in Cuba—national liberation from domination by United States imperialism, the ending of exploitation of the peasants by the implementation of agrarian reform, liberation of the working class from exploitation by foreign and domestic capitalists, nationalisation of all industries and commerce in all its forms, control of domestic and foreign trade and the planning of the whole national economy in order to develop the country in such a way that it can satisfy the people's material and cultural needs.

Cuba is building the first socialist and communist society in the Latin American continent.

The ending of exploitation has put an end also to hunger, poverty, illiteracy, begging, prostitution, and discrimination based on sex or colour, to a system which left orphans and old people without protection and gave rise to other social injustices caused by exploitation and the privileged position of a few by comparison with the majority of the population, a characteristic of all more or less developed capitalist societies.

In 1958, the year before the triumph of the revolution, Cuba had 686,000 unemployed, because of the under-developed state of the country, which was dependent on a single branch of the economy—the sugar industry, whose output, artificially held down by private interests, was controlled by the big American finance monopolies.

The revolution broke down all obstacles which held back the country's progress and kept the people in a state of poverty, opening up the path to national economic development, and at the same time an improvement in living conditions of the working people.

Unemployment Disappeared

The number of jobs has increased to the extent that unemployment has completely disappeared, wages have risen and pensions raised to a minimum of 60 pesos a month for 198,260 old-age pensi-

oners. Housing has been guaranteed to all citizens, the number of schools greatly increased and extended into the most remote parts of the country. A large number of educational institutions have been built which can provide accommodation, and which provide free schooling, books, clothing and food. New hospitals and clinics have also been built, not only giving medical care,

but also providing medicines and facilities for laboratory analysis, all without cost to patients. Expenditure in this field rose from 114.7 million pesos in 1958 (the last year under capitalism) to 320 million in 1970.

Illiteracy and polio have disappeared in Cuba, as has the expulsion of tenants for non-payment of rent, and the shortage of milk for children. Every workers' and peasant's child has the opportunity to study, from primary school through to university, with a guaranteed job at the end, all of it being free and in many cases with State grants.

This raising of the standard of living of the whole population, together with the increased purchasing power of the people, has led to a situation in which the needs of the population are greater than the level of production achieved, although this has risen in the case of meat, milk, rice, fish and other consumer produce.

In 1958 the population of Cuba

was 6,256,000, but preliminary census figures put the population in 1970 at 8,553,000.

When it is realised that only 32 per cent of the total population between the ages of 17 and 55 are engaged in production, it will be easier to understand the difficulty in meeting the country's needs and accumulating the reserves necessary for its development.

The industrialised countries, notably the European socialist countries, where productivity is much higher and the development of the productive forces much more advanced, have on average over the past decade employed about 46 per cent of their total population.

The immediate task of the Cuban

revolution, therefore is to increase production by increasing labour productivity.

What aims has the Cuban trade union movement set itself in order to increase production and labour productivity?

To bring in to production all forces able to make a contribution, because there are nearly a million women who should and can enter production, eliminate absenteeism and lack of labour discipline, and help to organise the whole production process.

Women and Production

In the old bourgeois society very few women, both because of the shortage of jobs and discrimination against them, could find work. The revolution not only recognised the right to equal pay, but also provided nurseries where their children could be looked after and fed free of charge, set up canteens in undertakings and built laundries. It was as a result of the revolution that

many educational establishments were built that could provide accommodation for children, being educated. As a result of all this 200,000 women took jobs and a great campaign is now being waged, together with the Union of Cuban Women, to ensure that no woman able to work remains outside production.

Mass Participation

The widest possible mass participation in discussing and solving all these problems, on the basis of the interests of the socialist revolution, is the foundation for the success that has been achieved in accomplishing these objectives.

The holding of democratic meetings and conferences at all places of work, large and small, in town and countryside, in industry, agriculture and the public services, meetings and conferences at which the workers give their opinions and take decisions on all problems that affect them, is a sacred principle of the Cuban trade union movement.

This work has made a splendid start in the plenary meeting that have been held since September 1970 in all sectors, in the presence of leaders of the trade unions and the party, and with the direct, personal participation of our First Secretary, Fidel Castro, and the directors of the various undertakings, so as to study problems in a profoundly revolutionary spirit.

Although this work is only a first phase, initial progress in some industrial undertaking can already be seen.

Strengthening the Trade Unions

As the most suitable instrument for accomplishing this great task is

the trade union movement, the Cuban Confederation of Labour (CTC) has undertaken to reinvigorate the whole Cuban labour movement so as to make it a strong and extremely powerful movement, from branches in undertakings through to the reorganisation of the leading bodies of all international unions.

The 5th National Council which met in September 1970, clearly showed its determination to strengthen all the work of the Cuban trade union movement and direct it along the paths which socialist revolution requires of the workers and their trade unions.

Since the National Council took place, successful national conferences have been held by unions in basic

industry, mining and food and in January in light industry.

An impetus is being given to the accomplishment of the objectives of the trade unions, and primarily the 1971 sugar crop.

Direct, secret elections are taking place in branches for the election of union leaders.

Emulation

Emulation campaigns to celebrate historic events in our revolution are the means whereby the trade union movement encourages the fulfilment and over-fulfilment of the objectives most fundamental to each undertaking. Such emulation has two objectives in our country: first, to develop and strengthen country's economy, and secondly to raise the level of socialist consciousness and the collectivist spirit of the working people.

The CTC lays down the aims of the emulation campaigns for each branch of industry or category of workers, but in each undertaking it is the workers who define their own

objectives, after discussion and majority decision.

Emulation campaigns to commemorate historic events are aimed particularly to show the traditions of struggle of the Cuban people. Their importance should be measured, therefore, not only in terms of economic effort, but also in relation to the ideological and moral stimulus they give the workers in carrying out their day-to-day jobs in industry.

The revolution has placed great responsibilities in the hands of the Cuban Trade union movement, and has given it great authority by enabling it to express its views and take part in adopting decisions in administrative and ministerial bodies, in relation to the great problems of the country's economy.

CITU WON AVB (DURGAPUR) ELECTION

The management of AVB, Durgapur dismissed all the Executive Committee members and activists of of AVB, Employees' Union following the general strike in Durgapur in August last year. The management tried its best since then to bolster AITUC-INTUC combine and the help of police was readily available in this job. Recently police repression was increased even in the localities to intimidate the workers. The Assistant Secretary of the Union, T. N. Gupta was arrested and beaten up mercilessly.

However the AVB workers have given a fitting reply to the machinations of the management and the authorities. In the elections of AVB Employees' General Co-operative Society held on October 24 all the 15 CITU nominees were elected routing the candidates of INTUC-AITUC and backed by the management.

Strike Struggles of Cotton Textile

(From Page Nine)

the unity achieved before the strike. The struggle began on October 5 as stay-in strike which led to a general strike involving more than 40,000 workers in the entire district. A Joint Action Committee consisting of CITU, AITUC, United Textile Workers Union (HMP) and Socialist Textile Workers Union (Indicate) was formed which enthused all sections of workers. The DMK Government and their Trade Union wing openly opposed the strike. It is also worth noting that the HMS union in Coimbatore did not join the strike. The strike lasted for 15 days and resulted in obtaining more concessions than the agreement signed by the INTUC union. A joint call for Coimbatore Bundh on October 21 was given by the unions but did not take place due to the settlement arrived at on October 20. Spontaneous strikes have also been reported in some textile mills in Tamilnadu.

Strike in Kanpur

The strike of 25,000 mill workers in Kanpur on October 16, was important in many ways. After many years of disruption in T. U. movement, the workers in that leading northern textile centre showed a massive demonstration of their united strength. Though the strike lasted only for one day it created a new confidence among the workers and paved the way for further united actions.

In Delhi too, one day protest strike for 8.33 per cent bonus was organised in Birla Mills on October 22 in which about 6000 workers participated.

AITUC's Vacillation

These actions would have been far more powerful and their impact far

more widespread if all the Central Trade Union organisations would have given a joint call for such a struggle. Despite unity achieved in the Conference of representatives of Central T. U. organisations and national federations held in New Delhi in May last the Co-ordination Committee formed by the conference could not chalk out any programme of struggle. The three members of the Co-ordination committee P. Ramamurti, Mahesh Desai and Satish Loomba took a unanimous decision to hold an all India convention of representatives of textile workers in Bombay in the month of August to chalk out programme of action. A letter was also sent to the Central T. U organisations in this regard.

This was a correct step taken by the Co-ordination Committee. If the Convention could have been organised as per decision it would have brought textile workers on a common platform. However suddenly the AITUC leadership developed cold face and the Convention was unilaterally cancelled without giving any reasons.

The reasons of the attitude of the AITUC leadership could be seen from their behaviour during the Bombay strike. The opposition of Dange and the leadership of Mumbai Girni Kamgar Union for joint action with Lal Bawta Mill Mazdur Union (LBMMU), CITU affiliate, despite repeated appeals was a serious handicap in building a united front of textile workers in Bombay.

It was possible for the MGKU and LBMMU to give a joint call for one day's strike on September 1. However the healthy atmosphere created due to the success of that

strike could not be preserved and strengthened during the indefinite strike. Both unions gave separate calls and organised separate campaigns. Dange while praising Smt. Gandhi in public meeting during strikes, stooped to the level of abusing CITU leaders individually.

Maharashtra CITU's initiative

The Maharashtra State Committee of CITU took initiative and convened a meeting of all the Central T. U. Organisations on September 27 to consider joint action of all unions. The HMS and HMP leaders participated in the meeting but the AITUC leadership refused to send representatives. Having failed in forging a united front the LBMMU had to campaign independently for the success of the strike. Big rallies were organised to mobilise the workers for the strike. Despite the opposition of MGKU leadership the rank and file workers of both the unions at the mill level worked jointly which generated enthusiasm among the workers. Five thousand copies of Marathi booklet written by Madan Phadnis, Secretary, Maharashtra State Committee of CITU were sold out and October 2 was observed as "8.33 per cent Minimum Bonus Day" all over Maharashtra by CITU unions.

The recent strikes in textile industry are only forerunners of series of similar struggles that are likely to take place in India in the days to come. The effort for unity of the workers should be continued more vigorously so that the millowners are forced to grant not only 8.33 per cent minimum bonus but other demands of the textile workers as well.

Is Annapurna Mills' Closure Justified ?

Sri Annapurna Cotton Mills declared "Closure" of its Shyamnagar (24-Parganas) Mills from October 19 last year absolutely on frivolous ground.

The Mill is equipped with latest automatic machines and the workload of its workers is the highest amongst the Cotton Mills of West Bengal. Though it possesses all the qualifications of an 'A' Class Mill, its management successfully got it classified as 'B' class and thereby deprived its workers wages as per recommendation of the Wage Board for cotton textile industry.

With the formation of the first United Front Government in West Bengal in 1967, the workers of the Mills under the auspices of Sri Annapurna Cotton Mills Workers' Union organised themselves and successfully redressed some of their grievances.

With the fall of the United Front Ministry in 1969, the management of the Mills pursued with greater veracity their anti-labour policy with the readily available assistance of C. R. P. and anti-social elements. Failing to disrupt the unity and determination of the workers the management declared closure of the Mills as a last resort.

An economically viable unit

It is evident from the published audited accounts of the Company that the Mill is a viable unit economically. The allegation that the production of the Mills had gone down as a result of labour unrest is found to be wholly untrue.

In Fact, the ratio of wage to value of goods manufactured dwindled to 27.2% in 1970 from 28% in 1969 indicating increase in

productivity of workers. The reserves of the Company as at the end of 1970 stood at more than eight times the actual share contribution of about Rs. 12.5 lakhs. Its cash balance and investments in shares stood at about Rs. 24.5 lakhs and Rs. 32 lakhs respectively. The Company doubled its share capital by issuing bonus shares in the last 20 years and declared 9 percent in 1970 which worked out at 18% of the capital actually invested. Moreover management has acquired the controlling right in Asher Textile Ltd. Tirupur Tamil Nadu from the surplus created by the workers in Annapurna Mills. But the management refused to pay bonus of more than 4% though the workers were all along receiving bonus of 20%.

A GAG order on Government Servants

It is well known that Government servants do not ordinarily seek redress against grievances by formal representations to higher authorities. Such representations are frowned upon by superior authorities and a Government servant is aware of the consequences of their displeasure. Representations are made only when the grievance is a serious one.

The ordinary rule is that such representations are to be channelled through the Government servants' immediate superior even in the case where a representation is against the orders of that superior.

Now read : *"the relevant rules or orders do not prescribe a timelimit for disposing of appeals and petition by the competent authority"*. (our italics)

Real purpose behind closure

The closure had been declared with the lone object of forcing the workers to submit to the management's policy of retrenchment and of workload on the workers. The fact that the workers, after the closure, have not even allowed to draw their provident Fund blatantly reveals the Mill authorities' objectives.

The Government of West Bengal which has through various representations been apprised of the management's attitude and the sufferings of the 2200 workers of the Mill and their families not only refused to protect the workers' interest but also positively assisted the administration in pursuing their anti-labour policies.

In this circumstances, the C.I.T.U in a communication to the Union Labour Minister has demanded for immediate taking over of the Mill by the Central Government.

This confession comes from a letter of the Railway Board on the subject of disposal of representations. It is common knowledge that even when bureaucrats are specifically asked by higher authorities to "expedite" "important" papers, they continue to dawdle, unless they happen to be personally interested in quick disposals. Is it to be imagined that they would show unnecessary haste to dispose of representations by their sub-ordinates on account of a grievance, when no time limit is prescribed.

And it is patent that there is general and widespread delay in the disposal or forwarding of papers by the bureaucrats concerned. Were it not so there would be no occasion for the Railway Board to issue circulars to all concerned to dispose (On Page Fourteen)

Conference of CITU Unions In Punjab and Himachal Pradesh

The First Conference of CITU Unions in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh was held in Town Hall, Ludhiana on October 30-31. Eighty delegates, 11 observers and 16 fraternal delegates representing 22 unions with a total membership of 8467 participated in the Conference.

A Presidium consisting of Pandit Kishori Lal, Jagat Ram Dutt and Ram Asra was elected to conduct the deliberations of the Conference. The proceedings began with a resolution on homage to martyrs who laid down their lives facing police bullets and gangster attacks by the capitalist agents.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU, inaugurated the Conference. Dalip Singh Johal greeted the Conference on behalf of Punjab State Unit of AIKS.

Hari Singh Kang submitted a report on the activities of the CITU Unions in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The report was printed and circulated among the delegates. 24 delegates participated during the discussion on the report which was adopted by the Conference after suitable amendments.

The Conference adopted about 20 resolutions on various pressing problems of the workers. Among the important resolutions were: united action of the working class, solidarity with the people of Bangladesh, victimisation of trade union leaders of State Government employes and defence factories in West Bengal, admission of Peoples China in UNO. Resolutions were also adopted on the problems of workers in engineering, textile, brick

kiln and sugar industries. The Conference also supported the demands of Project workers.

The Conference elected a Working Committee of 31 for Punjab and

A GAG Order on Govt. Servants

(From Page Thirteen)

of representations within a month of their receipt.

So, suffering grievances, and seeing that the representations for the removal of serious grievances are not dealt with, the aggrieved party may be driven to seek a remedy through other channels, such as the Secretary of his Department or the Minister-in-charge, or a Member of Parliament.

This has caused great displeasure on high. The Board, in their letter No. E (D & A) 69 RG 6-3 dated 14.2.69 had thundered against such "subversion". Now the attention of all concerned is again drawn to the command :

"Some Government servants are in the habit of sending copies of their representations to *outside authorities*... (e.g. other Hon. Minister, Secretary, Members of Parliament etc). This is a most objectionable practice, contrary to official propriety and subversive of good discipline and all Government servants are expected scrupulously to eschew it" (our italics)

How is it objectionable just to have the attention of authority being drawn by the so-called "outsiders", when that authority wantonly neglects to take action to remove the Government servants' genuine grievances? We feel on the contrary that this offensive should be removed

Himachal Pradesh including Jagat Ram Dutt as President and Hari Singh Kang as General Secretary.

The Conference ended in a rally of workers in industrial area which was addressed by M.K. Pandhe, Jagat Ram Dutt, Hari Singh Kang and others.

from the Government order, which is aware that inordinate delay is occasioned in disposing of representations, that there is no time limit prescribed—and no remedy through the "proper channel" is promised to be forthcoming.

CITU Office Bearers' Meeting

(From Page Eight)

practice of the management of the Education Institutions in the State. The CITU calls upon all the trade unions to rally behind the Kerala private college teachers so that the Achutha Menon Government is forced to concede their just demands.

The office-bearers decided to hold the next meeting of the CITU in the last week of January next year. The date and venue of the meeting will be finalised by the office-bearers in consultation with various State Committees.

Bombay Hotel Workers Solidarity for Strikers

"A meeting of the I Grade Restaurant and Star Hotel Employees Bombay held on November 14 to consider the situation arising out of the 35 day old strike of the Purohit's Hotel, Bombay. 100 employees are on indefinite strike for 16.66% Bonus. from October 11, 1971.

The Action Committee decided to intensify the struggle and called upon all employees to contribute a day's wage towards the strike fund. It also decided to organise a 'Half Day Bundh' of all the I Grade Restaurants of Fort—Churchgate Area in support of the Purohit Restaurant employees on November 20.

Delhi Workers on the path of Struggle

In the house of Dalmias, the CITU-led Dalmia Company's Employees' Union recently waged a historic struggle and got an all-round increase of Rs. 40 a month from a peon to the clerk.

The whole police machinery of the India Government has been geared up to support Dalmia and to browbeat the workers. Twelve workers were arrested. Instead of helping the workers, the U. P. Government in an unprecedented notification, has declared the strike illegal and banned it, even without a proper reference order. Dalmia has found a trusted ally in the AITUC leader, Jagat, who has provided black-legs to break the strike. While the CITU-led workers numbering about 450, are continuing the strike, about 40 workers, led by the AITUC, have reported for duty under police escort. But the striking workers have decided to fight till victory.

In his Head Office in Delhi, Dalmia has provoked the workers by victimising a peon. The workers have served a strike notice and started demonstrations.

Near Delhi at Sahidabad in the Ghaziabad industrial belt, more than 500 workers of Durga Enterprises Pvt. Ltd., a glass factory owned by Dalmia, have been on strike for over two months last demanding among other things, the payment of compensation to the widow of a worker who died due to the alleged negligence of the management and the withdrawal of suspension orders served on 16 Union activists.

The CITU-led Macneil Barry & Allied Companies Employees' Union has decided to launch a struggle for their charter of demands on which

the management has been sitting for well over a year.

Workers of the notorious U. S.-based I.B.M. (International Business Machine) are in the thick of a struggle demanding the reinstatement of six victimised drivers. Workers, led by the I.B.M. Workers Union, held a demonstration outside the house of the American General Manager of I.B.M., Taylor. Delhi policemen were there to give a guard of honour to this American whose company is busy promoting automation rendering thousands jobless-

Congress-CRP Terrorise Jay Engineering Workers' Colonies

A team of M.P.s and leading trade unionists visited the Katjunagar Colony, Rajendraprasad Colony, and Ushangar in Jadavpur area to enquire into the recurring incidents of armed attack of Congress goondas guarded by CRP upon the inmates of these colonies. A large number of workers of the Jay Engineering factory reside in these Colonies and the local Congress has been making a frantic effort to evict them for their unforgivable allegiance to the CITU Union.

The visiting team consisting of Monoranjan Roy, M.P., A.P. Chatterjee, M.P., Md. Ismil, M.P., Jatin Chakravarty, President, UTUC and Bimalananda Mnkherjee of the CITU, examined several witnesses of these Colonies all of whom narrated their horrifying experiences. All of them testified that not a day passes when the Colony is not attacked either by the goondas or by the CRP or by both. In the wake of such attacks the goondas have killed as

many as four persons of the locality, a worker of Usha Factory inside the workers quarters and tortured and injured a number of others.

The witnesses of Ushanagar narrated how day in and day out, the goondas aided and abetted by the CRP, who even supply rifles and bullets to the goondas, have been continuously firing on the residents of the quarters.

A memorandum was sent by the said team on October 20 to the Prime Minister, A. L. Dias, K. C. Pant and the Home Secretary, West Bengal. It stated that 'a dangerous precedent is being established and permanent damage is being caused to the social fabric by letting loose such goonda-police terror.'

However, it is reported that the administration has done nothing so far to stop this reign of terror on the contrary the goondas act with its connivance and persistently carry on their programme of terrorising the peaceful inhabitants of these Colonies.

On November 4, a large number of Congress goondas raided Rajendraprasad Colony and Ushanagar accompanied by CRP and attacked the local residents with bombs and gunfire. On November 17, they again attacked the inhabitants of Katjunagar with bombs, pipe guns, guns etc. The people of the Colony resisted the attackers till the amunitions of the goondas were exhausted and had to beat a retreat.

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Congress Government Unconcerned About Workers' Problems

Recently two Official Committees concerned with various problems of the workers met in New Delhi: First, the Parliamentary Consultative Committee met on November 1 and the other, the Central Committee on Employment on November 4.

Monoranjan Ray, M. P., Secretary and Md. Ismail, Vice-President, CITU, who are members of Labour Consultative Committee, raised a large number of vital issues concerning the workers to which the responses of the Labour Ministry are mostly either blantly negative or evasive. We summarise parts of the proceedings briefly.

1) The Government of India admitted that the Congress Government of Maharashtra had issued a circular to the employers enjoining them to employ only local persons. The 'socialist' Government of Indira Gandhi who talks so much of national integration has not thought it fit to tell the Maharashtra Government yet that this piece of pernicious parochialism paves the way to disintegration of India. Her Government seems to be quite in conformity with the loud cry of Siva Sena. 2) The Andhra Pradesh Industrial Relations Bill enacted by the Congress Government there, which has taken away the workers' right to strike, seems to have been done in consultation with the Central Government. 3) Regarding issue of recognition of Trade Unions on the basis of secret ballot of the workers, some of the Central Trade Union Organisations other than CITU are naturally apprehensive and are opposed to it and the Government very conveniently refuses to accept the principle on the plea of divergence of

opinion among the Central Trade Unions. 4) On the question of 8-1/3% minimum bonus for the workers, the Government's position is that pending finalisation of the question by a Tripartite Committee, Khadilkar's formula should be accepted. A Bill may be brought only after the Tripartite Committee's report is available. This means to keep the question to cold storage in the name of proposed committee. This attitude of the Government was strongly resented by the CITU representatives.

The Central Committee on Employment

The meeting of the Central Committee on employment revealed that as yet the Government wants to evade the issue on the plea that there is no estimate of the total unemployment problem in the country in spite of 20 years of 'Planning'. Monorajan Roy drew the attention of the Committee to the problem of unemployment in West Bengal. Generally speaking if registration in Employment Exchanges are taken as an indication it will be found that in last five years the registration has increased by 11.76% per year, whereas for last 5 years average increase in the number of employed in organised sector is only 1.5% per year. Since last year Employment Exchange registration has increased by 34% whereas employment increase is by 2.2% all over India, whereas in West Bengal and in certain other States there has been absolute decline in employment.

Unemployment of Women

One of the most serious aspect

of the unemployment problem has been brought out by a memorandum submitted to the Committee by Monoranjan Ray, M. P. The decline in women employment is severe all over the country. In 1947, 35,000 women worked in Bombay Textile Mill; their number has come down to 5,000 in 1968. In Jute Mills of West Bengal the number of women workers has come down from 32,890 in 1952 to only 9374 in 1962. In 1944, 25% of the Coal Mine workers were women; that figure came down to 21% in 1947; to 16% in 1951; to 13% in 1956; to 10% in 1960; and now it is only 7.6%. In Cigarette Factories of Bombay women workers constituted 2/3rd of the workers; in Bangalore 1/3rd. A recent Survey shows that the number of women employed in these sectors are only 12%. Tea Coffee Plantations and Tobacco Industry employed 75 to 80% women out of total complement. The total working force in Tea Plantations has decreased by 80 thousand the bulk of whom are women. Large number of women in pharmaceutical industries were retrenched recently. According to 1971 Census, of the total population of 547 millions are women. The percentage of working force among women which was 27.95% in 1961 has come down in 1971 to 13:18 only.

Monoranjan Roy asked for unemployment relief to all the unemployed persons. The Government however evaded considering it on the plea of finance difficulties.

Union Labour Minister, Shri Khadilkar in his speech admitted that in a "free economy" some sort of unemployment is inevitable. The point was sharply criticised by Sri Monoranjan Roy.

The issues however were merely talked out without any concrete measure for the teeming unemployed.

A Piece of Hypocrisy

(A. P. Chatterjee)

The Government of India initiated a legislation, namely the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 1971 in Rajya Sabha on the 16th November 1971 and got it passed. In the statement of objects and reasons for the Bill, it referred to the recommendation No.119 of the International Labour Organisation whereby the organisation recommended as early as June 1963 that a worker aggrieved by an order of termination of his employment should be entitled to appeal against the order of termination to a neutral Body, such as an arbitrator, a Court an arbitration Committee or a similar body.

The Government of India has waked up to the recommendation rather late. The recommendation is being sought to be implemented years after it was made.

A new section, namely; Section 11A has been added by the the amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act (herein after referred to as the Act) as follows :

“11A where an industrial dispute relating to the discharge or dismissal of a workman has been referred to a Labour Court, Tribunal or National Tribunal for adjudication and, in the course of the adjudication proceedings, the Labour Court, Tribunal, as the case may be, is satisfied that the order of discharge or dismissal was not justified, it may, by its award, set aside the order of discharge or dismissal and direct reinstatement of the workman on such terms and conditions, if any, as

it thinks fit, or give such other relief to the workman including the award of any lesser punishment in lieu of discharge or dismissal as the circumstances of the case may require :

Provided that in any proceeding under this section the Labour Court, Tribunal or National Tribunal; as the case may be, shall rely only on the materials on record and shall not take any fresh evidence in relation to the matter.”

The Bill does not add anything to the present state of things. For, since the inception of the Industrial Disputes Act, the Tribunals have sometimes given the relief of reinstatement in cases of unjustified discharge and dismissal, and the Supreme Court and the State High Courts have sometimes affirmed such orders of reinstatement. The Supreme Court has held even in some cases that, where the punishment is harsh, the Tribunal can set aside that punishment.

The bill does not however, give that relief which is most needed. The Courts, particularly the the Supreme Court, have, by their decisions- made it obligatory for the Tribunals not to go beyond the records of the domestic enquiry of the employer where, on the face of it, the employer has followed the rules of natural justice, that is to say, where a chargesheet has been given and a workman has been given an opportunity to lead evidence and cross-examine the witnesses of the employer.

In fact, that is the trend since the Supreme Court decided the case

of Indian Iron and Steel Company Limited and another Vs. their workmen reported in All India Reporter (1958) Supreme Court at Page 130. In that case the Supreme Court has held that in cases of dismissal, discharge on grounds of misconduct (and an employer deliberately keeps the range of misconduct formidably wide), the Tribunal may interfere only where there is want of good faith, victimisation, unfair labour practice etc. on the part of the management. The Supreme Court held, on the analogy of the anti-diluvian, anachronistic common law doctrine of master and servant, that the Tribunal could not substitute its own judgement for that of the management and sit in appeal over the decision of the employer. That was a dangerous doctrine enunciated by the Supreme Court because the records kept by the employer can never be sacrosanct. There is no guarantee that those records will not be tampered with and unfair labour practice and victimisation may snugly be tucked away underneath a facade of fair play and justice. The Supreme Court doctrine is being assiduously adhered to and, as late in August 17, 1971, the Supreme Court has decided in The Hindusthan General Electrical Corporation Limited Vs. Bishwanath Prasad and another (reporter in 1971 (2) Supreme Court XXVI) that even though there is a violation of the condition in Section 33 (a Section applicable where some proceedings either before the conciliation officer or a Tribunal are pending) the workman is not entitled to reinstatement automatically, but the Tribunal adjudicating the matter will examine the question of termination in the light of the decision in Indian Iron and Steel Company's case.

(On Page Eighteen)

A Piece of Hypocrisy

(From Page Seventeen)

In fact, what was recommended by the International Labour Organisation was that the workman should have a right of appeal to a Central body. In section 11A as sought to be inserted in the Act by the Bill under consideration there is everything except a provision for appeal, that is to say, it lacks exactly that provision which would have enabled the Tribunal to substitute its own influence for the judgment of domestic tribunal of the employer. The lack of this power of the Tribunal is underlined by the fact that Tribunal is debarred from going beyond the records kept by the Management and from taking any fresh evidence. An amendment moved by the writer and Shri D.N. Sen Gupta and others vesting the power in the Tribunal to go beyond the records and to take fresh evidence was cynically enough not accepted by the Ruling Party. The Bill does not also take within its scope all those thousands of employees throughout India who are now deprived of the right to have their dispute referred to the Tribunal by reason of the case of Cricket Board of India where the Supreme Court has held that, where employees are employed in an organisation whose primary purpose is "sports" or "culture", or professional, their dispute with the employer is not an Industrial dispute within the meaning of the Act. These thousands of employees are sweated labour and they are cruelly exploited in the name of sports and culture. In spite of the recommendation of the International Labour Organisation questions of the termination of their service, have not been subjected to the division of any Tribunal or neutral body.

In West Bengal, in 1969 when the United Front was in power, a Bill was unanimously passed by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly making such dispute of employees in Sports or Cultural or professional societies an industrial dispute within the meaning of the Act. The Bill was then referred to the President for assent, and, though two years have gone by, the Central Government has not yet thought fit to accord assent to the Bill.

Nothing more perhaps would have been expected of a Government

which is notorious for its own anti-labour practices. In West Bengal, this very Government has dismissed 13 State Government employees and 32 Central Government employees under the provisions of Article 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution without even indicating to those employees the reasons for the termination of their service and giving them an opportunity to show cause against that termination either to the employer or before a Tribunal. And all this in spite of the recommendation of the International Labor Organisation that a discharged employee should have a right of appeal to a neutral body.

REPORTS FROM UNIONS

Union Bank Employees Agitate For Longstanding Demands

About seven thousand employees of Union Bank of India have been participating in work-to-rule movement all over the country since October 25 at the call of the All India Union Bank Employees' Federation on their 23-points Charter of Demands.

The Union Bank Employees have been agitating for long to realise some of their outstanding demands which include revision of promotion policy, festival allowance, fair recruitment policy etc. but the recalcitrant authorities did not only refuse to concede those demands but issued such black circulars that steps would be taken against those employees who would participate in the agitation under the banner of All India Federation. The management however failed to cow down the workers who are holding demonstrations every day during office-hours.

Marmagao Port And Dock Workers' Ninth Conference.

The Ninth Annual Conference of the Marmagao Port Trust and Dock Workers was held on October 29 at Shambhaji Nagar, Goa. Gerald Pereira, General Secretary of the Marmagao Waterfront Workers' Union (CITU) placed his report before the 450 delegates attending the Conference.

The Conference made a strong protest against the wrongful arbitrary dismissal of the 13 West Bengal State Government employees and 32 employees of the Ordinance Factories in West Bengal and demanded re-instatement of all of them.

Resolutions were also adopted on ESM, PVA and MIS. Acts and on the various longstanding demands of the Port and Dock Workers.

The Conference elected a 15 member Managing Committee with Caetano Alvares as the President and Gerald Pereira as the General Secretary.

New Upswing of Struggle in Kerala

"Dark clouds are gathering over the political horizon in Kerala with lightning and thunder in the air. The Achutha Menon Ministry are facing dark, difficult days—Kerala is in the midst of an acute economic crisis—struggles are rising wave upon wave..."

So writes Malayala Manorama, the most vicious reactionary, retrograde, anti-communist paper in Kerala, with a staunch supporter of the regime now in power. Below is a brief account of the surge of struggles in Kerala, embracing not only industrial workers but also all toilers including agricultural labourers.

Against High Prices and Denial Of Democratic Rights

Protesting against the rise in prices, increase in taxation, denial of democratic rights, etc. the organised working class of Kerala conducted a mass Satyagraha on November 16 in front of the State Secretariat and District Collectorate offices all over the State. This Satyagraha was part of the Protest Week, being conducted throughout the State at the call of the Kerala State Committee of the CITU.

Coir Workers Demonstrate

7000 coir workers demonstrated on November 15 before the Paravoor taluk office in Ernakulam District under the auspices of Joint Action Council of Coir workers. Their demands were saving the coir industry from ruin, the publication of minimum wages report, etc.

Coir spinning workers of Udayamperur panchayat conducted Satyagraha before the Ernakulam Collectorate. Their demands were

solving the unemployment problem in the Coir industry sector, granting fair wages and relief for unemployed Coir workers etc. About 200 women also took part in the Satyagraha conducted by workers belonging to all political parties.

1½ Lakh Workers' Action

Nearly 1½ lakhs industrial workers of Calicut District went on one day token strike on October 26 in support of the struggle of the workers of Mavoor Rayon Factory for Bonus. This was conducted under the joint auspices of CITU INTUC, AITUC, HMS, Independent unions etc.

Reports from Unions

All India Plantation Workers' Conference

The All India Plantation Workers' Conference will be held on January 4-5, 1972 in Vandiperiyar, District Kottayam in the hilly regions of Kerala. The decision to hold such a conference was taken by the General Council meeting of the CITU held at Coimbatore in June last.

A Preparatory Committee has been formed to make all the preparations for the Conference with Monoranjan Ray, Secretary, CITU as Convenor.

The Conference will consider the situation in plantation industry and chalk out a programme of action for the plantation workers. It will take suitable steps to coordinate the activities of the plantation unions all over India.

Teachers Continue Struggles

The State Committee of All Kerala Private Teachers' Association, which has been conducting strike struggle for the last 57 days rejected on November 21 the offer of the Government and decided by overwhelming majority to continue the strike till Government accepts their demand for direct payment of salary by the Government.

Congress (R) Students Union and the Youth Congress (Indira) betrayed their true colours by withdrawing their support to this strike. This was supplemented by the betrayal of the President of the Association, Congressman (R) Prof. K.M. Chandy who asked the teachers to go back to colleges, in violation of the majority decision of the State Committee.

The CITU has appealed to all the non-CITU unions to participate in the Conference by sending delegates, fraternal delegates or observers.

Representation of Employees of Coking Coal Mines and Birla Concerns

The deputation of the Federation of Marcantile Employees Unions led by Md. Ismail, M.P. had an interview with the Minister of Steel and Mines on October 25 and submitted a memorandum urging him that the interest of the employees should be protected after taking over of Coking Coal Mines.

In another memorandum to the Minister of Labour, Khadilkar on the closure of Birla's concerns the representatives demanded immediate re-opening of Head Offices of Birlas in Calcutta and ensure job securities in the closed offices and factories.

West Bengal Day Observed Through-out India

(From Page Four)

resolution also demanded reinstatement of the dismissed employees, and abrogation of the afore-said undemocratic provisions of the Constitution.

HARYANA. Demonstrations and meetings were held all over HARYANA by State and Central Government employees, Life Insurance Corporation employees, Railway employees and others.

RAJASTAN. In Rajasthan where the State Government employees are carrying on their movement on their own specific demands the Day's programme was observed under the leadership of the Rajasthan State Government Employees' Federation. In Jhalore, Chitorgarh, Jaipur, Bharatpur, Kotah and in all other units. At different levels employees, attached to the Central Government, Life Insurance Corporation, Railways, banks etc. participated jointly in the programme.

MYSORE. The programme was implemented in all parts of the State under the leadership of the Mysore State Non-Gazetted Officers' Association. Central Government employees Life Insurance Corporation employees and others also participated.

Hyderabad. The Day was observed with great success by State and Central Government employees Unions.

GUJARAT. Demonstrations and meetings were held all over the State in response to the call of the All-India Federation.

MAHARASHTRA. On the joint initiative of State and Central Government employees and employees of other categories the pro-

gramme was implemented quite successfully in different parts of the State.

KERALA. In Kerala the observance of the "West Bengal Day" became an occasion for massive campaigns and was marked by joint demonstrations of students, youths, workers, employees and other sections of the democratic masses at State, district, taluk and bloc levels. A permanent "fifth November Committee" has been set up to fight against attacks on trade-union and democratic rights. The participation of the general masses of workers in the Day's programme was extremely encouraging, despite non-participation of the AITUC and the UTUC leadership. In some places the HMS ac-

tively participated in the programme. Central Government employees, especially P and T., Life Insurance employees, joined in the programme in a very big way. 800,000 employees and workers wore badges. Protest demonstrations were held for one hour in front of every mill and factory and all Government offices at the commencement of the Day's work. This was followed by demonstrations and meetings in the afternoon. There were three hundred such meetings. Hundreds of street-corner meetings were held in 55 taluks. Chief Minister Achutha Menon of the Congress-Right Coalition Government has charge-sheeted more than 100 employees already for participation in the Day's programme and similar actions are contemplated against numerous others.

Steel Workers Plan For Action

A meeting of the 26th July Bhilai Steel Convention Committee was held on November 21, at Jamsedpur. It was attended by representatives of unions in steel industry. K.K. Tripathy of Tisco Karmachari Union, presided over the meeting. After reviewing the organisational position of the different units, the Committee decided that letters should be issued to all Trade Unions in the Steel Plants for a joint movement on a co-ordinated programme some time in the second week of January, 1972. If no response was received from the other unions, the Committee decided to organise a workers' Convention in the 2nd week of December, to chalk out the programme.

The meeting also adopted resolutions :-(a) condoling the death of Com. Udai Singh Kishore, one of its Convenors ; (b) condemning

the arrest under P.V.A. of J.B.Roy, the Convenor of the Committee, and demanding his immediate release ; and (c) noting with concern the increasing attack of the ruling class on the leaders of the Committee in the form of arrest under false charges, attempts at murder, charge-sheets and suspensions, A report on Negotiating Committee and Standardisation Committee for Steel Industry was also placed before the Committee by A. Dakshi of H.S.E.U., Durgapur Unit.

Plantation Conference Reception Committee Formed

A reception committee has been formed with K. I. Rajan as Secretary and M. G. Ramchandram as chairman for the ensuing All India Plantation Conference in Kerala. B. T. Ranadive, President, C I T U will inaugurate the conference.