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# Withdraw The Black Bills



LABOUR RELATIONS BILL AND  
TRADE UNIONS BILL ANALYSED

AN AITUC PUBLICATION

As. 2

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PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE, LTD

190-B, Khetwadi Main Road, Bombay 4

## Introduction

THIS pamphlet is based almost entirely on the statements submitted by the AITUC delegation to the Tripartite Indian Labour Conference, convened by the Government of India in New Delhi on March 20 and 21, 1950, for discussing the Labour Relations Bill and the Trade Unions Bill introduced by the Government in Parliament.

The AITUC delegation, headed by the President of the AITUC, Comrade V. Chakkarai Chettiar, at the outset branded these two bills for what they are—fascist measures. Initiating the discussion on the general principles in the conference, Comrade Chettiar showed how the bills were permeated from beginning to end with out and out reactionary and anti-working class principles and how, therefore, no amount of amendments to their various sections could alter these basically reactionary principles. He, therefore, demanded the complete withdrawal of the two bills.

Consistent with its stand of total opposition to the bills and demand for their complete withdrawal, the AITUC delegation refused to participate in the subsequent proceedings of the conference, where the two bills were discussed clause by clause.

Convinced that a united opposition by the working class alone could force the Government to withdraw these bills, that such united action by the working class and its organisations was practicable in face of this common menace, the AITUC delegation approached the representatives of the Hind Mazdur Sabha (HMS) with a proposal for united opposition to the bills at the conference and united struggle against them throughout the country.

The Working Committee of the Hind Mazdur Sabha, by its resolution of March 14 had called for united opposition to and a united campaign against the bills "in cooperation with other working class organisa-

Printed by Jayantilal at New Age Printing Press, 190-B, Khetwadi  
Lane Road, Bombay 4, and published by M. S. Dakshi for AITUC  
R. E. East Banani, 55 Ganga Road, Bombay 4

tions, till they were finally withdrawn". And yet the delegation of the HMS, consisting of Messrs R. S. Ruikar and Ashok Mehta, the President and General Secretary of the HMS respectively, in practice went contrary to this resolution of their own organisation.

They did not make common cause with the AITUC delegation for total opposition to the bills. Indeed, Mr. Ashok Mehta even characterised the Government's aims behind the bills as "laudable".

Disunity within the working class which enabled the Government to introduce these bills has once again emboldened it to decide to push them through Parliament. The Labour Minister has announced that the bills will be referred to a Select Committee of the Parliament, which means their passage is assured.

The battle against the bills, therefore, has to be fought in the towns and cities, in mills, factories and offices. If it is to be successful, and it certainly can be, then it must be fought as a united battle. The danger is far too common and far too grave to tinker with the urgent need for a nationwide united struggle.

This pamphlet will show that in face of this grim menace, every section of the working class, irrespective of its political views and organisational affiliation can and must forge this united front of struggle against these bills and defeat them. This way alone can they defend their basic right to organise and right to strike.

## I. The Two Bills

The two bills recently introduced by the Government of India in the Parliament of the Indian Union—the Labour Relations Bill and the Trade Unions Bill—are open fascist measures. They are complementary measures, have common aims and seek to achieve them in a thoroughgoing fashion.

They aim at the complete suppression of all strikes and resistance of the working class and at illegalising all trade unions that lead workers' struggles against the growing attacks of the capitalists.

Under the Labour Relations Bill, all strikes—spontaneous strikes, strikes against retrenchment, political

strikes, sympathetic strikes and strikes against victimisation—are directly declared to be illegal. In addition, under stringent provisions of arbitration and of so-called “collective bargaining”, which make a mockery of the term, all possibilities of a legal strike are completely ruled out, with the result that a legal strike will be as rare as snakes in Iceland.

At the same time, the bill legalises mass retrenchment and victimisation and gives every right to the employers to mount any attack on the workers at any time they please.

It further seeks to facilitate the owners' attacks of increased workloads and rationalisation by declaring that any resistance to such measures will be treated as illegal strikes, punishable under the law.

The Trade Unions Bill, its twin brother, seeks to outlaw all trade unions which organise and lead workers' struggles in defence of their interests and against the growing attacks of the capitalists and the Government.

In fact, the main activity of a “registered” trade union under this bill will be to act as an agent of the Government and the capitalists, to see that workers do not go on strike, and to punish its members who dare to go on strike and also its office-bearers should they dare to lead workers' strikes.

This bill demands that every union registered under it must frame rules under its constitution to expel members who go on “irregular” strikes and office-bearers who participate in any manner in “irregular” strikes. And “irregular strikes” are defined as all strikes that are illegal under the Labour Relations Bill, as also all strikes that have not been sanctioned previously by the executive of the union or that are not in accordance with the rules of the union, framed in consultation with the Registrar for the purpose of declaration of strikes.

Thus no loop-hole is left for any possibility of a strike. A trade union must agree beforehand, by means of provisions in its constitution, to act as a criminal court punishing its worker-members for going on strike and its office-bearers for leading one. And this punish-

ment by the trade union is to be in addition to the heavy punishments by ordinary criminal courts, by way of imprisonments and fines, for which ample provisions are made in both the bills.

The bill seeks to ensure that a trade union faithfully carries out these dirty functions through the appointment of Government inspectors whose powers of supervision and punishment are sweeping.

Any infringement of these provisions, any refusal to carry out or evasion of these dirty functions, will entail cancellation of the registration of the union concerned.

In other words only a union that undertakes, by covenant, to break strikes can be registered under this bill and only a union that carries out that undertaking faithfully can retain its registration.

Under the bills, only such registered unions can become "bargaining agents". They alone will have the right to conclude "collective agreements" with the employers. They alone will have the right to represent the workers in the industrial courts and tribunals. In short, they alone can do anything in the name of the workers.

It is obvious that only organisations of strike-breaking agents of the capitalists, of police spies, labelled as "trade unions"—of the type of the INTUC unions—will be registered under this bill. They alone will become the "representatives" of the workers.

All their deals with their capitalist masters are to be stamped as "collective agreements" under the Labour Relations Bill. They are binding on all workers, breach of which is punishable with imprisonment. The bills further provide that strikes in defiance of the "collective agreements" are illegal.

Thus, under these bills, organisations on the model of Hitler's Nazi Labour Front are being sought to be foisted on the workers, in the name of "registered unions" and "collective bargaining".

Despite all this, however, the Government is so much frightened of the very contact between its own employees and other workers that the Trade Unions Bill prohibits them from joining even such "unions"

whose office-bearers openly undertake to act as strike-breakers. The bill stipulates that unions of civil servants must further provide in their constitution, in addition to all the conditions noted above, for the exclusion of all workers who are not civil servants and also prohibit all outsiders from becoming their office-bearers.

To the men in the armed forces and police services, the right of even such association is denied.

The two bills thus totally deny and withdraw even the most inadequate and meagre rights that workers had won through years of struggle and untold sacrifices. The right to organise unions of their own choice, the right to manage their unions without interference from the State or the capitalists is blatantly denied. The right to strike is totally withdrawn.

The bills thus seek to illegalise the militant trade union movement based on the principle of class struggle, the movement which mobilises and leads the workers in their struggle against capitalists' attacks and which fights for freedom, democracy and Socialism.

Faced with the ever-increasing resistance of every section of workers and Government employees to their open and shameless plan to transfer the burdens of the crisis on to the backs of the workers, the Congress bourgeois rulers have introduced these bills, which seek to transform Indian workers into their bond-slaves. These bills fully unmask and falsify all the claims of the Government that they have allowed the workers freedom of organisation and freedom to strike in defence of their interests.

It will be seen that these bills embody all the demands made on the Government by the American Wall Street dollar barons and their Indian collaborators--the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie--for the suppression of the working class movement in the name of ensuring "security" for their investments.

A Government capable of understanding the vital demands of the working people and desirous of satisfying them will have no need to have recourse to such fascist laws to strangle democratic liberties and trade union rights. It is obvious that the Congress rulers



in bringing forward these bills is acting in the interests of India's Big Business, and on the direct instruction of Anglo-American imperialists, who see in the destruction of trade union rights and democratic liberties one of the conditions for the preparation of their war against the democratic and Socialist countries.

In the next two sections we shall see that this is the inescapable conclusion that will follow from an analysis of the provisions of the bills.

## II. Labour Relations Bill

In the very objects and reasons of the Labour Relations Bill, the Government states:

"Among the other special features of the bill may be mentioned the provisions relating to retrenchment, go-slow policy and the exercise of control over certain categories of undertakings in certain circumstances....

A go-slow policy, whether on the part of employers or employees, if proved before a labour tribunal, will be deemed to be an illegal lock-out or strike and dealt with as such."

Clearly, therefore, the bill is openly aimed at legalising every scheme of increased workload and rationalisation of the capitalists and at suppressing resistance to it by declaring such resistance to be illegal strike.

The objects and reasons make it clear that the existing law relating to compulsory arbitration is to be strengthened and workers' strikes are to be crushed ruthlessly. They further state:

"A serious drawback of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, is the fact that the provisions contained in it for enforcement of settlements and awards are too weak to be effective.... The bill seeks to remedy these defects.... The penalty for breach of a settlement, collective agreement or award has been substantially increased.... Employees are liable to forfeit their claims to bonus and the employer's share of the provident fund and to be dismissed from service. Trade unions are liable to forfeit their registration and recognition and certified bargaining agents, their certificates."

The bill is thus openly aimed at legalising mass retrenchment, at suppressing every trade union that organises and leads workers' resistance to retrenchment and rationalisation. It seeks to outlaw all strikes by provision of compulsory arbitration and imposes drastic punishment for enforcement of awards. It declares that workers will lose their jobs, bonus and provident fund, and unions will lose their registration and recognition.

To call this bill a Labour Relations Bill is outrageous. It should aptly be called the "Trade Union and Strike Suppression Bill".

How these aims and objects concretely take shape can be seen if one peruses the 132 clauses of the bill.

The explanation to Section 59 says:

"For the purpose of this Section 'labour dispute' means any labour dispute relating to any matter which is not specified in the Second Schedule, but does not include the termination of service of an employee who is surplus to the requirements of the employer."

Under the excuse that there is no market and that stocks have accumulated, mills and factories are today being closed down. Even on a most conservative estimate, the number of unemployed has exceeded 20 lakhs. These workers are being turned out of jobs on the plea that they are surplus to requirements.

The Railway Enquiry Committee has suggested that 34 per cent of the workshop workers are surplus; thousands from the engineering and other departments are declared surplus.

The ordnance factories, docks, clothing factories and all Government and Local Fund factories have turned out of jobs over two lakh workers since 1945-46.

Metalhurgical industry, engineering factories, banks, insurance companies and every Government or commercial concern—all are today discharging workers as being surplus to requirements.

And at this time, the Government of India is enacting a legislation which declares that termination of service of an employee who is "surplus to requirements" is no labour dispute.

Right to discharge workers on the plea that they are surplus is legal; it is no labour dispute; therefore right to resist such a dismissal is illegal.

The Government has thus given the all-clear signal to the employers to go ahead with their plans of mass unemployment. The law, the whole repressive machinery of the State, will be at the disposal of the employer to protect his eternal right to turn out of jobs hundreds and thousands and cause misery, starvation and death to millions.

What is the protection that this bill affords an employee against unemployment? None whatsoever.

The Government parades Section 122 of the bill, as if it were a great boon conferred on the workers who are daily being thrown out of their jobs in their thousands.

Under this section the employer is liable to give one month's notice of discharge or pay one more month's wages in lieu of such notice before discharging an employee. Secondly, he is to pay the discharged employee 15 days' wages for every 12 months' service as gratuity.

The first liability of a month's notice or a month's wages in lieu of notice is nothing new. Today, the employees are entitled to it under the common law. All that this bill does is to codify the existing right of the workers—a right which has been upheld by all civil courts.

As for the pittance of 15 days' wages as gratuity, the less said about it the better. At best, some workers can hope to get two or three months' wages as gratuity. What is the worth of this pittance and how could it save the worker and his family from starvation, when the reality is that for months and years there is no prospect of any employment anywhere whatsoever?

This is how the Government seeks to evade its most elementary responsibility for payment of unemployment relief—a responsibility accepted by bourgeois democratic Governments.

In practice, however, even this provision would not put the employers to any substantial liability. More than 50 per cent of the workers in various establishments are either considered as casual labour, or are

those whose services have been frequently interrupted by discharges and re-employment. Substitute workers in the textiles, casual and construction workers in the railways, contract labour which is on a daily wage—all these have “no service” according to the employers and the Government. And hence they will not get even this pittance of a “gratuity”.

Today the Government and employers are feverishly trying to carry out schemes of rationalisation. Through it they increase workload and turn out of employment hundreds of thousands. They have, therefore, met with stubborn resistance from the workers who refuse to submit to intensified exploitation and unemployment.

In the textiles it may take the form of working four looms instead of two. In the railways it may be doing four hours' work in two or doing heavy repairs in the time fixed for light repairs, etc. No matter what form it takes, the workers have rightly opposed it as meaning mass unemployment.

“Most of the industrialists,” complained Birla's **Eastern Economist** recently, “have been unable to carry out their schemes (of rationalisation) due to labour opposition.”

The Congress Government, a Government of the big bourgeoisie, quickly acts and comes out with this legislation illegalising all resistance to rationalisation as “go-slow policy”.

Explanation to Section 99 says:

“For the purpose of this section, a go-slow policy shall, in relation to any establishment or class of establishments, include any policy or mal-practices on account of which:—

- (a) there is an appreciable fall in the productive capacity of that establishment or class of establishments, which the employees or the employer could have avoided if they so desired; or
- (b) there is a marked deterioration in the quality of the articles produced therein; or
- (c) there has been a partial or total breakdown of the-

machine parts in that establishment or class of establishments."

Appreciable fall in productive capacity is the usual complaint of the employers who charge the workers with deliberately doing less work and demand of them more production in the same amount of time.

Today, with chronic malnutrition, as a result of years of starvation rations, sub-standard wages, abominable housing conditions and under-employment, the vitality of the workers is sapped. Even the existing workloads are unbearable and every factory and workshop is a living hell for the workers.

The Government does nothing to assure the worker adequate rations even according to Indian standards, does nothing to maintain his health, does nothing to solve the housing problem. But it shamelessly comes forward to help the employers to intensify their exploitation of the workers by increasing workloads.

When workers resist these attempts of the employers, the employers scream and send up the false complaint that efficiency is falling. Government accepts this complaint and puts a legal stamp on it.

Government's definition of "go-slow" policy is thus another name for the owners' complaints against the workers. It declares such acts illegal, as illegal strikes.

The employers can now go to the industrial courts and tribunals, place the evidence of their "job analysis experts" and get a declaration from the courts that the workers are following a policy of go-slow.

Once such a declaration is got, the workers in the factory concerned will be considered to have been following a go-slow policy. As such they will be charged with having gone on an illegal strike and penalised with loss of job and imprisonment for six months.

The working class throughout the world has never accepted compulsory arbitration, for it is fundamentally opposed to and cuts at the very root of all principles of class struggle and collective bargaining. The Indian working class, true to its traditions of class struggle, has decisively rejected compulsory arbitration and all the attempts of the Congress Government with the aid

of its agency—the INTUC—to impose it, have met with the stubborn resistance of workers throughout the country.

During the last three years, the workers have learnt from experience that these tribunals and courts and their awards are but the instruments of the capitalists to carry through their plans of attacking the workers. Most of these awards have been against the workers. Every time such anti-working class awards were attempted to be thrust on them, the workers have resisted stubbornly.

Textile and other workers have fought against many unfavourable awards and forced changes in them. The employers today are bitterly complaining against this resistance and demanding stern action against them. The Government has, therefore, made necessary and sweeping provisions in the bill for a still more rigid enforcement of these anti-working class awards.

Under Section 86, an award will normally remain in operation for one year. But “the appropriate Government may, before the expiry of the said period, extend the period of operation by any period not exceeding one year at a time, as it thinks fit. So, however, that the total period of operation of any award does not exceed three years from the date on which it came into operation.”

Not only does the Government make it compulsory for workers to accept the awards unreservedly, but it has made provision by which the awards can remain in force for three years. Any action against the awards within this period is punishable with all the severity of the law, including six months' imprisonment.

Workers are thus to be bound hand and foot and handed over as slaves in Government-owned or private factories.

The provisions relating to the so-called “collective bargaining” in this bill are nothing but a mockery of the term. None but the hardened agents of the capitalists will be empowered, under these provisions, to enter into agreements with the employers. And these “agreements” are sought to be thrust on the workers by making them legally binding on all workers, whe-

ther they were concluded with their consent or not.

The Government can "declare any establishment or class of establishments to be appropriate for collective bargaining". Under Section 33, a "certified bargaining agent" for workers in these establishments can be

- (a) a registered federation of trade unions having a membership in good standing of not less than 15 per cent of the total number of employees employed in that establishment or class of establishments in that area; or
- (b) a registered trade union having a membership in good standing of not less than 30 per cent of the total number of employees employed in that establishment or class of establishments in that area; or
- (c) the representatives of the employees of that establishment or class of establishments in that area elected in the prescribed manner.

**Explanation:** "For the purpose of this sub-section, a membership of a registered trade union or a registered federation of trade unions shall be deemed to be in good standing if such membership has not lapsed during the ninety days preceding the date of the application under this sub-section by the trade union or federation of trade unions, as the case may be."

Thus who can become a bargaining agent? In the first place, a registered trade union or a federation of trade unions. Which can be a registered trade union or federation of such unions? Those which include in their constitution clauses penalising workers if they go on strike without the sanction of the union. Under the Trade Unions Bill, only such unions which are directly opposed to any strike can get registration.

This means that bargaining agents can be only those who represent anti-strike unions, in the present case, the INTUC and its puppet unions.

But so as to allow no loop-holes, the bill makes further provision to see that only INTUC unions and federations can have the right to become bargaining agents. A minimum of 30 per cent membership for an individual union and of 15 per cent for a federation of unions is necessary to secure the certificate of a bargaining agent.

With the exception of the INTUC, none of the trade unions are allowed facilities for functioning. The All-India Trade Union Congress and its affiliated unions are singled out for ruthless repression. With thousands of organisers in jail, even the enrolment of members cannot be done except by risking loss of jobs.

Enrolment of members to the INTUC unions is done directly with the aid of the employers. Under threats of dismissal from service, the management and its agencies compel workers to join INTUC unions. Besides bogus and inflated membership is shown, which no one is allowed to challenge.

Even today, despite the fact that it is hardly possible for the INTUC unions to hold a single mass meeting without the help of the police, despite the fact that these unions stand fully unmasked and exposed as strike-breaking agencies, when workers have repeatedly shown that they have no confidence in this puppet of the Government and the capitalists, it is the INTUC that is considered by the Government as the representative organisation.

Under the Labour Relations Bill, these INTUC unions alone will have the right to become bargaining agents. They alone will get registration, because they alone will agree to expel workers who go on spontaneous strikes.

Thus those who are thoroughly unmasked as agents of the capitalists and their Government, i.e., the INTUC and its unions, alone will be certified as bargaining agents having the right to negotiate "agreements" on behalf of the workers, which will be binding on workers whether they like it or not.

No wonder these certified agents are given sweeping powers. Section 42 of the bill says:

**"Special provisions relating to persons on whom collective agreement is binding:—**A collective agreement between an employer and a certified agent shall be binding upon—

- (a) that employer, and
- (b) that bargaining agent and all employees in the establishment or class of establishments for which the bargaining agent has been certified.



This provision is simply outrageous. It means that only such organisations as are Government's and employers' puppet bodies and which are enemies of the workers have the right to negotiate and conclude an agreement and bind all workers to it. The collective bargaining agent is, thus, in reality a licensed agent of the capitalists, legally empowered to conclude binding agreements with them and betray the workers.

This is how the bill openly and shamelessly deprives the workers of their right to represent themselves and makes them slaves of the capitalists through the medium of the strike-breaking unions of the INTUC.

So far we have seen how this bill systematically takes away the basic trade union rights of the workers. But the climax is reached in its sweeping provisions which ban all strikes and resistance to the offensive of the capitalists and the Government. Through these it seeks to take away from the hands of the workers their only effective weapon, the weapon of strike, so as to completely emasculate them, make them helpless against the continued and brazen-faced attacks of the capitalists to transfer the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the working class.

Every chapter of the bill has one single aim, namely, to deprive the worker of this weapon of strike and leave him defenceless before the attacks of the employer.

At the very outset, the bill bans spontaneous strikes against sudden attacks of the employers on the workers' standard of living and conditions of service. Section 26 (1) says:

"Where for any reason a labour dispute has arisen or is likely to arise between an employer and an employee, the employee or as the case may be, the employer may send a notice, in the prescribed manner, to the other party setting out the nature of the dispute and the specific demands that the other party is required to accept and requiring the other party to enter into negotiations, within seven days of the date of receipt of the notice, with a view to the settlement of the labour dispute."

Under Section 28 of the bill, the negotiations are allowed to drag on for 14 days. Even if at the end of these 14 days no settlement is reached the workers cannot still go on strike. Under Section 95 they must give a notice of further 14 days and only at the the end of these 14 days, i.e., at the end of 28 to 35 days from the time the notice of the dispute was given, can the workers think of going on strike, while in the meantime the employer would have already attacked them and carried through his offensive. For nothing under this bill prevents him from acting as he likes.

It is in resistance to the sudden attacks of the employers and the Government that spontaneous strikes take place. The employers alone are responsible for such strikes. Despite repression, mass arrests, lathi-charges and firings, the starving workers have boldly, repeatedly and with determination resisted these sudden attacks with spontaneous strikes which have today become a common feature.

It is only as a result of these prompt counter-attacks by the workers that the employers and the Government often find themselves unable to easily carry out their offensives of unemployment, increased workload, attacks on wages, etc. It is to prevent these effective counter-actions of the workers that the Government is now out to declare such strikes illegal.

Even after all this, the workers cannot go on strike, once the Government refers the dispute to adjudication.

Section 96 of the bill says:

“(1) No employee shall give any notice of strike or go on strike and no employer shall give any notice of lock-out or declare a lock-out for any reason whatsoever—

(a) during the pendency of any conciliation proceeding before a Board or Standing Board and seven days after the conclusion of such proceeding;

or

(b) during the pendency of any proceeding before a Tribunal or the Appellate Tribunal; or

(c) during any period in which any settlement or collective agreement or award is in operation ”

Thus, the Government has only to refer some dispute to the tribunal for adjudication and then all strikes—whatever be their causes—even if they have nothing to do with the dispute that has been referred to or may have been adjudicated upon by the tribunal—become automatically illegal.

It will be seen that the section prohibits also strikes during the period of operation of a collective agreement. We have already seen what these collective agreements are. They are agreements concluded by the enemies of the working class by the strike-breaking unions, who are to be licensed under the bill as “bar-gaining agents.”

This means that if workers refuse to accept these collective agreements and go on strike, then they will be considered to have gone on an illegal strike.

The bill prohibits strikes against retrenchment. Section 98 (d) says that

“a strike shall be illegal if . . . it has any object other, or in addition to, the settlement of the labour dispute which has arisen in relation to the establishment or establishments in which the employees going on strike are engaged.”

Thus under this section all strikes other than those in furtherance of a labour dispute in an establishment or establishments are prohibited. And what is a labour dispute, according to this bill?

Section 96 (2) states:

“Where labour courts have been constituted under Section 10, no employee shall go on strike . . . in pursuance of any labour dispute relating to any matter which is not specified in the Second Schedule.”

One may search the whole of the Second Schedule, all the fifteen objects enumerated therein, but one will not find there the subject “retrenchment”. This means that retrenchment is not one of those subjects that can become a labour dispute. And therefore, a strike against retrenchment, since its object is not a “labour dispute”

within the meaning of this bill, is illegal.

In order to make the meaning absolutely clear, explanation to Section 59 states:

“For the purposes of this Section, ‘labour dispute’ means any labour dispute relating to any matter which is not specified in the Second Schedule, but does not include the termination of service of an employee who is surplus to the requirements of the employer.”

We have already seen how the employers, when they retrench workers, always give the reason that these workers are ‘surplus to requirements’.

Thus the Government after having legalised retrenchment, after having invited the employers to go ahead with their schemes of mass retrenchment and unemployment, after refusing any protection to the workers against mass unemployment and insecurity of service, goes further and deprives the workers of the one weapon they possess against these attacks, the weapon of strike. It proclaims that the workers have no right even to struggle against unemployment, that is they cannot struggle even for their very existence.

Afraid of the growing unity of the working class, the bill prohibits all their solidarity actions and declares sympathetic strikes to be illegal.

Section 98 (e) states that a strike is illegal if “it is commenced or declared in sympathy with any other strike or lock out”.

Today the solidarity of the working class has grown on an international scale. Dockers of London and Liverpool go on strike in support of striking Canadian seamen. The entire Indian working class rose in support of the postal workers’ general strike in 1946, when the Government tried to crush it. Before the might of the united working class the Government was then compelled to bend.

This unity of the working class is a formidable obstacle in the way of the employers and the Government carrying out their schemes of mass retrenchment, rationalisation and other attacks on the workers.

The Congress Government wants to destroy this unity of the working class. It is for this purpose that

it has made sympathetic strikes illegal under this bill.

We have already seen that under Section 98 (d) a strike is illegal "if it has an object other than, or in addition to the settlement of the labour dispute which has arisen in relation to the establishment or establishments in which the employees going on strike are engaged". This means that workers have no right to go on a political strike or to strike in defence of their political and democratic rights.

The Government has let loose a reign of terror on the working class. Over 25,000 leaders of the workers and other toiling people have already been arrested. Meetings, processions, demonstrations are freely banned. Trade union offices are constantly raided and unions banned. Lathi-charges and firings have become the order of the day. All trade union rights have been trampled under foot by this Government.

After all this, the Government says that the workers have no right to protest against these atrocities. They have no right to struggle in defence of their political rights and democratic liberties. The Government decrees that the working class shall not fight against repression, that it shall not fight for democracy and real freedom.

This is what it means by illegalising political strikes.

After thus having declared all strikes—spontaneous strikes, strikes against retrenchment, strikes after the reference of a dispute to arbitration, strikes against the treacherous deals of the INTUC company unions, sympathetic strikes and political strikes — illegal, the Government goes on to provide for heavy punishments should the workers refuse to submit to this ferocious attack on their rights and standards. Section 112 (1) says:

"(1) Any employee who commences, continues, or otherwise acts in furtherance of, a strike which is illegal under this Act shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to one month or with fine which may extend to fifty rupees, or with both."

In addition to this, Section 115 states:

"Any person who commits a breach of any term of any settlement or collective agreement or order of a Labour Court or award which is binding on him under this Act, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with both."

This means that workers who go on strike against unjust awards of the labour tribunals, will be charged on two counts, under Section 112 for going on illegal strike and under Section 115 for breach of the terms of an award of the tribunal.

Similarly workers who are declared by the labour tribunals to have adopted a go-slow policy will be charged on two counts, on the charge of illegal strike and also on the charge of breach of the order of a labour court or tribunal.

Workers who refuse to accept the treacherous pacts entered into by the INTUC's company unions will also be charged under two counts—on the charge of breach of collective agreement, for which they can be sent to jail for six months, and also on the charge of going on illegal strike.

The bill further provides for very heavy punishments for supporting the struggles of the workers. Section 113 states:

"Any person who instigates or incites others to take part in, or otherwise acts in furtherance of, a strike or lock-out which is illegal under this Act shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or with both."

This means that all trade unions that refuse to betray the workers, that defend the interests of the workers, are prohibited from acting in this direction. If they agitate against an unjust award, they will be charged with instigating workers to go on illegal strike. If they denounce the treacherous pacts concluded by the INTUC unions and rally the workers to fight against their imposition, they will be charged with instigating workers to go on illegal strike.

This means virtually that all activities by unions other than INTUC puppet unions are banned. Section 114 declares:

“Any person who knowingly expends or applies any money in furtherance of any strike or lock-out which is illegal under this Act shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or with both.”

Thus after having illegalised all strikes, the Government proclaims that even showing any sympathy to workers who are on strike despite all these heavy odds is illegal. It wants to crush the workers by isolating them from the rest of the working people. It wants to terrorise the working people so as to prevent them from showing any sympathy to workers on strike. It wants to terrorise the other workers, who are prohibited not only from going on sympathetic strike, but also from giving any help to the fighting strikers.

This is how, with these heavy punishments, the Government wants to crush all working class resistance to the growing capitalist offensive.

In short, the Labour Relations Bill introduced by the Government of India seeks:  
 ments binding on all the workers:

1. TO legalise retrenchment by the employers who are now free to retrench thousands of workers on the plea that they are “surplus to requirements”;
2. TO legalise rationalisation and increase of work-load on the plea that workers are adopting a “go-slow policy”;
3. TO carry through the offensive of the employers by means of treacherous pacts with the INTUC puppet unions, which are to be declared as bargaining agents, and whose pacts are to be stamped as collective agreements binding on all the workers;
4. TO bolster up these INTUC puppet unions and to outlaw all the activities of unions that refuse to betray the workers and instead lead their resistance to the attacks of the employers; and

5. TO crush all resistance of the workers against the attacks of the owners. For this purpose the bill declares as illegal:

- (a) Spontaneous strikes of the workers against the sudden attacks of the employers;
- (b) Strikes against retrenchment;
- (c) Strikes after reference to arbitration;
- (d) Strikes during the period a "collective agreement" concluded by the INTUC puppet unions is in force;
- (e) All sympathetic strikes;
- (f) All political strikes.

The bill further seeks to impose very heavy punishments for refusing to submit to this attack. It imposes very heavy punishments for showing any sympathy to workers who fight against the attacks of the employers.

Thus the Labour Relations Bill concedes not a single right to the workers. It grants them no protection against the growing menace of mass unemployment. It gives them no protection against wage-cuts, rationalisation, increased workload and other attacks of the capitalists.

There is no law in this country guaranteeing the workers a living wage. There is not a single social security measure in existence. Unemployment benefits are simply unknown in this country.

Under these conditions this bill not only legalises all the attacks of the employers on the workers—attacks of mass unemployment, rationalisation, retrenchment and wage-cuts—but it takes away the only weapon the workers have against the rapacious and unbridled exploitation of the capitalists—the weapon of strike. It seeks to destroy the unity of the working class, built with untold sacrifices over many years of struggle. Under this bill, the very exercise of the fundamental rights of the workers as understood all over the world—the right to strike and to organise—is made a crime punishable with imprisonment.

The bill therefore is an open fascist measure, seeking to suppress working class struggles, to destroy their unity and organisation, so as to facilitate the capitalist



offensive against the workers and thereby enable the owners to transfer the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the workers.

### III. The Trade Unions Bill

At the very outset, in the objects and reasons of the Trade Unions Bill, the Government declares:

"In the interests of discipline, the armed forces and the police have been excluded from its scope."

This means that the Congress bourgeois Government is mightily afraid of facing the discontent of the armed forces and the police who are as much exploited as the rest of the working population under the rule of the bourgeoisie. Their wages are starvation wages, their conditions of service are hard and hazardous. The Government does not guarantee them any right such as living wage, but instead puts all kinds of restrictions on them with a view to keeping them away from other workers who are fighting against capitalism for a better living standard. The bourgeoisie has no justification whatsoever for thus debarring the armed forces and the police from organising unions for securing living conditions.

The Government demands by this bill that the rules and bye-laws of unions must contain provisions for taking disciplinary action against those who go on any strike not sanctioned by the executive. It demands that the rules should mention:

"The procedure for taking disciplinary action against members who go on strike without the sanction of the executive or the majority of the members of the trade union, or who otherwise violate the rules of the trade union." (Clause 6 [1]).

Resisting the growing and sudden attacks of the employers and the Government, workers both in private and Government service go on spontaneous strikes. Managements alone are responsible for such strikes. Despite repression, mass arrests, lathi-charges and firings, the starving workers have boldly, repeatedly, and with determination resisted these attacks, and spon-

taneous strikes have become a common feature of the present day. It is only as a result of these prompt counter-attacks by the workers that the employers and the Government have often been prevented from easily carrying out their offensive of unemployment, increased workload, deterioration of wages, etc. It is to forestall these effective counter-actions of the workers that the Government has declared such strikes illegal and workers are threatened with a penalty of six months' imprisonment, in addition to loss of job and wages.

But the Government is not satisfied even with this. It is out to penalise the unions also and seeks to compel them to have a constitution under which workers will not be allowed to participate in spontaneous strikes. The unions are thus being forced under this bill to become strike-breaking agencies.

The objects further lay down and the bill demands that the constitution of a union seeking registration must contain "the procedure for taking disciplinary action against officers who contravene the provisions of this Act or of the rules of the trade union." (Clause 6 [j] )

First, make a rule in your constitution that the workers will not join a spontaneous strike. If workers defy this rule, then expel them from the union. If any office-bearer supports or participates in a spontaneous strike, then expel him from the union. These are the capitalist Government's dictates to the workers' trade union, the price it demands of a union for securing or maintaining registration.

Should the unions, true to the interests of the working class, refuse to have in their constitutions such outrageous provisions of servitude to the capitalists, they will not be registered at all under this bill. The unions that are now registered under the existing Trade Union Act will also lose their registration when this new bill becomes law and replaces the existing Act, unless they amend their constitution and incorporate in it these outrageous provisions.

But this is not all. It shamelessly attempts to disrupt the workers' ranks, by forbidding the 20 lakhs Government employees from joining any organisation of non-

civil servants. With this aim of keeping the Government employees away from the general working class movement and thus emasculating their struggle for better conditions, the bill has imposed several restrictions on them.

The objects and reasons of the bill state in this regard as follows:—

“The bill provides that a trade union of civil servants will not be entitled to compulsory recognition by the appropriate Government if it does not consist wholly of civil servants or if it is affiliated to a federation to which trade unions of persons other than civil servants are also affiliated.”

It is thus clear that the aim of the bill is to keep away these lakhs of Government employees from the central organisations of the Indian working class like the All-India Trade Union Congress or other organisations to which trade unions of all workers are affiliated.

The bill imposes identical restrictions on organisations of workers in hospitals and educational institutions, as well as on other categories of workers such as the supervisory staff and the watch and ward staff. All these sections of workers are to be arbitrarily kept away from the common struggle of the Indian working class for their basic rights and demands. The bill thus is an open attempt at disrupting the fighting solidarity of the working class with a view to suppressing its struggles.

The objects and reasons further state:

“The rules of a trade union should hereafter mention the rate of subscription payable by members, the circumstances, including default in payment of subscription, in which the name of a member shall be struck off the list of members.”

Today even the normal activities of the unions such as collection of subscription, etc., are to be carried on under conditions of fascist terror. Discrimination against and even dismissal of workers who join any union other than the one which is a lackey of the management (*i.e.*, the Congress-controlled unions) is a common story. The Government knowing full well

these difficulties, which are the result of its own fascist rule, is now demanding this strict provision in the constitutions of the unions.

The aim is to see that through these measures the unions which really command the workers' confidence and are their real leaders are declared to be non-representative and instead puppet INTUC unions, which forcibly collect subscriptions with the help of the management on pain of reprisals, are declared to be representative organisations having all rights and privileges to speak on behalf of the workers, that is, to betray the workers.

The same aim is further sought to be achieved by imposing the following conditions for registration of the union (Clause 6):

"(g) The rate of subscription payable by ordinary members which shall not be less than two annas per month, provided that in the case of employees employed in agriculture, cottage industries in rural areas, conservancy service or such sweated industries as may be notified in this behalf by the appropriate Government in the Official Gazette, a lower rate of subscription per annum may be prescribed;

"(h) the circumstances (including default in payment of subscription for a specified period) in which the name of member shall be removed from the list of members."

But the capitalist Government is not satisfied with imposing even these restrictions on its employees' trade union rights. It goes still further. The objects and reasons of the bill state:

"Government employees, whether civil servants or not, will be debarred from contributing to political funds though there will be no such ban on members who are not Government employees."

The meaning is obvious. Railwaymen, post and telegraph workers, workers and employees in ordnance factories and engineering workshops of the Central Government, P.W.D., Secretariat, and similar other establishments of the Government, in all nearly 20 lakhs

employees, are not only to be debarred from taking part in any political activity but they cannot even contribute to any political fund. These lakhs of employees are not allowed to struggle for civil liberties and democratic rights, they cannot participate in any movement that seeks to fight against the capitalist rule. This is nothing but open and shameless denial to lakhs of workers of their right to hold political views.

With this aim in view the Government has demanded the inclusion of the following rule in the constitution of a union as condition precedent to its securing or maintaining registration. Clause 6 (k) demands:—

“where the trade union consists, whether wholly or partly, of civil servants, the prohibition of its members from participating directly or indirectly in any form of political activity, and the removal of the name of any member who takes part in any form of political activity from the list of its members.”

After having secured for themselves under this bill the right to compel unions to punish and expel workers for going on spontaneous strikes or face loss of registration, the right to prevent 20 lakhs Government employees from joining their forces with those of other Indian workers in the common battle against capitalism and for better living conditions, the Government has sought further powers to ensure its open and unashamed control over even the day-to-day functioning of the unions, to ensure its intervention any time in the activities of trade unions.

Section 15, Clause (1) states:—

“The appropriate Government may appoint as many Inspectors as may be necessary for inspecting the registered trade unions and for exercising such other functions as may be prescribed.”

The meaning is obvious. The sweeping powers that the bill gives to the bourgeois Government for emasculating the militant trade unions are to be exercised by and through these petty officers, to whom the unions of the working class are now sought to be subor-

minated. Under the hated Public Security Measures Acts, the police sub-inspector is given unlimited powers over the personal liberty of the workers and the toiling people. Under the Trade Unions Bill this inspector is given equally vague and undefined powers over the workers' and other toilers' class organisations.

It is this inspector—whose powers are deliberately left undefined under the bill—who will decide whether or not the trade union has servilely carried out all the dictates of the bourgeoisie and its legislation. Should he decide that it has refused to do the Government's bidding and instead has firmly stood by the working class, he can have its registration cancelled or denied altogether.

It will not be the masses of the workers concerned but this Government officer who will now decide how a trade union is to be conducted and how not. Not they but he will control their union. He is the all-powerful dictator whose orders the organisations of workers are called upon to obey. Failure means loss of registration, compulsion to work almost under conditions of illegality.

To make union work difficult the Government through this bill has put further restrictions on the office-bearers of unions. Clause 24 (1) lays down:

"In any registered trade union the number of persons who, without being employees in any establishment or class of establishments with which the trade union is connected, are entitled to be officers of that trade union, shall not exceed four or one-fourth of the total number of members of the executive of that trade union, whichever is less."

Thus leaders of workers who have all along led their struggles are now to be debarred from being leaders of the unions. This is clearly a measure aimed at depriving the workers of effective leadership of their struggle. But the real meaning of this clause is far more dangerous. What the Government intends to achieve is to keep out of the union even those militant worker fighters who while leading workers' struggles

have been victimised. They are now to be kept out of the union on the ground that they have ceased to be employees. It is thus an open invitation to the management to victimise worker office-bearers of unions. This clause thus directly aims at the trade union movement. It is an open attempt to prevent worker fighters from being in leading positions in their union and instead keep at the helm submissive elements from among the employees, with a view to be able to easily suppress workers' resistance.

Even if a union submits to all these humiliating conditions and restrictions and obtains registration and recognition, it will find it very difficult to maintain that registration in practice. It always stands the risk of losing the registration for indulging in what are called in the bill "unfair practices".

Clause 40 defines "unfair practices" as follows:

"The following shall be deemed to be unfair practices on the part of a recognised trade union, namely:—

- (a) for a majority of the members of the trade union to take part in an irregular strike;
- (b) for the executive of the trade union to advise or actively to support or to instigate an irregular strike;
- (c) for an officer of the trade union to submit any return required by or under this Act containing false statements."

The "irregular strike" referred to here is defined in the bill as "an illegal strike or a strike declared by a trade union in contravention of its rules". We have already seen that the Labour Relations Bill makes practically every strike illegal.

This section, therefore, really means that the union will lose its registration if the majority of its members take part in any strike, or if it advises the workers to go on strike or even if it supports workers who might have gone on a spontaneous strike.

On the plea that the union is guilty of such unfair practices the Registrar or the employer may apply to the labour court demanding withdrawal of the recogni-

tion of the union. This will show how fake and fictitious is the so-called recognition of a union and how it can be withdrawn the moment the union concerned supports a workers' spontaneous strike. Even on finding a flaw in the statements submitted to the Government by the union, the Registrar or the employer can demand the withdrawal of its recognition.

Any office-bearer of a trade union whose recognition is thus withdrawn on the charge that the union was guilty of unfair practices will be barred from being an office-bearer of any union for a period of three years.

First no union can have registration if it does not have in its constitution provision for expelling its members or its office-bearers for having participated in an illegal strike or any other strike which is not sanctioned by a regular meeting of the executive. Unless the union definitely sets its face against all strikes, unless it agrees to become an open strike-breaking agency it cannot claim registration.

Secondly, registered unions alone have a right to be recognised. But the recognition so secured can be maintained only if the union concerned undertakes to give no support whatsoever to any strike struggle in any circumstances:

In short, what the Trade Unions Bill aims at is complete suppression of all unions which stand by and defend the workers' right to organise and their right to go on strike when the circumstances demand that they promptly retaliate against and halt attacks by the management. Under this bill, unions that are the real fighting organisations of workers are called upon to agree to oppose every strike to punish their members for participating in strikes. Failure to carry out these shameful dictates will now mean that those fighting unions will lose their registration and will have to function almost under conditions of illegality, having no legal protection whatsoever.

Having made registration and recognition of fighting trade unions impossible, the Government under Clause 35 has allowed the puppet unions facilities to function and made it incumbent on the employer to



allow them facilities for announcing their meetings, etc.

Thus, while withdrawing recognition or registration of all trade unions if they do not agree to punish their members for going on spontaneous strikes, i.e., which do not agree to act as strike-breaking agencies, the Government is giving full facilities to puppet trade unions which undertake to do open strike-breaking.

In short the Trade Unions Bill introduced by the Government of India is an open attempt:

1. To suppress all trade unions which refuse to surrender to the capitalists and the bourgeois Government, and which organise and lead workers in their struggle for a living wage, security of service and for better living conditions, which resist every attack of the employers and the Government by way of mass retrenchment, continued attacks on wages, attempts at increasing workload and similar measures;

2. To cancel the registrations of the existing unions unless they agree to include in their constitutions rules to punish and expel from the unions workers and leaders who participate in spontaneous strikes against attacks of the Government;

3. To grant registration and recognition in future only to those unions that agree to spy on workers and punish them when they go on strike, and thus act as open strike-breakers and agents of the capitalists and the Government;

4. To intervene in the affairs of unions so as to ensure their complete subjugation to the employers and the Government and compel them to act as opponents of all strikes, as strike-breakers;

5. Under this bill only INTUC unions, which openly declare their policy to be one of opposing every strike and serving the interest of the bourgeoisie, will have the right to be registered;

6. The bill thus seeks to register and recognise only the Government and capitalist-controlled unions of the Indian National Trade Union Congress as entitled to negotiate and effect settlements on behalf of the workers. In practice this means legalisation of the

open betrayal of workers' interests by the INTUC and its affiliated unions;

7. The bill deliberately seeks to divide the lakhs of Government employees from the rest of the workers by preventing their unions from joining the central organisations of the Indian working class to which non-Government employees' unions are also affiliated. This is a deliberate attempt to disrupt workers' solidarity and weaken their common front against capitalist exploitation;

8. The bill places heavy restrictions on Government servants. By prohibiting them from taking any part in political activities in any shape or form, it demands that they shall hold no political views. It thus attempts to transform the Government servants into bond-slaves.

9. The bill discriminates against hospital employees, employees in educational institutions, the watch and ward and supervisory staff, thus seeking to weaken the common united front of all workers against the capitalists and their Government.

10. It denies even this heavily restricted right of organisation to the armed forces and the police, who, along with the rest of the working population, are also groaning under the same deadweight of worsening economic conditions and starvation wages.

Thus the Trade Unions Bill concedes not a single right to the workers to freely organise their trade unions. Instead it seeks to withdraw even the most meagre facilities that might still exist and thus fetters the working class with unlimited restrictions attempting to transform them into bond-slaves.

#### **IV. Forge Mighty United Front To Defeat The Bills**

The All-India Trade Union Congress has, therefore, rightly denounced these bills as openly fascist measures and demanded their unconditional withdrawal, both in

the resolution of the General Council, which met on February 26, and 27, 1950, and in the memoranda submitted by its delegation to the Indian Labour Conference called by the Government of India at Delhi on March 20 and 21.

The AITUC has further demanded the unreserved recognition of the workers' right to strike and freedom of organisation. It has demanded that the workers' right to a living wage and security of service be recognised unreservedly.

For the purpose of ensuring the above fundamental rights of the workers, the AITUC demanded that the following steps be taken immediately:

1. Recognition of full freedom to organise trade unions, right to strike, right to hold political opinions and right to join any political party.

2. Full freedom to carry on trade union activity at work places, without any restrictions.

3. Repeal of the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act, the Indian Trade Disputes Act and similar other Acts that restrict the workers' right to strike.

4. Guarantee against victimisation; for this purpose the right of the management to dismiss workers be taken away; the task of maintaining discipline be vested in a committee elected by the workers.

5. Full guarantee against unemployment; all mills and factories which may close down or have already closed down, to be taken over without compensation by the Government and run with the full complement of workers as before the closure.

6. Payment of full wages and dearness allowance as compensation to all workers who have been rendered unemployed as a result of these closures and statutory liability of employers to pay such compensation.

7. Unemployment benefits equivalent to full wages and dearness allowance for all those who are forced into unemployment, the State to find them work according to their capacity.

8. Repeal of all Public Security Measures Acts and the Preventive Detention Act under which thousands of trade union, peasant and student leaders are detained in jails; recognition of full democratic rights of the working people.

9. Withdrawal of bans imposed on trade unions in Madras, the United States of Travancore and Cochin, Madhya Bharat and other places.

10. Release of all leaders of workers, peasants, students, middle class employees and women who have been detained without trial and release of political prisoners convicted of various charges.

All trade union militants and all workers should realise the seriousness of the situation. These bills are a menace to all workers whatever be their political affiliation.

The passage of these bills means unbridled exploitation of the working class by the capitalists — both Indian and foreign. It means that the offensive of retrenchment, rationalisation and mass unemployment, of wage-cuts and intensification of exploitation is to be ruthlessly pushed through.

Even the very right to struggle against poverty and unemployment is denied. Any resistance of workers is to be crushed by all the repressive measures of the State, by loss of jobs and fine, by arrests and detention, by lathi-charges and bullets. The bills foreshadow open naked colonial fascism.

The postwar years have seen in India a new working class, fighting huge and prolonged strike struggles with amazing courage, tenacity and determination before which the capitalists have often had to beat a retreat. The most ferocious repression and brutal terror, the like of which had never before been seen in India, could not crush the working class and its struggles.

How, then, does the Government dare to bring such openly fascist measures?)

History teaches that the ruling big bourgeoisie in crisis, moves over to open fascism when, menaced by the advance of the militant working class movement, it

finds that the continuation of the exercise of democratic and trade union rights by the working class threatens its regime of unbridled exploitation.

History also teaches that the big bourgeoisie temporarily succeeds in suppressing the trade union and democratic rights of the working class and in establishing its naked fascist dictatorship only when and to the extent the ranks of the working class are divided. But before a united working class movement such attempts have always foundered.

Today also the Government of India has dared to bring these measures only because of the disunity in the ranks of the Indian working class. The Indian working class, however, by its united struggle can smash these fascist measures and win and extend its democratic and trade union rights.

The foremost duty of all active trade union workers, of all trade unions, is, therefore, to build the broadest united front of all workers and mobilise the entire working class in the struggle against these bills.

Defence of the trade union and democratic rights of the workers, defence of the right to strike and freedom of organisation, defence of the living standards against the attacks of the capitalists, defence of their jobs against attacks of mass unemployment, rationalisation and retrenchment, fight against these fascist bills, repeal of all anti-working class and repressive laws—such is the platform on which the broadest united front can be immediately built. None who have the vital interests of the workers at heart can refuse to cooperate on this platform.

Such a broad united front must have its firm foundation in every factory and work place. All militant trade union workers must develop fraternal contact with militants of other unions and the broad masses of workers and patiently explain to them what the issues at stake are. They should organise the broadest discussion of these fascist measures and of this broad platform of united front in their work places, at the factory gates, in the tiffin sheds and in bustees.

They should organise delegates' meetings, conferences and demonstrations in every factory and locality. They must take the initiative in bringing their unions into the joint struggle in defence of their vital interests and trade union and democratic rights.

Together, they must set up committees in every factory and broad united committees of their unions in their localities to carry on a nationwide campaign and struggle against these fascist bills.

Only their initiative and activities in the factories and in all working class centres will ensure the building up of a powerful all-India united front against the bills.

Today, as always, every militant, every worker, must judge everyone that claims to fight for his interests by one standard alone. *Are you for or against the united front for the defence of the democratic and trade union rights?* All those that stand in the way of the united front must be resolutely weeded out of the working class movement as enemies of the working class and direct agents of the capitalists.

Workers all over the world have shown that on the impregnable rock of their unity all fascist laws and attempts at disruption have been shattered.

Only recently, the miners of the United States of America by their courageous and united strike smashed the notorious Taft-Hartley Act and the disruption of their treacherous leader, John Lewis.

Millions of workers in France, in Italy, are demonstrating the impotence of all the fascist measures of their Governments backed by American arms and of the desperate attempts of the disruptors financed by the American dollar barons before the powerful unity and struggle of the working class.

The Indian working class, in the great strikes it had waged during the last few years, has seen what an immense strength it has. The mobilisation of that immense united strength is the most urgent need of the hour.

The All-India Trade Union Congress, therefore, appeals to all workers, irrespective of the organisation

to which they may owe allegiance, to all militant trade union workers, to all genuine fighters for working class interests and to all trade unions, to come together and immediately forge a mighty united front on the basis of the above broad platform, launch a nationwide campaign and struggle against these fascist bills and defend the basic rights and vital interests of the working class.

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