

# The Working Class

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU



VOL I. No 2

OCTOBER 1971

40 Paise

## WHAT PREVENTS UNITED ACTION ?

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Annual Subscription Rs. 5'00

## CITU's Appeal to AITUC and HMS to Implement Decisions of Delhi Conference

The unprecedented enthusiasm created all over the country after the Conference of trade union representatives of Central Organisations and National Federations held in New Delhi on May 18 and 19 is on the wane since no follow-up action was taken to implement the decisions.

The CITU took the decisions seriously. The meeting of the General Council of the CITU held in Coimbatore on June 11-14, 1971 welcomed the declaration of the New Delhi Conference and called upon "all its affiliated trade unions and members to take initiative and make fraternal approaches to other trade unions and their members, popularise the programme of the declaration and organise trade unions on the basis of the programme of the declaration and against every attack of the working class."

However, the over involvement of the AITUC and the HMS leadership in parleys with the INTUC on the issues agreed upon by the Convention has been the main obstacle in unitedly carrying forward the task of implementation of these decisions. This is a matter of concern to everyone who cherished the idea of powerful united actions to defeat the offensive of the capitalist class.

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary of the CITU addressed identical letters to S. A. Dange, General Secretary, AITUC and Mahesh Desai, General Secretary, HMS on September 19, in which he has emphasised the need for immediate implementation of the decisions of the New Delhi Conference.

The following is the full text of the letter of P. Ramamurti :

"More than four months have elapsed since the Conference of the representatives of the Central Trade Union Organisations and Federations met on the eve of the Conference of Trade Union Representatives

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# The First Conference of CITU West Bengal State Committee

The First Conference of W. Bengal State Committee of the CITU held in Asansol on September 17-19, 1971 was a manifestation of a new urge for unity and united action among the working class of W. Bengal. 2,326 delegates who attended the Conference brought with them valuable experience of innumerable struggles conducted all over the State during the recent past. The five lakh and eightysix thousand membership represented in the Conference clearly indicated the rise of over one lakh workers in the ranks of the CITU since its Foundation Conference held in Calcutta in May last year.

The Conference was held in the Sen-Raleigh township where 3,500 workers have been carrying a heroic fight against closure of the factory by the Indo-British collaboration management.

The Reception Committee, formed under the Chairmanship of Bijoy Paul collected Rs. 50,000 for the success of the Conference. A remarkable 1,000 strong volunteers, which included 200 women, were working without any rest and looked after the conveniences of all the delegates during the Conference.

The conference began after Benoy Chowdhury hoisted the flag and Md. Ismail garlanded the martyrs' column. Md. Ismail, Acting President of the W. Bengal State Committee of CITU presided over the Conference. Bijoy Paul, Chairman of the Reception Committee while welcoming the delegates gave a graphic picture of the struggles of the workers in the Asansol-Raniganj-Durgapur belt under the banner of the CITU.

## Inauguration by Ranadive

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU in his inaugural speech paid glowing tributes to the heroic working class of W. Bengal and pointed out how the entire T. U. movement in India was drawing inspiration from these struggles.

He sharply criticised the bankrupt policies pursued by the Congress Government which was mainly responsible for the closure, retrenchment, unemployment and low wages.

Ranadive pointed out how a ferocious offensive was launched by the Government and the capitalists to impose the burden of the economic crisis on the working class and people of India. When the workers resisted these onslaughts the Government came forward with unprecedented repressive measures. The working class fought the repression bravely and raised the banner of CITU high.

Ranadive by giving examples showed how the policy of unity in action proved to be correct. He called upon the delegates to pursue the policy with more vigour and bring more and more sections of the working class into the fold of united movement.

The CITU President emphasised the need for developing powerful movement for solidarity with the fighting people of Bangladesh.

## Review of Struggles

Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary, West Bengal State Committee submitted his report which was printed and circulated in Hindi and Bengali languages.

The Report contained a review of the struggles of the working class of W. Bengal during the last four years. It highlighted the role played by the CITU during the last 16 months and sharply criticised the AITUC leadership for repeatedly betraying the struggles of the workers.

While explaining the Report Monoranjan Roy observed, "The experience of the workers in W. Bengal has clearly shown that the formation of the CITU was a historic necessity. Within a short period the CITU has emerged as a formidable force in the State. No repressive measure of the Congress Government can check the rising tide of the workers' struggles in W. Bengal."

Monoranjan Roy expressed his confidence that the CITU in W. Bengal would carry forward the policy of united action and mobilise workers for still bigger struggles.

Altogether 28 delegates covering various districts and industries participated in the discussion on the Report of the General Secretary. Discussion was opened by T. K. Tiwari and followed by Haridas Malakar, Biren Roy, Bimalananda Mukherjee, Ananda Pathak, Dilip Majumdar, Jamini Saha, Subodh Ganguly, Robin Chatterji, A. Querishi, Rabi Sinha, Bimal Chatterjee, Sudhin kumar, Suniti Biswas, Sujit Biswas and others.

The discussion veered round the experience of the delegates in various struggles led by them. Several important suggestions were made by the delegates and accepted in the Conference. It was decided  
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# Spotlight on Coal Industry

Coal industry is one of our oldest industries. It provided employment to more than 3,50,000 workers as early as in 1951. An analytical study of the various aspects of this industry covering the period from 1956 to 1968 (post first year plan period) reveals its poor performance. The following vital informations about the industry are available from various Government records.

by only 12.2 per cent. The workers were naturally subjected to harder work which in its turn increased their productivity from 0.40 to 0.64 tonne per worker per man-shift; an increase of 60 percent. The wages of the workers was raised from Rs. 15 per week in 1956 to Rs. 48.39 per week; an increase of 222.6 per cent. During this period cost of living of the working class increased substantially. Even the fraudulent

will be evident from the fact that the quantity of exports of coal decreased from 15.0 lakhs tonnes in 1955-56 to only 2.92 lakhs tonnes in 1967-68.

This is the record of development of the coal industry which is one of the basic industries of the country. The working class cannot allow themselves to be exploited and they are determined to resist the same.

Year	Annual Production ('000 tonnes)	Value thereof (Rs. lakhs)	Average daily employment ('000)	Average earnings of workers per week (In M. Tonne) (Rs.)	overall Out-put per manshift
1956	40037	6503	352	15.00	0.40
1961	56065	11719	411	23.39	0.48
1965	67162	16987	411	—	0.56
1966	67974	17811	425	32.99	0.57
1967	68223	19795	414	37.56	0.59
1968	70814	23355	395	48.39	0.64

From the foregoing table it will be found that in 1956 the industry employed 3,52,000 workers which produced 400.37 lakhs tonnes of coal valuing Rs. 6,503 lakhs at an average price of Rs. 16.2 per tonne. A worker engaged in the industry then earned on an average Rs 15 per week and his productivity was then found to be 0.40 metric tonnes per man shift. In 1968, the production of coal increased to 708.14 lakhs tonnes and it fetched a sum of Rs. 233.55 crores at an average price of Rs. 32.9 per tonne. This increase in production resulted mainly from increase in the workload on labour as it is found that the number of workers remained more or less constant. The production during this period increased by more than 76 percent; the price of coal registered an increase of more than 100 per cent but the employment increased

working class general price index registered an increase from 105 to 215 (1949 base year) an increase of 104.7 percent. It should be noted in this connection that the coal mine-owners take false receipts from the workers and pay less wages. The official statistics however fails to give a correct picture on this question. Plainly thus, the workers have been deprived of their legitimate dues and they were placed in much worse conditions in 1968 than they were in 1956. Had the general price index numbers been worked out in conformity with realities, the extent of exploitation of the workers would have revealed an amazing figure. The exploitation of the workers has not led the industry to prosper but has retarded its progress. The industry failed to increase its employment potentiality. Its foreign exchange earnings also dwindled as

## CITU Office Bearers Meet

(From Page Fifteen)

to mobilise the full strength of the glorious struggle of the Bangladesh people. The meeting calls upon all organisations to immediately take steps to implement the decision of the National T. U. Committee of India for solidarity with Bangladesh and further proposes series of joint conventions in leading industrial centres in India in support of Bangladesh.

The meeting has discussed the questions of rectification of Consumer Price Index Numbers, wages and income policy of the Government and Employees' Family Pension Scheme. It appreciates the role of the CITU unions in campaigning against the scheme which has forced the other T. U. Centres like AITUC and INTUC to change their earlier stand of supporting the scheme. The meeting discussed about.

New Delhi meeting of the trade union centres and national federations held in May last and decided to take-up the issue with other participants in the Conference.

The meeting decides to hold a meeting of the Working Committee of the CITU either in the end of October or in the first week of November in Calcutta.

# Khadilkar's New Bonus Recipe

The new bonus formula suggested by the Union Labour Minister R. K. Khadilkar is a futile exercise to hoodwink the workers. After making apparently radical announcements from time to time he has now brought forward proposals which would please only the employers.

According to Khadilkar's formula the industrial units would be divided into 3 categories.

1. Units who have shown gross profits as inadequate to provide normal statutory depreciation should give 1% extra over the minimum bonus (i. e. 5%).

2. Units who have shown profits higher by 1% of the total annual wages after providing for statutory depreciation would pay 2% extra over the minimum bonus (i. e. 6%).

3. Units whose profits show a 2% surplus over the annual wages after providing for statutory depreci-

ation would pay an additional  $4\frac{1}{3}$  over the minimum bonus (i. e.  $8\frac{1}{3}$ %).

The matter is simple for the employers. They have only to manipulate their balance sheets to show that the companies could hardly have any surplus after payment of depreciation.

Central T. U.s have rightly rejected the formula. The workers in several centres have already snatched more bonus than offered by the Bonus Act and Khadilkar's formula. A 5000 strong demonstration organised by the CITU in Bombay on September 20 near the tripartite consultative meeting convened by Khadilkar has shown the new mood of the workers against any machination to bring down the minimum bonus lower than  $8\frac{1}{3}$ %. P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU while addressing the demonstrators called upon the working class to launch a country-wide united struggle to defeat the game of the Government.

restaurants and bakery of the Kwaliti Restaurant & Ice cream Co. (Bombay) went on a strike for an indefinite period on various demands such as D.A. on par with Khyber restaurant, uniform wages-scales for the Grade 1 Air-Conditioned restaurants in Bombay. The strike is being led by Hotel and Bakery Workers' Union (CITU) and the Bombay Labour Union jointly.

## Convention of Trade Union in Kanpur

Recently conference of trade union delegates at Kanpur was convened by the Trade Union Coordination Committee formed sometime back consisting of the representative of local CITU Unions and some of the Associations that have been struggling against government repression.

About 300 delegates attended. Delegates from Textile, Rayon, IEL Fertiliser, J. K. Jute, J. K. Electronics, Corporation employees Electricity workers were present.

A presidium of 5 comrades conducted the deliberations of the Conference. The leaders of the Unions that have continuously fought for the trade union rights and their demands addressed the conference and narrated their experiences of the struggles and the behaviour of reformists and revisionist trade union leaders.

Resolution welcoming the 8-point Delhi Declaration and incorporating some other local demands was accepted unanimously. It has been decided to hold a workers Rally on October 10 where the common demands will be raised to demonstrate solidarity.

## NEWS-BRIEFS

### Bengal Firemen Protest CRP Repression

Sept. 5-7—More than 5,000 West Bengal Fire Service workers at 65 different stations all over the state struck work in protest against the killing of a fireman. Lakshman Gharai at Tollygunje Fire Station on September 5.

### O. G. P. (Durgapur) Workers Strike

Sept. 9-10—Ophthalmic Glass Plant (Durgapur) workers observed strike demanding revision of pay-scale, acceptable gratuity and incentive scheme and others at the call of the O. G. P. Employees' Union

(CITU). The rival union led by the Right CP, both wings of Congress, SUC and Jan Sangh failed to break the strike in spite of their persistent effort.

### Calcutta Reserve Bank Employees' Struggle

Sept. 11 The Reserve Bank employees in Calcutta struck work for 2 hours demanding release of their arrested colleagues, withdrawal, PVA, MISA and other black Acts and stoppage of police repression upon democratic movement.

### Bombay Hotel Workers' Strike

Sept. 15 More than 200 workmen employed in the Kwaliti rest-

# Bombay Cotton Textile Workers Prepare For General Strike From October 11

## From Our Correspondent

The successful one day strike on September 1, by the Cotton textile workers of Bombay in support of immediate reopening of closed mills, end to all wage and bonus cuts in government-run mills, abolition of contract system, twelve per cent bonus, permanency to 'badli' workers and revision of wage standard was a landmark in the history of Bombay textile workers' movement.

This was the first industry-wise action after last year's bonus struggle in which the cotton textile workers got more bonus than what was available under the Bonus Act and the majority recommendations of the Bonus Commission including S.A. Dange.

Lal Bawta Mill Mazdur Union (CITU) and Girni Kamgar Union (AITUC) gave a joint call for strike on September 1. The AITUC leadership refused joint preparations for one-day strike which gave a handle for disruption to the mill-owners. The strike could have been far more spectacular if both the unions would have launched a joint campaign.

B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU who addressed a meeting on the strike day congratulated the workers for their successful strike and urged them to carry forward the unity achieved in this struggle for more powerful actions of the cotton textile workers.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the Lal Bawta Mill Mazdur Union held on September 6 called upon two lakh cotton textile workers in Bombay to prepare for a General Strike from October 11, to press for the following demands:

\*Promulgation of Ordinance by October 10, for 8 per cent minimum bonus;

\* In view of the high profits of cotton mills in Bombay 12 per cent bonus to the workers in all the mills;

\* Bonus should be paid to all the workers working in the Mills taken over by the Government;

\* Edward, Narsu, Indu Group and other mills taken over by the Government should immediately pay all the arrears accumulated during the last 4 years.

The Managing Committee of Girni Kamgar Union has also taken a decision to go on for a general strike from October 11 on similar demands. However the leadership of the GKU is only emphasising 8 per cent minimum bonus while observing discreet silence over the quantum of bonus to be paid to Bombay workers despite high profits of mills during 1970.

## INTUC Propaganda

The spokesmen of the Congress Government and the INTUC leaders have been loudly talking about the Government's proposed ordinance on minimum Bonus of 8 percent. The Working Committee of Lal Bawta Mill Mazdur Union pointed out that such slogans have been repeated several times only to blunt the edge of the workers' struggle while in practice the Government blatantly refused to take any concrete action.

While underlining the remarkable unity displayed by the cotton textile workers during the recent one day strike, the resolution states.

"No one union can boast that the strike of September 1, was successful due to its efforts alone.

If any one tries to do that it would only lead to confusion among the workers and the responsibility for disrupting the workers would fall on his head. Active workers of both the unions have made untiring efforts and shown doggedness which alone built a powerful anti-mill-owners and anti-Government united front of Bombay textile workers. This is the key of the success of September 1 strike and the unity achieved during this strike was an invaluable treasure of the Bombay textile workers. Such unity is hundred times more necessary if the General Strike is to be organised successfully. The Working Committee therefore appeals to the union activists to defend this unity at all costs."

The meeting criticised the decision of the managing committee of the GKU of not having joint front with the CITU union since it would only demoralise the workers and disrupt their united strength. This decision violates the spirit of the meeting held in Delhi in May which specially emphasised the joint front against the offensive of the employers and the government.

## Appeal for Unity

The resolution further observed, "We strongly point out to the Girni Kamgar Union that we jointly made September 1 strike successful. This action brushed aside the inactivity haunting the movement for years and created a new enthusiasm among the cotton textile workers of Bombay. This treasure of unity should be carried forward. Let us stand shoulder to

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# Will Waterfront Federation Leadership Give Up Inaction ?

Despite important struggles breaking out in India and outside during the recent past, AITUC dominated Waterfront Workers' Federation went on following the policy of inaction. The things which should have received the leadership's utmost attention callously went unnoticed. They hardly appreciated the significance of the one-day united strike on August 27, in West Bengal as a mark of protest against the attacks launched by the ruling class on the workers. Besides, a number of strikes had taken place in the ports of Madras, Cochin and Calcutta. The leadership of the Federation refrained from taking any part in those movements. Lack of any co-ordinating activity on the part of the Federation was most pronounced.

Even when International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union resorted to strike, thus paralysing 'the entire pacific coast of the U. S. A. and Canada' the Federation leadership did not inform all the units the nature of the supporting actions they contemplated to take. The strike was launched for higher wages against containerisation, for better benefits etc. Marmagao Waterfront Workers' Union (CITU) cabled a message expressing solidarity to Harry Bridges, the President of the union.

The Federation leadership has not done anything to mobilise the dockers for the cause of Bangladesh. The entire initiative was left to the ICFTU Union.

Moreover, no directive is forthcoming from the Federation leadership as to how and when agitational

programmes should be carried out on pressing problems of waterfront workers of India.

G. Pareira, General Secretary, Marmagao Waterfront Workers' Union (CITU) has drawn attention of the dominant Federation leadership to these issues and proposed a meeting of the working committee of the Federation in Bombay either in October or November, to discuss these and other issues relating to the Third Conference of the Federation.

It is hoped that the dominant leadership of the Federation would respond to it and give up its inactivity so that a powerful united movement of waterfront workers is launched throughout the country.

## Bombay Textile Workers' Strike

( From Page Five )

shoulder against mill-owners, pro-employer and anti-worker policies of the Government and write a new page in the history of the textile workers' movement by making the General Strike from October 1, a grand success. Please remember that if we unite victory will be ours, if we divide it will create obstacles in our movement."

The LBMMU appealed to all the mill committees in the Action Committees that they should side with the workers in this hour of trial. A section of the leadership of these mill committees gave a slogan no flag, no politics, no union, which

according to LBMMU is only an instrument in the hands of the mill-owners to divide the workers. It further appealed to the INTUC workers that they should join this struggle despite the betrayal by their leadership.

The Working Committee of the LBMMU called upon all the workers to form strike committees in every mill to organise and conduct the strike unitedly. The workers should close up their ranks irrespective of their affiliations.

The Resolution in the end called upon the workers to take inspiration from the glorious strike of working class of West Bengal on August 27 and build a powerful unity which the Government and the employers would find difficult to break.

## Railwaymen Fight For Demands

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detailed discussion on the question of running allowance it was decided that the final decision for direct action would be taken after the annual convention fixed at Burdwan on January 18-20, next year.

The N. E. Railway Loco Runn-Staff also met there and formed an Ad-hoc Committee for the entire zone with Brahmdeo Kumar, as Convenor to organise the Loco Running Staff Association there.

These decisions were explained in a largely attended mass meeting on September 18. Hari Krishna, Secretary of the State and Central Government Employees' Co-ordination Committee, addressed the meeting. In this meeting the contents of Railway Minister's reply to the letter of Md. Ismail, M.P. on the question of victimisation of workers after the last strike in March. April, 1971 was explained. The workers, resented the attitude of the Railway Minister, who went back from his assurance of 'No Victimisation.' These meetings created new enthusiasms among the railway employees of Barauni-Garhara.

## Calcutta High Court Decision Makes Industrial Disputes Act More Retrograde

In this issue I shall discuss Section 2(k) read with Section 2A of the Industrial Disputes Act, the latter being declared ultra-vires by the Calcutta High Court.

The discussion is important from the Trade Union point of view to show how the Courts import by their interpretation a content into a legal provision which was never the intention of the legislature. Even though in some cases such law-making interpretation may have slightly benefitted the workmen, one cannot support the process and principle of judge-made law which ultimately saps the sovereign authority of the Legislatures.

Section 2(k) is one of these legal provisions which has been bothered too heavily by the Supreme Court and the other High Courts. The result is that it has received an interpretation that was perhaps not within the ken of the legislating body. The Section defines industrial disputes as "any dispute or difference between employers and employees, or between employers and workmen, or between workmen and workmen, which is connected with the employment or non-employment, or the terms of employment or with the conditions of labour, of any person."

This definition became an important jurisdictional fact because the Industrial Tribunals have jurisdiction only to try an 'industrial dispute' on its reference by the State or Central Government. Again and again therefore the employers have challenged the awards of the Industrial Tribunals on the ground

that the dispute was anything but an industrial dispute, particularly where the matter related to the dismissal or discharge, or termination of service, of a workman. The capitalist fights every inch for his "inalienable" right to hire and fire.

The capitalist, by his sustained attack, was able to cause a dent in the provision of the law defining 'industrial dispute', and we regret that it was so.

One of the first shots in the arm for the capitalist is in the decision in Banerjee vs. Mukherjee, 1953(1) (LL) 195—AIR 1953 Supreme Court 58—1953 Supreme Court Journal 19. The Court observed, "...we would hardly think of saying that there is industrial dispute where the employee is dismissed by his employer and the dismissal is questioned as wrongful. But at the same time ...a single employee's case might develop into an industrial dispute when, as often happens, it is taken up by the trade union of which he is a member and there is a concerted demand by the employees for redress."

The questions that subsequently arose were as to whether the trade union would be a trade union of the majority of members, what should be the position where there is no trade union in the establishment concerned, whether the backing of the dispute by the employees should be by a majority of those or any number of them however small.

In Central Provinces Transport Services Lord vs. R. G. Patwardhan

(All India Reporter 1957 Supreme Court at page 104—1957 Supreme Court Journal 58—1952(2) Labour Law Journal 27), as well as in Newspapers Limited vs. Industrial Tribunal, H. P. and others (All India Reporter 1957 Supreme Court at page 532—1957 Supreme Court Journal 566—1957(2) Labour Law Journal 1), the Supreme Court held that a dispute between an employer and a single employee cannot be an industrial dispute unless it is taken up by the union or a number of workmen under the same employer.

But, if the employer dismissed all his workmen and if there is no union to support them, there might be left none among the workmen left under that employer to support that dispute. Faced with that contradiction, the Supreme Court held in Workmen of Dharampal Premchand vs. Dharampal Premchand (All India Reporter 1966 Supreme Court 182—1965 (1) Labour Law Journal 668—1965 (2) Supreme Court Journal 818), "If eighteen workmen are dismissed by an order passed on the same day, it would be unreasonable to hold that they themselves do not form a group of workmen which would be justified in supporting the cause of one another."

Again, in the same case, "Considerations which would be relevant in dealing with a dispute relating to an individual employee's dismissal would not be material in dealing with a case where a large number of employees have been dismissed on the same day."

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## Legal Notes

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The law seems to have been settled now that a majority of the workmen need not support a dispute, but a substantial number should. In Workmen of Rohtak General Transport Company vs. Rohtak General Transport Company" ( 1962 (1) Labour Law Journal page 334), a dispute regarding 2 workmen in the transport company employing a total number of 22 workmen was supported by 5 workmen and 14 workmen did not support their cause, and yet it was held to be a valid dispute by the Supreme Court.

In State of Bihar vs. Kripa Sankar Jaiswal ( All India Reporter 1961 Supreme Court page 304-1961(1) Labour Law Journal 334-1961(1) Indian Factories and Labour Reports 321), the Supreme Court held that the union sponsoring the dispute need not be either recognised or registered. The Court has also reiterated that the dispute can be raised by only some of the workmen.

The union need not even command the support of the majority of the workmen, as held by the Supreme Court in Associated Cement Co. Ltd. vs. their workmen (All India Reporter 1960 Supreme Court 777-1960(1) Labour Law Journal 491-1960 Supreme Court Journal page 690).

Can a foreign trade union sponsor a dispute? In Bombay Union of Journalists and others vs. The Hindu, Bombay and another (All India Reporter 1963 Supreme Court 318-1962(2) Supreme Court Journal 107), the Supreme Court has held in the Bombay Union of Journalists vs. The Hindu ( See Supra ) that an outside union can espouse a dispute provided a large number of workmen or a majority thereof of

the establishment concerned are members of that union.

In order to set at rest all these vexed questions as to when and how an individual dispute of dismissal or discharge of a workman becomes an industrial dispute, parliament enacted Section 2A by the amending Act 35 of 1965. Section 2A lays down that the dismissal, discharge, retrenchment, or termination otherwise of the service of a workman would be deemed to be an industrial dispute, notwithstanding that no other workman nor any union of workmen is a party to the dispute. This enactment seems also to be a declaration of the intention of the legislature in having enacted Section 2 (k) of the Industrial Dispute Act. Section 2A restored that meaning to Section 2(k) which was meant to be its original meaning. In fact, amending Act 35 of 1965, to my mind, falls in the category of declaratory legislation. The simple meaning of the statute was obscured and almost subjected to sea-change by a mass of judicial decisions and Section 2A remedied that state of affair.

The amended Section has been

noticed by several High Courts and Mr. Justice Sankar Prosad Mitra of Calcutta High Court has in a recent case struck down the case as ultra vires. It was a little unusual for Mr. Justice Mitra to have decided the vires of that section, without giving a notice to either the Advocate General of the State or the Attorney General of the Union. The judgement is not in our hand but Mr. Justice Mitra seems to have proceeded on the ground that Section 2A is contrary to the principles of industrial peace and harmony on the basis of which only the machinery of the Act can according to the learned judge be set in motion. The learned judge seems to have thought that the dismissal of an individual by itself does not violate industrial harmony and peace.

The question of dismissal or discharge even of a single workman indubitably creates a tension in the establishment which may not burst into open industrial unrest but it has all the potentialities for such unrest. Such cases are therefore per se industrial disputes.

We shall watch how Parliament now sets right the imbalance.

—A. P. Chatterjee M. P.

## Birla Employees' Struggle Against Closures

( From Page Nine )

and documents which would have been very important for the Commission of Inquiry. Therefore, it is clear that the closing down of these offices of Birla concerns within four days of the appointment of an Inquiry Commission is a clear attempt to sabotage the outcome of this Commission.

Secondly, a case is pending in respect of contravention of the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act 1947 for purchasing a huge sum of sterling by Hindustan Motors Ltd. (a Birla concern) from the United Commercial Bank in 1966.

The Birlas want to crush the union so that they can manipulate without hindrance their irregularities and malpractices which they have been indulging in for the last two decades. What is amazing that inspite of all these undemocratic and unscrupulous acts the Government of India in stead of bringing them to book or sending them behind the bars, reward them with *Padmavibhusan*, and licences worth crores of rupees.

The Birla Employees are however confident of the ultimate victory and therefore are struggling with courage and determination.

# Birla Employees' Struggle Against Closures

The Birlas have always been hostile to the idea of forming a Trade Union by their employees. They have been continuously pursuing anti-labour policy, exploiting the people in collaboration with foreign monopoly capital, and are now leading the reactionary in their attack on the working class and democratic movements particularly in West Bengal where the working class is more conscious and militant. Their reactionary character has come out in the most naked form in their attack on their employees of Calcutta Office.

Having failed in the attempts to suppress the formation of a union for over 2 decades the Birla management started negotiations with the union, and an agreement was arrived at on February 6, 1970, between the representatives of the employees and one of the Director of Birla Brothers, regarding recognition of the union and settlement of the Charter of Demands. As per the agreement, discussions were initiated on February 9, 1970, with the officials of the Birlas regarding the Charter of Demands. But suddenly on February 20, 1970 the management changed its attitude and forthwith closed the door of negotiations. The union submitted a memorandum to the Birlas but to no effect. Virtually, on and from February 23, 1970 the Birlas started to effect closure and the shifting of over 100 offices on false pretexts which the employees are still fighting with fervour.

The Co-ordination Committee of the Birla Workers' Unions, a representative body of 70,000 workers and employees of different Birla concerns in West Bengal, demanded repeatedly to the State Government

and the Central Government to take over all Birla concerns in West Bengal at least the Hindustan Motors Limited as a token to force Birlas to retrace their steps. But the Central Government, instead of taking such actions, issued fresh licences to the Birlas to increase their capital.

Apart from these Calcutta offices seven factories under Birla Management in West Bengal are also under closure or lock out involving about 8,000 workers. Recently, the Birlas had locked out the Kesoram Rayon Factory at Tribeni (West Bengal) to crush the newly formed CITU Union.

For these 20 months, the employees have been struggling a heroic battle against Birlas. During this period, many conciliation meetings were held, but the Birla Management every time wanted to retrench the union leaders. The unions always refused to oblige the Birlas. At the same time Birlas had instituted false court cases against the struggling employees to frustrate their legitimate struggle. The Police, CRP administration, Press, All India Radio, are all helping the Birlas. When Sm. Indira Gandhi came to Calcutta and attended the meeting of the industrialists at the Indian Chamber of Commerce, the employees from their Camp at India Exchange started to shout the slogans as "Indira Gandhi, Explain why the offices of Birlas are still closed !." The police and CRP took the position and pointed their rifles at these starved employees.

Significant, though limited, achievements, were also made in this struggle. A Co-ordination Committee of all the workers and employees in West Bengal of Birla concerns was formed and for

the first time in the history 70,000 Birla's Workers and Employees in the State observed one day's strike on two occasions i.e. on April 21 and August 10, 1970. So far as the salaried employees of Dalhousie Square area of Calcutta are concerned, two one-day strikes were observed by all the unions under the Federation of Mercantile Employees' Unions on March 5 and August 10, 1970. Recently, all Central Trade Union Organisations of this area, both Government and non-Government employees, have come on a common platform and have taken up a programme of actions.

On pressure from the Opposition in Parliament the Government of India appointed a Commission of Inquiry to enquire into the affairs of Birla Concerns on 18. 2. 70, and Birlas had closed down their Calcutta offices on 23. 2. 70. Since that date, with the help of police, Court Orders etc, Birlas managed to remove all the necessary papers  
( On Page Eight )

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# Whither Bank Employees' Movement?

The All India Bank Employees' Association was founded by several bank employees unions of Calcutta at the initiative of the Imperial Bank of India Staff Association (Bengal Circle), twenty five years ago on April 20, 1946. During this 25-year period, the AIBEA has cast off its almost regional character to grow into a nation-wide organisation embracing almost all the states and banks including Reserve Bank of India excepting the State Bank of India. Bankwise unions in some states and regional unions covering all Banks in others, in fact all unions in the banking enterprises including the foreign ones have affiliated themselves with AIBEA. It has thus grown from a tiny organisation into a country-wide federation of unions, varied in character, complex in composition—within a quarter of a century. It was decided that on April 20, 1971, its Silver Jubilee would be celebrated. Earlier Ahmedabad was declared as the venue of the conference which was considered unsuitable for the Silver Jubilee session. Calcutta could have been appropriate venue as it was in Calcutta that AIBEA was born and its head-quarters was at Calcutta during its most critical phase. Instead, Delhi was preferred presumably because it was the capital wherefrom the Government, now the biggest bank-bosses operate.

It must be said here that pomp and grandeur alone do not make for success of a workers' conference. The mood of the conference was rather festive and lacked the seriousness which a great organisation like AIBEA usually manifest in annual or biennial conferences. From the General Secretary's report it appeared

that bank employees have no problem to face and no dispute to resolve. All that remained to be done was to acclaim as an achievement, the nationalisation of big Indian banks leaving out the foreign banks and to debate over the follow-up measures to make it a success while its control will unquestionably remain with the vested interests and the bureaucrats. The demand for nationalising other banks looked like a pious wish, as amendments for a time scheduled movement for its achievement, were very casually treated.

About the sinister trends, the already introduced mechanisation, re-organisation and also computerisation in a few banks, the banker's demand for rationalisation and computerisation before the National Commission of Labour, the mischievous terms of reference of the Banking Commission, the persistent pleading for Computers by Shri R.K. Talwar, Chairman, State Bank of India and the Co-ordination Committee of Public Sector Banks and also by the Dy. Governor of the Reserve Bank of India where job eliminations have started in a big way, not a word was uttered.

A delegate's attempt to highlight the bankers' and the Government's conspiracy, which lie behind the setting up of the High-Power Banking Commission was thwarted on the plea of lack of time.

For reasons inexplicable, a central trade union organisation like AIBEA did not feel the necessity of adopting a resolution on the undisputedly harmful attitude of the National Commission of Labour, which has seriously challenged the workers' right to strike, not on the Government Labour Policy, which, as admitted

by the General Secretary, is consistently attacking the real wage by deficit financing, indirect taxation and wage freeze. The General Secretary in his report narrating the above threats to the working class, along with the fall in the real wage, retrenchment, lay offs, closures etc, automation and restriction on struggles through legislation, describes the Government's policy 'in respect of these burning issues'. Despite the experiences of brutal repressions at Durgapur, huge taxation, soaring prices and enactment of Internal Security Act the General Secretary found, 'a toning down in the recent past of the heavy offensive' unleashed during the last Central Government Employees' strike.

Regarding the second bipartite negotiation, though mentioning that the demand of AIBEA was for a standardisation of wages in the Public Sector and 'A' Class banks, with 15% overall improvement over the existing wages for abolition of area-wise classification and for full neutralisation in D. A., the General Secretary hailed the second bipartite negotiation, which is incomplete, as 'unique achievement' because 'all the basic principles' of AIBEA demands stood 'virtually conceded'. Any reference to the shortcomings of the negotiations were termed as disruptive. Any amendment for removal of anomalies and speedy conclusion of the negotiations which started early in 1970 and also for demanding marginal benefits like tiffin allowance (already earned by several bank employees' unions) was treated as irrelevant talk and voted down. No decision was adopted at conference laying down the future tasks in the above context.

In democratic organisation, to differ in opinion and outlook with the leadership is no crime, but to AIBEA leaders any difference with or criticism of the leadership is anti-AIBEA activity. To them leadership is synonymous with organisation, and discipline means unquestioned obedience to the leadership irrespective of the requirements of the organisation and a federal organisation at that. In these leaders' view, unity means blindly toeing the line of the leadership without reasoning why and how. Perhaps that is why since the Poona Conference in December, 1968 the General Secretary introduced a new system where by amendments, to a particular sentence or paragraph of his report not liked by him cannot be moved and voted upon piecemeal. According to him in that event one has to vote against the whole report. In his zeal of not accepting any amendment to the report from his critics at Delhi, the General Secretary even threw over-board an amendment to include an appropriate reference to the Centenary of the Paris Commune.

The conference was followed by lavish entertainments of music, dance and feasts. But the most important item of the Jubilee Celebration was missing, that the long arduous way through which a tiny, regional organisation has traversed to grow into a big, that the patient forbearance, the zealously guarded democratic functioning which the pioneers demonstrated in uniting diverse elements and organisational trends on a single platform, that the unflinching sincerity in championing the bank employees' interests, the dog like tenacity in counteracting the attacks of the most powerful financial

oligarchs, and the tactful combination of struggles inside and outside, use of legal forums to expose and defeat at times the Government Bankers' conspiratorial game through countrywide agitation, public campaign, strikes and work-to-rules, in fact, the most interesting history of its militant growth, its achievements and failures, its most valued experiences, and lessons and sacrifices which contributed to its progress, was not brought out to make the celebration meaningful.

The leadership could not take the trouble of completing a Souvenir with such history, which would have been a source of inspiration for the future. It is therefore not without significance that the General Secretary in highlighting the memorable incident of the past 25 years of AIBEA's existence in his report referred only to Tripartite meeting in 1951 and a meeting with the Cabinet Sub-Committee in 1954 at Delhi to indicate the stature and militancy of the organisation demanding imperative recognition. So the 25th year of AIBEA's existence has been observed as if to forget once for all the past years and its militant traditions and struggles.

A new course is being charted now with meetings, some times bipartite and at other tripartite, or a board meeting where employees' representatives will be delighted to sit with Government ministers, bankers, industrialists and custodians as equals or partners, but not as contending or hostile classes.

Illuminating enough was the conference called just after the conference by the Finance Minister Chavan, of nationalised banks' employees' representatives and the

custodians along with the top officials and members of the Finance Ministry to exchange views for the success of bank nationalisation measures as partners in common endeavour. Chavan expressed his concern for the alleged indiscipline of the bank employees and deteriorated service to the customers therefore, particularly on account of go-slow, work-to-rule and work stoppages. He therefore wanted to evolve a machinery and procedure by which such things can be avoided. In course of discussion he suggested formation of Consultative Committees in each bank apart from the employees' representation on the Board.

AIBEA leaders briefed the representatives to demand that such conferences can be useful if AIBEA leaders i. e. the top bosses who are not employees now of any bank, are invited to the Conference. It was even suggested that the top bosses alone and not such a big crowd i. e. 2 each from all 22 public sector banks except RBI, can discuss and finalise things for AIBEA and all the banks' employees it represents.

In terms of the brief, Consultative Committee was also opposed, as it would not result in adequate democratisation of the administration as it is and is likely to usurp substantially the function of the trade union. Even at a review meeting after the conference, the same stand was reiterated. Surprisingly after meeting in camera of the top leaders with the top custodians who reportedly elaborated the proposal to the leaders' satisfaction, the opposition to Consultative Committee was sufficiently mellowed down.

It is high time therefore, that the fighting cadres of the bank

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# Reports From Union :

## Assam Press Workers' Struggle Against Closure and Retrenchment

The Karamchand Thapar—management of Peco Printing Press, Gauhati closed down the press on July 31 on some flimsy grounds and retrenched 83 out of 86 workers with immediate effect. The workers earlier had been fighting for pay scale, D. A., yearly increment and interim relief.

Taking advantage of the workers' low income, the management made the workers to do overtime of 8 to 12 hours a day. The press was practically run and managed by the workers themselves. But even then the management was ready to pay only Rs. 10 per month as lump sum, while the union demanded at least Rs. 40 as interim relief and yearly increment. In the midst of their struggle, on July 31, the management closed the press all on a sudden with the help of the police, and pushed the workers out the press.

Since then the workers have been fighting against this mischievous action of the management under the leadership of the workers' union, a CITU-affiliate. A 'Sangram Sahayak Samiti' was formed afterwards with the representatives of different trade unions of Assam. They have also extended financial help. Through mass collection and other help, received from different unions, the affected workers have been paid Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 in August.

The Government of Assam, instead of taking any action against the management, resorted to police repression on the fighting workers.

## S. E. Railwaymen's Head Quarters' Action Committee meets

A convention of the Head Quarters' Action Committee of the

Garden Reach, Calcutta, Shalimar and Santragachi branches of the South Eastern Railwaymen's Union, was held on September 5.

Shanti Chakravarty, Convenor of the Committee placed a report on the occasion. The report laid down the future tasks of the Railwaymen in their struggle for various demands. It discussed the various problems of both all-India and local dimensions, and urged the adoption of a programme of action. It also suggested a demonstration before the General Manager, South Eastern Railway at the Head Quarters' offices of Garden Reach on September 16. The demonstration will demand among other things granting of need-based minimum wage, restoration and expansion of T. U. and democratic rights, repealing of PVA, PDA and other black Acts, withdrawal of CRP and other paramilitary forces from the railway premises, scrapping of automation, recognition of Bangladesh, election in West Bengal etc.

## National Coal Development Corporation Employees Prepare For Strike

A meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the National Coal Development Corporation Employees' Union held at Ranchi decided to go on a strike demanding increase in quarters-facilities and gratuity etc. Robin Chatterjee, General Secretary, Colliery Mazdoor Sabha, Raniganj and Chandi Prasad, Secretary, Bihar State Committee of the CITU were present at the meeting. The NCDC collieries numbering 38 under the public sector are situated through a vast region of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa.

The total number of workers'

strength in NCDC is 68,900 out of which 1,055 are the officers, 14,000 monthly paid and 20,000 piece-rated workers.

Nearly 2,000 workers stated to be temporary, are getting only Rs 2.40 per day as basic wage. The quarter problem is serious and the gratuity is not paid in all cases.

Abraham Mathews, General Secretary of the NCDC Employees' Association, pointed out that the corruption amongst the officers is serious. They are found engaged in open competition among themselves for selling the machineries of NCDC. Besides other malpractices abound. This is their way of sabotaging this public sector enterprise, and of degrading it in the eyes of the public.

The total capital invested at NCDC is 212 crores and the last years balance sheet shows 97 lakhs' loss.

For several years the managements have been refusing to concede the just demands of the workers which has now forced them to take the decision of the strike.

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## Bank Employees' Movement ?

( From Page Eleven )

employees' movement should understand that the big business and Government have mounted a cunning offensive to wreck the bank employees' militancy and unity by polluting them, in the name of so-called harmless participation in the management. Unfortunately, for them their leadership are acquiescing in the game, it is now upto cadres to take up the challenge and fight with determination so that the leadership is prevailed upon to give up the policy detrimental to the interests of bank employees.

# Reports From Union :

( From Page Twelve )

## Closure of Krishna Silicate And Glass works

Krishna Silicate and Glass works of 24-parganas, West Bengal closed since October 6, 1970, reopened recently following an agreement between the management and the union.

The management closed down the factory again from August 23, 1971 on the plea of a notice from Excise department for payment of arrears.

This violation of the agreement by the management caused a great resentment among the workers. The workers had taken it as a deliberate conspiracy of the management to go back from the commitment. The West Bengal Government has taken no action in this matter. The West Bengal Glass Workers' Union is agitating for reopening of the factory and honouring of the agreement.

## Bihar Police

### Repression on Mine Workers

The Bihar Government has launched repression on the United Mineral Workers' Union, Singbhum (CITU) since July 1971 and making the normal functioning of the union impossible.

The INTUC and other reformist trade unions failed to win over the Iron-ore miners due to their persistent class-collaborationist policies. The Bihar Government, the mine management and police have come forward to bolster the INTUC by resorting to underhand deals.

Several active members were arrested, put in jail custody and mercilessly beaten by the police. The S. I. of Gua P. S. led this operation. Operation combing took place on

August 7 in many labour-huttings at Gua and many workers were arrested. They were threatened by the police either to join the INTUC union or to remain inside the jail.

N. Guha, Secretary of the CITU Union, was taken to the police station on August 2 and threatened by the S. I. in filthy and provoking language. Tajuddin, member of the Executive Committee of the union was also threatened by some anti-social elements.

All this is being done because United Mineral Workers' Union is fighting against non-implementation of bipartite norms and various labour laws.

## Texmaco Workers' Union Conference

The 28th Conference of the Texmaco Workers' Union was held on September 4. Over 800 delegates and observers were present at the Conference. Promode Dasgupta, member, polit-bureau of the CPI(M) greeted the conference in its inaugural day i. e. September 4 and urged the workers to struggle ahead against the semi-fascist repression of the Congress-raj. M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU said that the role of the Texmaco workers in the democratic trade union struggle of West Bengal is heroic and will be ever-remembered. Abul Hassan also greeted Conference. The Open Session of the Conference was held on September 10. Jyoti Basu, member, Working Committee of the CITU and polit-bureau of the CPI (Marxist) was the chief speaker at the meeting. In his speech Basu reiterated the need for united trade union movement to defeat the reactionary policies of the government.

The Conference elected an executive committee of 187 members with Shanti Chatterjee as President and Tarakeswar Tiwari as the General Secretary.

Rs. 1001 was donated to West Bengal State Conference to be held at Asansol.

## Employer-Government Clique to Deprive Bihar Colliery Workers

Once again the collusion between the mine owners and the Government officials was revealed when the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central), Dhanbad was found to deliberately connive at the unfair labour practice of the management of the East Basuria Colliery, Bihar.

The RLC (Central), Dhanbad issued a certificate to the said management stating that they had been implementing the recommendations of the wage board for coal mining industry though the management had not done so and asserted that they never agreed to implement them.

Yet they secured orders for supply of coals to different public sector undertakings.

The Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union(CITU) has brought the matter to the notice of the Prime Minister and demanded immediate inquiry into the matter.

## Andhra Hotel Workers Demand Minimum Wages

Though the Government of Andhra Pradesh conceded in August last demand for the revision of the minimum wages for the workers in hotels, restaurants and catering house. some brass hats in the Andhra Government intervened and the said order was not published in Andhra Pradesh Gazette. However in the index of the Gazette it was mentioned that the order was printed but it was not printed inside. Under the circumstances the employers did not care to implement it.

This caused a great resentment among the workers throughout

## Gulbarga Workers Contribute to Bangladesh Fund

Two CITU Unions from Gulbarga. M. S. K. Textile Workers' Union and Trade Union of General Workers have together sent Rs. 4011 to the Bangladesh solidarity and Aid Committee through the CITU. The unions also collected new

ready-made garments worth about Rs. 1000 and sent a parcel to the Solidarity Committee.

The Management of the M. S. K. Textile Mills has also contributed two bales of cloth to the Solidarity Committee through the CITU.

## Reports from Union

( From Page Thirteen )

Andhra. The Khammam Hotel Workers' Union(CITU) has brought this to the notice of the Government and demanded immediate implementation of the order. payment of arrears with compensation and an inquiry into the whole matter.

# TISCO Workers Boycott Bonus

The general dissatisfaction and resentment among the TISCO workers, Jamshedpur over the bonus quantum declared by the management for 1970-71 was expressed in the bonus boycott call given by TISCO Karmachari Union on September 12. Almost all the employees boycotted the bonus payment for three consecutive days inspite of the threatening and intimidating attitude of the management. It was reported that some ministerial staff of the general office were forced their pay-packets under the threat of dire consequences that would follow if any one dared to refuse.

The employees' demands were : payment of Rs. 2.565 crores as statutory bonus to all workers, No exception should however, be made with regard to the workers of the Adityapur Complex as well.

Regarding the bonus-issue the Managing Director's personal letter addressed to all employees on September 6 sparked off the agitation. He made a futile attempt to explain that with the increase of operational costs and rise in taxes, the company was confronted with a formidable problem. Though the turn-over in the 1970-71 had been higher, they were left with an allocable surplus of Rs. 10 lakhs. Even though he agreed to pay bonus at the rate of 4% to the employees, this comes to a total expense of Rs. 80 lakhs on the part of the Com-

pany. The management also made a claim of generosity that acting on the basis of a representation made by Michael John's stooge INTUC union they agreed to pay Rs. 120 lakhs additional in the form of ex-gratia payment.

On September 18 a mass rally was held in front of the TISCO General office where the two Jt. Secretaries of the Union spoke and explicitly stated the reasons for making the demand. The profit during the 1970-71 shot up to the extent Rs. 7.42 crores, there by, surpassing all the previous records.

Moreover, the policy of getting the production and maintenance work done by hired contractors, have only added to the fabulous profits of the company. The world bank loan also have been back. Having these informations at hand, the Union demanded the payment of Rs. 3.315 Crores as bonus and ex-gratia while the management desired to distribute Rs. 2 Crores only.

The newly registered TISCO Karmachari Union has created enthusiasm among the mass of workers. The red banner is once again flying high in the Tata empire.

## Consumer Price Index Numbers ( Working Class )

Year	Month	All India General Index	
		Base : 1949	Base : 1960
1966		184	151
1967		209	172
1968		215	177
1969		213	175
1970		224	184
1971	August	227	187
	September	228	188
	October	230	189
	November	230	189
	December	226	186
	January	224	184
	February	224	184
	March	224	184
	April	224	184
	May	224	184
	June	224	184
	July	227	187

# Decisions Of The CITU Office Bearers' Meeting

A meeting of the office-bearers of the CITU was held in Calcutta on September 22, 1971. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, presided over the meeting. The following is the press communique issued after the meeting.

"The C I T U strongly protests against the arbitrary dismissal of the 13 prominent leaders of the West Bengal State Government employees, which is an outrageous act of the Government to attack the right of association of the State Government employees. This deliberately provocative attack has been made in the context of the situation here when all attention of the people and the Government alike was needed for rendering help to the struggle of Bangla Desh.

"The unprecedented action of the Governor of West B e n g a l constitutes an effort to sidetrack people's attention from their democratic struggle. It is illuminating that the same Government did not take any action against Police officials who were found colluding with goonda gangs in their rampage of murder and loot in the Cossipore area a few days back.

"The meeting congratulates the State Government employees in West Bengal for their solidarity and unity and their firm determination to fight the attack. It congratulates the trade unions, employees' organisations, the students and women's organisations on the demonstration of their fraternal solidarity to the fighting State Government employees.

"The meeting notes with satisfaction that all the Central trade union organisations have condemned this arbitrary action of the Government and demands its immediate with-

drawal. The CITU is confident that in case the Government refuses to retrace its steps the entire working class and the democratic forces in West Bengal will rally for a mighty Bundh and further struggle in support of the State Government employees. It hopes that the present reservations and vacillations shown by some central organisations will be overcome in the interest of common struggle.

"The meeting warns the Government of West Bengal against further repressive measures. It has no doubt that the workers and employees in other states will rally round in the defence of the West Bengal State Government employees and exert their full strength to defeat this attack on the right to organise.

## 8½ Percent Minimum Bonus

"The meeting strongly protests against the refusal of the employers to concede the just demand of 8½ per cent minimum bonus and failure of the Government to enforce the demand. The proceedings of the informal consultations in Bombay show that the Government has once again yielded to the pressure of the employers. Though the demand of 8½ per cent was unanimously raised by all the Central T. U. organisations and an assurance was given by the Government in P a r l i a m e n t that the Government itself would bring a measure to meet the workers' demand it appears that the Government is going back from the commitment in the name of arriving at consensus.

"It is accepted by the Government and the Courts that bonus is a deferred wage intended to partially

fill the gap between the existing wage and the living wage. However, under present conditions of continuous rise in prices 8½ per cent minimum bonus will hardly compensate for the continuous erosion of the real wage that has taken place during the last year. The meeting therefore rejects all proposals to impose a lower level of bonus and calls upon the working class to wage a united struggle against the attempts to impose a lower quantum of bonus.

"The Meeting is confident that the united front presented by the central T. U. organisations on the question will be further developed into common action to enforce the demand. It notes with satisfaction that in several centres, unions belonging to different Central Organisations have already taken decision for joint actions in case of refusal of their demands. The decision of CITU, AITUC, HMP and Smt. Indira Group unions in Coimbatore to go on strike on bonus is worth emulating in other centres.

"The CITU calls upon the working class to unitedly build a powerful campaign all over the country on the following demands relating to bonus.

1. Minimum 8½ per cent bonus.
2. Guaranteed minimum bonus to employees of all categories of workers including those employed in departmentally run Government undertakings,
3. Withdraw the maximum limit on bonus,
4. Payment of bonus to workers, employed in factories taken over by the Government as relief measure."

The meeting notes with regret the apathy shown by some Central T. U. organisations in connection with the implementation of the decision by the National T.U. Committee of India for solidarity with Bangladesh. This has been one of the reasons for the postponement of the Convention that was scheduled to held on September 12 last in Calcutta. It has resulted in failure

( On Page Three )

# Lessons Of August 27 Bundh

The spectacular strike and Hartal on August 27, in West Bengal and the massive support and spontaneous response it received from the people has evoked frowns from the servitors of the ruling class within the working class movement. Hence, it is but natural that many have come out with their own version of the developments in West Bengal giving a distorted picture which would be pleasing to the ruling class. It is well known that the leadership of AITUC imposed a split on the organisation by subverting all democracy within the organisation, enrolling bogus members on the pattern of the Congress Party and following a rabid class collaborationist policy to disarm the workers.

The birth of CITU, representing the democratic, and the socialistic urges of the working class of India was inevitable under the circumstances. The ruling classes did not take kindly to this momentous event particularly in West Bengal which is a stronghold of the democratic movement with the working class in the van. So the ruling classes adopted the politics of individual murder and assassination in order to crush the working class and the democratic movement in West Bengal.

This fact is well known to all. But the AITUC leadership came to the aid of the ruling class and shielded its heinous policies from the gaze of the public by dubbing others particularly CITU as initiating politics of murder, and we can only hope that the ranks of

the AITUC will raise their voice in order to fight this class-collaborationist policy. Because numerous facts, like the Cossipore mass-killings have already come out into the open making it difficult for the Congress to defend its position any longer. That the highest leadership of the Congress has banded together all sorts of anti-socials including Naxalites and aided and abetted by their time-servers has

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By Niren Ghosh,  
Secretary, CITU

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unleashed a systematic campaign of individual murders, assassinations, thus gradually wiping out the cadres of the trade unions and democratic movement, is now an open secret.

One should ask in all seriousness why does AITUC leadership try to cover up this policy of the ruling class? The All-India leadership of AITUC has sunk to such low depths that instead of holding the Government of India responsible for closures in West Bengal they have come forward to hold a brief for the ruling class and their political servants, by laying the blame on CITU. They have gone to the extent of disrupting the trade unions through wrong policies inside the factories of one of the big business houses, namely Birlas, in order to help him.

## **AITUC opposed Militant Action**

It is appropriate to recall here that the trade unions in West Bengal could ultimately come together and decide to launch the General Strike on 27th August despite the persistent

efforts by AITUC of opposing such a militant action. They were so much enamoured of building anti-CITU trade union front that they insisted on a so called code of conduct for eliminating murder as a precondition for a statewide action as if a mere code of conduct, can abolish individual murders which has been adopted by the Government of India as a matter of state policy to crush the democratic movement. When CITU proposed that one of the demands of the general strike should be against politics of murder by ruling class it was sought to be obstructed by AITUC in various ways. Thus they tried to absolve the ruling class of its crime. CITU had to show flexibility to some extent in order to get over hurdle of obstruction put by AITUC. Then Government of India came forward and left no stone unturned in order to prevent the general strike. So Khadilkar, after Shri Siddhartha Sankar Roy, called a conference in order to get all the class collaborationist trade union centres to come to the aid of the Government of India and get the strike call withdrawn. This was apparent from the course of the Conference itself. Everyone knows that INTUC and HMS are hangers on of the Government of India. But AITUC always resorted to tightrope walking in order to shield its true character. But all their efforts were proved to be futile. Without batting an eyelid S. A. Dange, General Secretary, AITUC conveniently forgot to mention even democratic demands like, end of politics of murders by the ruling class, wholesale terror and

# Lessons of August 27 Bundh

( From Page Sixteen )

repression against the trade unions and the democratic movement ; repeal of black-bills like P. V. A. and MISA and even vital economic demands like unemployment benefit and immediate take-over of closed factories so that they can be put into operation in due time with the one lakh 25 thousand unemployed workers, the victims of such closures.

Evidently he was satisfied with some vague promises made by the Government of India's spokesmen Shri Siddhartha Shankar Ray and Shri Khadilkar that they might take over in the future only some of the closed factories after introducing an act of parliament and will urge the employers of Jute and Engineering industries to stop the D. A. cut of Rs. 9.50 and 12.50 respectively of course, with the proviso of consequential adjustment against rise in D.A. in future. This can only mean an immediate relief but future losses. It should be noted here even this petty concession is still to be honoured in the case of the workers of the engineering industry.

## CITU's Firm Stand

The CITU representatives refused to be taken in by the dirty manoeuvre of the Government of India and clearly stated that unless closed factories are immediately taken over, unemployment benefit acceded to by the Government of India and repression against trade unions is stopped and the election for a democratic set up is considered, there can be no question of reconsidering the position of calling off General Strike and Hartal. Khadilkar openly stated that the central leaders of INTUC, HMS and AITUC had already given their word of honour

to withdraw the strike and Hartal call on vague and illusory promises made by the Government of India. The complete volta-face on the part of the leaders of INTUC, HMS and AITUC can only be explained by their class collaborationist policies.

Here one cannot but congratulate the leaders of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) HMP and Forward Bloc who did not succumb to the pressure of INTUC HMS and AITUC combine and stuck to the position of defending the true interests of the working class. So it came about that AITUC in West Bengal found it impossible to openly toe the line of Government of India and disrupt the General Strike in order to maintain their facade of anti-CITU unity in West Bengal.

If they opposed the August 27 General Strike and Hartal, their anti-CITU Central Trade Union Co-ordination Committee would have openly broken up. The Government mobilised all their weapons of repression like CRP, military, Sec. 144 Cr.P.C., Congress, Chatra Parisad, Yuba Congress, in order to suppress the strike. Even peaceful picketing at the factory gates was impossible. Yet the response of the workers and the people was almost complete thus defeating all the calculations of the Government of India. One of the 16 point demands was the demand for recognition of Bangladesh Government and it can be asserted without any controversy that CITU tried its utmost to highlight this demand in the course of General Strike.

In conclusion, it should be put on record that the united strength of the trade unions in West Bengal is such that if the working class and and trade unions are determined to defend their own interests and the interest of the people the Government of India cannot get away with

their anti-people policies undermining the basic interest of the country. The CITU will consistently persist in forging unity of workers undeterred by provocations and slanders meant to divide the working class and bolster the anti-people policies of the Government of India.

The CITU would at the same time not yield to any pressure whatsoever and abandon the fight for the economic and democratic demands of the working class and the people. Let us hope that the other trade unions urged by their workers, will take courage in both hands and come forward to forge unity, defeat disruption and uphold the basic interests of the working class and the people.

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## Without Comment

The special armed force of Mana group of camps administration in Madhya Pradesh opened fire on September 18 at the Kendri camp when the evacuees from Bangladesh were protesting against the supply of unsuitable wheat. Two evacuees were killed in the firing.

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## III-Treatment of Durgapur PVA Detenues

The PVA detenues who were vindictively detained to suppress the trade union and democratic struggle in West Bengal are treated in the most inhuman manner. Twenty five trade union functionaries of Durgapur detained in Burdwan jail are being treated as criminals. They have been placed as ordinary prisoners and except 2 no one is paid family allowance. As a result of the unhygienic conditions in jail most of the detenues are suffering from skin diseases.

# Despite Police Repression Railwaymen Fight For Demands

Railwaymen's resistance to police repression is on the increase. At Bhojudih, the workers struck work on September 9 against the unjustified arrest of one of their colleagues. The Loco Running staff of Khurdah Road, struck work for a short while in protest against the attempt of the Railway Administration to evict one Driver from his quarters with the help of police. The attempt did not succeed. On the same date, the Monoharpur workers struck work against the action of RPF staff to arrest one worker on false grounds. For about three hours the train services were stopped. The work was resumed only when Administration got the staff released unconditionally.

On September 14, the police arrested a carriage staff while he was on duty and beat him up mercilessly in the police lock-up. The workers of Adra, rose up in protest under the leadership of the Adra Divisional Action Committee and the train services came to a dead stop, and the S. E. Railwaymen's Union was forced to support the struggle. The Administration, assured that the staff concerned would be treated as injured on duty and rendered legal help. An enquiry by the D. S. P. was ordered and an assurance was given that the guilty police officials will be punished. The Administration was also forced to assure that no worker would be victimised for participating in protest action.

A Convention of the workers of Eastern Railway was held at Ranaghat on September 5. About 1200 delegates from all divisions participated from important categories.

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In spite of the area being flood-affected, there was no dearth in arrangements. The womenfolk of the railway colony came forward to manage the preparation of food for the delegates while volunteer force of about 500 made proper arrangements of the Convention, which was addressed by Dipen Ghose, Narsingha Chakrabarty, K. M. Bhadra amongst others. Convention decided to lead a mass deputation to General Manager on September 14. About twelve thousand workers marched to the Head Office at Calcutta where police blocked the procession at the entry. A delegation of 12 handed over a memorandum to the Chief Personnel Officer, who assured that a date would be fixed in the near future to discuss the demands. The workers then went towards Raj Bhavan and joined the demonstration against summary dismissal of State Government Employees' leader under Governor's special powers.

On September 6, another Convention was held at Chittaranjan, in which employees from Eastern and South Eastern Railways also participated. This measure was taken by Chittaranjan Locomotive Workers' Union, because they felt that victimisation is continuing in Eastern, South Eastern, North Eastern, N. F., Northern Railways as well. The Convention requested the Asansol Divisional Co-ordination Committee, to take the leadership and make efforts to find out if a joint Convention of all these railways could be held by December next against victimisation and for early publication of Pay Commission's report, another instalment of interim relief, need-based

wage etc. The Secretary of the Asansol Divisional Co-ordination Committee readily accepted the responsibility.

On September 9 and 10 a Conference of the Switchmen of S. E. Railway was held at Waltair in which delegates from all over the railway participated the conference demanded change in their designation and an advisory council was also constituted to chalk out programme of action.

On September 11 and 12 the Central Council of the S. E. Railwaymen's union met at Waltair, and adopted a charter of demands. If the demands are not met the branches were directed to hold demonstrations squatting etc. in order to prepare the staff for a higher struggle.

Central Committee of the S. E. Railway, LOCO Running staff Association held a meeting at Santragachi on September 15. A delegation of the Loco Running staff met the Chief Personnel Officer in a mass deputation and handed over a memorandum.

The Central Committee of All India Loco Running Staff Association met at Barauni on September 17 and 18 though the whole railway colony was water-logged, Boats had to be used to bring the staff from the railway colony of Garhara. All those, who had quarters in the ground floor had to vacate the same and take shelter in wagons and bogies. In spite of these difficulties, the workers enthusiastically, made preparation for the meeting. The meeting considered the victimisation in different railways and decided to observe November 5 as Anti-victimisation Day. After a

# The First Conference of West Bengal CITU

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that on the basis of the discussion the report should be improved and modified by the new Working Committee and released for mass circulation.

About 200 fraternal delegates participated in the Conference including 10 from Bihar. Abdullah Rasul of All India Kisan Sabha, Chandi Prasad, Secretary, Bihar State Committee of the CITU greeted the conference. Greetings were sent by the CITU State Committees of Goa and Assam as well as K. G. Bose of 12th July Committee and Harekrishna Konar, General Secretary, AIKS.

## Resolutions

About 40 resolutions were adopted in the conference. The condolence resolution moved by the President was adopted by observing a minute's silence. In a separate resolution moved by Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury, homage was paid to the martyrs.

Krishnapada Ghosh, moved the resolution in support of freedom struggle of the people of Bangladesh supported by Sudhin Kumar and Md. Amin. Immediate recognition to Bangladesh Government and all material help including arms to the freedom fighters irrespective of their political affiliation and immediate release of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman was demanded in the resolution. "While all democratic forces unanimously demand recognition to Bangladesh, the Government of India are only toying with the idea of recognition and dilly-dallying in the matter, causing immense disservice to the freedom struggle"—the resolution added.

In the resolution on unemployment, closure and lockout the demands were made for reopening of all closed factories, office, coal mines, mills and establishments, immediate taking over of the units which the employers refuse to reopen, employment for everybody or unemployment benefit, radical land reform and land to the tillers, to declare a ban on automation, rationalisation and mechanisation and for full utilisation of the productive capacities of industries. It was also decided to observe a week in November, 1971 to highlight the demand for employment.

The resolution 'On Present situation in West Bengal', was moved by Samar Mukherjee and supported by Jyoti Basu. The resolution demanded immediate withdrawal of victimisation orders issued to 13 State Government Employees' leaders, West Bengal Assembly election in February, 1972, withdrawal of CRP and other armed forces, withdrawal of P. V. A. Act, Preventive Detention Act, Sec. 144, release of all persons arrested in connection with democratic movement, withdrawal of all false cases and to stop the politics of murder introduced by the ruling Congress.

In the resolution on Bonus, the Conference demanded a minimum bonus of 8.1/3% and lifting of the ceiling on maximum bonus. Demands were also made for additional facilities under the Employees' State Insurance by another resolution.

In the resolution 'On United Action of the working class', the workers and all trade unions were called upon to organise series of mighty struggles and united campaign on the basis of 16-point pro-

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## West Bengal Committee of CITU

### New Office Bearers

#### PRESIDENT

Md. Ismail M. P.

#### VICE-PRESIDENTS

Suhrid Mullick Choudhury, M. P.

Bimalananda Mukherjee

Biren Roy

Niren Ghosh, M. P.

Krishnapada Ghosh

Dinen Bhattacharya, M. P.

Parimal Mitra

Hrishi Banerjee

Rabin Mukherjee

#### GENERAL SECRETARY

Monoranjan Ray, M. P.

#### SECRETARIES

Kamal Sarkar

Santi Ghatak

Santi Sekhar Bose

Harisadhan Mitra

Bimal Chatterjee

Sunil Basu Roy

#### TREASURER

Nirode Chakravarty

# The First Conference of CITU West Bengal State Committee

(From Page Nineteen)

ramme at all levels to defeat the anti-working class policies pursued by the Government.

'The shameless disowning by the Government of the tripartite norms for fixation of minimum wage laid down in 1957' was strongly condemned in the resolution 'On Wage policy.' While congratulating all trade unions for rejecting the so-called wages and incomes policy and linking up of wage with production, the working class was warned in the resolution of the new threat of further inroads in their real wages by the new offensives planned by the Government to safeguard the interest of monopoly capitalists, both Indian and foreign."

A separate resolution moved by Niren Ghosh, M. P. supported the struggle of the State Government employees against victimisation of 13 leaders and demanded immediate withdrawal of the termination orders.

Resolutions were adopted in support of the liberation struggles in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, support of the struggles of jute workers, coal mine workers, cotton textiles workers, etc.

The Conference elected an Executive Committee of 99 persons which included Md. Ismail as President and Monoranjan Roy as General Secretary. It authorised the newly elected Working Committee to constitute a General Council of 300 persons.

## Need for Political struggle

B. T. Ranadive while summing up the conclusions of the Conference called upon the delegates to take the decisions of the Conference to the mass of workers and organise State-wide struggles against anti-people

policies of the Government. He further emphasised the need for the working class to participate in political struggle and fight for the establishment of a democratic regime of the people in India.

The open session and mass rally was held on September 19 at Polo Ground, Asansol. It was an impressive 60,000 strong rally—one of the biggest so far held in the town. Workers and peasants from all over Burdwan District came in procession from the early morning. Even they came from adjoining

districts like Bankura, Purulia, Birbhum, etc. The workers from Durgapur, Chittaranjan, Burnpur, Raniganj, Kulti and various other places came in impressive processions.

B. T. Ranadive, Jyoti Basu, Monoranjan Ray, Sudhin Kumar, and Benoy Choudhury addressed the meeting. It was presided over by Md. Ismail.

The West Bengal State Conference of the CITU has initiated a new phase of united struggles in defence of workers' interests all over the state.

## What Prevents United Action

(From Page One)

convened by the Union Labour Minister. As you are aware the Conference adopted a Declaration unanimously.

The Declaration did not confine itself to certain immediate problems facing the working class, but adopted a Programme covering wider ground of economic policies, which are of vital importance to the working class and to the democratic development of the country.

The Declaration also committed the participating Organisations to certain principles for bringing about unity in the Trade Union movement.

The Conference also appointed a Convening Committee to convene a meeting or conference of Trade Union Representatives for the purpose of implementation of the Declaration by Joint Action.

"After my repeated request the Committee met only once in Delhi and although it was tentatively agreed that we would meet about the 24th of August in Bombay and plan for a wider Conference, and Coms. Satish and Mahesh Desai were to confirm the

dates, no such confirmation had come.

"You will also remember that at the Conference convened by the the Labour Minister, all of us stood by the Principles of the declaration regarding unity of the Trade Unions and on the question of Recognition by secret Ballot.

"Though the HMS and AITUC have found no time to meet us and chalk out a Programme, I find from the newspapers that you have found sufficient time to meet the INTUC, which did not subscribe to the declaration on the question of Recognition by Ballot, and unity of the trade unions, and to carry on negotiation.

"Under the circumstances one can only conclude that you were and are not serious regarding the Declaration and its implementation. The Convening Committee is itself becoming a farce.

"I would like to know even now if you are agreeable to do any thing concrete in furtherance of the Declaration. Otherwise, we may as well announce publicly that the Committee cannot function and thus put an end to the deception of the working class, whose expectations had been roused by the Declaration and the formation of the Convening Committee.