

REPORT OF
THE ALL-HYDERABAD
TRADE UNION CONGRESS

Presented by
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to the

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NOTE

This is the second part of the Report dealing with the years 1951-1954. The earlier part, relating to years 1946-1950 has been omitted.

FOUR ANNAS

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REPORT OF THE ALL-HYDERABAD T.U.C.

(1951-1954)

THE period, 1951-54, has been one of deepening economic crisis and growing unemployment, signifying the fiasco of Government policies. An increasing attack on the working class through rationalisation, increased work-load and retrenchment, mounting victimisation and attacks on trade union rights, the revival, reorganisation and strengthening of the AHTUC, the growing unity, united action and counter-offensive of the working class have been features of this period in Hyderabad.

GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment both among the middle and the working classes has reached catastrophic heights. The retrenchment of 12,000 from the army, 9,000 from the police, 7,000 from offices and 8,000 from the jagirs has added 37,000 to the army of unemployed. According to Major Guruswamy, the Director, Regional Employment Exchange, total registrations in the employment exchanges from 1947 to 1952 were 1,26,156 whereas total placements during the same period were hardly 9,297. Major Guruswamy further says "the general employment situation in the State was further aggravated during 1951 and 1952. And the retrenchment drive in Government and private establishments which had commenced in the latter half of the year 1950 continued throughout the period." ("General Employment Situation in Hyderabad State during the Period 1945-1953," *Government Economic Bulletin*, January-February, 1953.)

Industrial unemployment has been steadily increasing. According to the Industries Department itself, 3,900 workers have been retrenched between 1950 and 1953.

From the reports of our affiliated unions we gather that in the Singareni Collieries, the employment has come down from 21,000 in 1949 to 15,000 in 1953, that in the Hutti Gold Mines by about 200 during the last two years, that in Cement factories from 4,000 in 1944-45 to 2,445 in 1951-52, that in the Vazir Sultan Tobacco Co. from 3,500 in 1947-48 to 2,000 in 1953-1954, that in the Allwyn Metal Works from 1,500 in 1949 to 996 in 1954, that in the Aurangabad textile

mills from 2,400 in 1947 to 700 in 1954 and that in the Osman-shahi Mills by about 1,000 in recent months. Retrenchment has been effected by the Birlas in Sirpur. Asbestos Cement threaten to retrench 200. There has been heavy retrenchment in the Bidi industry, soap industry and in many factories and establishments.

INDUSTRIAL COLLAPSE

The collapse that began with the cottage industries, particularly the handloom industry, continually extended to medium industry. Out of a total of 24,00,000 workers, there were 2,99,000 weavers. Amongst them only 1,48,000 could draw yarn in 1950-51. The artisans engaged in the bidi works in Bidar and in many other works in Aurangabad, Nirmal, and other parts of the State are all facing a serious crisis of the market and starvation. Thousands of building workers are going without work for at least three days in a week.

The number of closures is an index of the collapse of medium industry. During 1949-50, 32 companies with a total paid-up capital of Rs. 19,03,000 were closed down. During 1950-51, 25 companies with a total paid-up capital of Rs. 6,40,000 ceased to work. And during 1952-53, 12 companies with a total paid-up capital of Rs. 9,50,000 went out of production.

The Old Mills have been closed for the last three months and are now going into liquidation.

Out of 1,200 oil expellers, employing 15,000 workers, 600 are out of production, throwing at least 7,000 out of work.

The main reasons for the closures are financial stringencies, over-capitalisation, corrupt management and difficulties of market, both for raw materials and finished goods.

As against this, we see the big increase in production in some of the major industries.

| Year | Coal (lakh tons) | Sugar (000 tons) | Cloth (lakh yds.) | Cement (000 tons) | Paper (000 cwts) | Cigarettes (crores) |
|-------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1951 | 12.69 | 22.79 | 638.66 | 186.32 | 105.49 | 417.64 |
| 1952 | 14.34 | 25.81 | 768.48 | 138.72 | 113.79 | 480.34 |
| 1953* | 13.75 | 30.37 | 821.01 | 196.54 | 103.78 | 348.15 |

*11 months.

RATIONALISATION AND WORKLOAD

Every concern is resorting to rationalisation, increased workload and retrenchment attacks against the workers.

Intensive rationalisation has been introduced in the Char Minar Cigarette Factory. For example, in the packing department where one woman used to produce 450 packets per hour, machines have been introduced that produced 150 packets per minute. In the cutting department new machines have been installed with the result that now 21 men work in the place of 70, and the tobacco cut is 36,000 lbs. while it was 1,800 previously.

The four-loom system has already been partially introduced in the Osmanshahi and Azamshahi mills, and threatens to become universal and lead to large-scale retrenchment. In every municipality, work has increased, but employment has not, thus directly exacting more work from the workers. Among the road workers the number of the gang has been reduced while the gang-length is the same as before. The building workers while, on the one hand, getting work only for a few days in a week, have, on the other, to work 9 to 10 hours a day when they do get work under contractors.

In order to extract this increased work from the workers, everywhere there is the tendency to increase supervisory staff and use them as "slave drivers." In the Char Minar Cigarette Factory, in the cigarette-making department the strength of the workers has come down from 150 to 104, but the number of foremen has been increased from one to three, two of whom are Europeans. In the Hutti Gold Mines, there are 14 foremen for a worker strength of 450 underground. In the mill there are 9 foremen for 160 workers. In the engineering department, including the workshop, there are 16 foremen for 210 workers.

ABSENTEEISM - WORKERS' DEVICE TO SNATCH SOME LEISURE

In these conditions of horrible workload, the workers have resorted to absenteeism as a means of getting some leisure. This is seen from the fact that though in cement factories absenteeism has gone up from 17.9 in 1950 to 22.3 in 1953, the average monthly production too has gone up from 13,422 tons to 17,867 tons. And though the absenteeism in paper factories has gone up from 4.4 to 12.0 between 1950 and 1953, the average monthly production too has gone up from 476 cwt. to 943 cwt.

Another device to harass labour and retrench workers is the unreasonable implementation of Standing Orders and on many occasions cooking pretexts to charge-sheet and even dismiss the workers under their provisions.

CORRUPTION AND WASTE

All this increased workload is being forced on the workers in the name of the financial difficulties of the companies. But the workers have no say in the management, sales and purchase policies of the companies. Even tripartite investigation is refused.

Corruption and mismanagement are no small factors adding to the difficulties of the concerns. The Asbestos Company is so much over-capitalised that it pays Rs. 40,000 monthly as interest while the monthly wage bill is only Rs. 30,000.

Allwyns are in ruins mainly due to over-capitalisation, mismanagement and negligence.

In the Char Minar Cigarette Factory, the European staff has been increased from 3 to 15 and are paid far more than their Indian counterparts.

In Hutti, in the Engineering Department alone, there are four European officers. They are heavily paid. The Chief Electrical Engineer gets Rs. 2,100 plus Rs. 300 as overseas allowance plus Rs. 80 as servants' allowance plus Rs. 300 annually as crockery allowance. Other British officials too get all these allowances. Further, the Government has increased the commission to the agents from £7,000 to £11,000.

MORE ACCIDENTS - RESULT OF INCREASED WORKLOAD AND CORRUPTION

The result of increasing workload and over-burdening machinery without properly attending to it increased the number of accidents from 3 fatal, 3 serious and 132 minor for the first seven months of 1952, to 16 fatal, 42 serious, and 1,118 minor for the corresponding months of 1953.

Such is the horrible effect of increased workload, carelessness and neglect of machinery on the life and health of the workers. But the capitalists need money; men do not matter for them.

Due to speed-up and such other devices to get more production, injuries to workers are increasing in number.

And there is a growing tendency among the employers either not to record them or record them as due to the workers' negligence. The trade unions, as in the Nanded textile mills, have had to wage a struggle to get the injuries properly recorded.

The recent deaths in Kottagudem due to the crashing of the cage is a cruel commentary on the ways of the management when, in spite of warnings from the workers, the rope was not attended to.

The deaths in Shahabad in December 1953 and the refusal of permission to the Union leaders to visit the site of the tragedy shows the callousness with which some employers deal with the workers.

VICTIMISATION AND ATTACK ON TRADE-UNION RIGHTS

In order to facilitate the attack on the workers' living conditions, their unity and bargaining power must be smashed. And towards this end trade union rights are attacked and trade union actives dismissed.

In the Hutti Gold Mines, the vice-president of the Union, Com. A. V. Pai and General Secretary, Com. P. Narayan and many other actives have been victimised.

In Shahabad, the secretary of the Union, Com. Gopalswamy, was victimised under the fabricated charge that he threatened to murder the Manager. The Labour Appellate Court permitted this dismissal even while there was a case going on in Gulbarga Court on precisely the same charge against Com. Gopalswamy.

Com. P. N. Abraham, vice-president of the R.T.D. Employees' Union has been under suspension for three months. Another office-bearer of the R.T.D. Employees' Union, Com. P. Ram Mohan Rao, has been charge-sheeted for political activities before his arrest in 1950, merely on the basis of the cooked-up reports of the police. The height of viciousness in this whole affair is that in the departmental enquiry on charges against Com. Mohan Rao, a police official was invited to attend and even asked to cross-examine him.

In Kottagudem, leaders of the Union were picked up for prosecution when, in fact, they had pacified the workers who were justifiably enraged against the negligence of a mines officer which was responsible for the cage crash causing the death of four workers.

Twenty-three R.T.D. employees have been suspended in Kazipet for their participation in the funeral of one their colleagues who committed suicide as he was not getting any allowance during the period of his suspension.

In the Zinda Tilsmath establishment, the Union leadership has been victimised. In J. & J. De Chane and the Hyderabad Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, the worker leaders of the Union have been victimised. The Secretary of the Drainage Employees' Union has not been made permanent in spite of 12 years' service.

Some worker leaders in the Osmanshahi Mills have been victimised for protesting against certain injustices.

In many shops and establishments, no union is tolerated. In Secunderabad the hotel workers have been fighting a heroic battle against victimisation of union actives by the various owners.

Percy Hetaria, ex-General Secretary of the INTUC, has been victimised because he was mainly instrumental in bringing to light some inconvenient facts of alleged corruption by an ex-Manager who has now been brought back as Technical Adviser to Mr. Taraporewalla, the super-boss of Allwyns.

Works Committees are being misused to attack and undermine lawful trade unions. In Shahabad, Works Committee elections were suddenly announced. In spite of the requests of the Union, they were not postponed. The Union had to boycott the elections and now a stooge-infested Works Committee is used virtually to counter the Union. In Aurangabad, a similar situation was created and when the workers boycotted the elections, they were virtually locked in by closing the gates and were forced to vote. In Kottagudem, where the Union nominees came out victorious in the elections to the Works Committee, everything was done to make it ineffective.

REPRESSION ON THE WORKING CLASS

Where all employers' attempts to break the workers through disruption and victimisation fail, the Government has always stepped in with heavy repression to try to bend the workers to submission.

The Home Minister, in his broadcast report to the people on the activities of his department, has shamelessly declared that during the last year workers have shown a defiant mood in their struggle for their demands and that

the police had done a good job with lathis and teargas and even firing.

Section 144 was imposed in Hutti, Shahabad, Sirpur, Ramagundam, Bellampally, Kottagudem and Hyderabad.

Workers, including women, were brutally lathi-charged in Sirpur, Hutti, Kottagudem, Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

Tear-gassing was resorted to in Hyderabad in March 1953 against the E. C. workers and again in March 1954 against the Old Mills workers. Many workers, including women, were injured and Amalak Ram, the General Secretary of the Union, had his knee-cap fractured.

In Kottagudem, in July last year, when negotiations failed, Section 144 was imposed and the police resorted to a lathi-charge and arrests of leaders and actives to force the workers to surrender.

On March 27, a drainage workers' procession was attacked. The head of Drainage Workers' leader, Comrade Venkat Swamy was broken, and he and other workers were arrested.

In April 1953, there was a wild lathi-charge on Sarfekhas employees who, led by the INTUC, were fighting retrenchment. The agricultural workers and the Taj Glass workers, led by the INTUC, were severely beaten. Firing was resorted to in Sirpur to disperse workers.

In Secunderabad, when a hotel worker was victimised and when the owner refused to take him back in spite of the advice of the Labour Department, the worker resorted to hunger strike. He was arrested and sentenced "for causing public nuisance" and the workers assembled were brutally lathi charged.

In Hutti, no respite is allowed to union leaders and actives. When cases are quashed, new cases are launched.

R. T. D. workers were attacked many times during the strike in August 1953.

During the last two years, Section 144 was imposed on working class centres on 7 occasions, and curfew on 2 occasions, once in Shahabad and then in Hyderabad. Lathi-charges were resorted to on about 20 occasions. Firing was resorted to thrice; once in Shahabad in 1952, once on Hyderabad demonstrators during the so-called 'Mulki Movement' and then in Sirpur. Tear-gas was used on four occasions. Not less than 500 people and leaders were arrested and about 1,000 received injuries. The notorious Police Act was used twice to extern leaders in Sirpur, against INTUC leaders and, earlier, against Hutti leaders.

Such has been the repression against the workers and their struggles.

LOW WAGES AND HIGH COSTS OF LIVING

The following figures reveal that the average annual earnings of the various workers in Hyderabad in 1952 are far lower than the all-India average in 1950 though the cost of living here is the highest.

AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS

| | <i>Chemicals</i> | <i>Textiles</i> | <i>Non-metals</i> | <i>Metals</i> | <i>Machine Tools</i> |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| All-India (1950) | 872 | 972 | 729 | 1,176 | 1,001 |
| Hyderabad (1952) | 613 | 704 | 450 | 642 | 644 |

COST OF LIVING INDEX (1951-53)

Base: 1939 — 100

| <i>Centre</i> | 1951 | 1952 | 1953 |
|---------------|------|------|------|
| Ahmedabad | 345 | 362 | 384 |
| Bombay | 315 | 330 | 344 |
| Madras | 344 | 334 | 360 |
| Nagpur | 397 | 378 | 385 |
| Hyderabad | 417 | 400 | 455 |

Let us also compare the cost of living index in the various centres of Hyderabad with the all-India average.

COST OF LIVING INDEX IN CITIES OF HYDERABAD STATE (1951-53)

(Base 1944 — 100)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>All-India</i> | <i>Hyderabad</i> | <i>Warangal</i> | <i>Nizamabad</i> | <i>Nanded</i> | <i>Aurangabad</i> | <i>Gulbarga</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1951 | 144 | 167 | 175 | 210 | 214 | 205 | 161 |
| 1952 | 141 | 164 | 173 | 180 | 187 | 163 | 147 |
| 1953 (Jan) | 139 | 167 | 182 | 178 | 185 | 162 | 142 |
| 1953 (July) | 152 | 184 | 194 | 190 | 200 | 175 | 160 |

Thus we have lower wages and a higher cost of living here compared to other centres. These low earnings acquire added significance when viewed in the background of the family obligations of the workers. According to the Hyderabad Economic Association investigations in 1950, the number of consuming dependants in the families of the various income groups is as follows:

| <i>Income Group</i> | <i>Persons per family</i> | <i>Consuming Dependents per family</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Rs. 25- 50 | 4.52 | 2.83 |
| Rs. 50-100 | 6.50 | 3.65 |
| Rs. 100-150 | 6.50 | 4.35 |
| Rs. 150-200 | 7.69 | 5.35 |
| Rs. 200-250 | 8.12 | 5.66 |
| Rs. 250-300 | 9.54 | 8.00 |

These large numbers of dependents show a backward industrial economy, and low wages, in this background, mean a further cut in the standard of life.

FIASCO OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES

This growing unemployment and collapsing industry and business, in spite of rise in production in certain major industries, and the rise in the cost of living and fall in the real earnings of the workers is a demonstration of the complete fiasco of the Government's economic policies.

They have put forward a Plan and this is the result of three years of its working. An analysis of the expenditure on development shows that only 66% of the estimated amount was actually spent.

BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT 1951-1953 (In lakhs of rupees)

| <i>Development Heads</i> | <i>Planned Expenditure</i> | <i>Actual Expenditure</i> | <i>Percentage of Actual to Planned</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Agricultural Development | 190.53 | 121.81 | 62.8 |
| Irrigation & Power | 1,613.00 | 974.21 | 60.35 |
| Industry | 271.14 | 183.21 | 67.50 |
| Transport | 51.42 | 87.53 | 169.00 |
| Social services | 135.39 | 128.29 | 95.00 |
| Total | 2,261.48 | 1,495.05 | 66.65 |

The taxation and expenditure policy of the Government of Hyderabad only further aggravates the crisis. The *per capita* taxation, including income-tax, has risen from Rs. 8-14-5 in 1951-52 to Rs. 10-3-2 in 1952-53. Further enhancement of taxes in 1953-54 has only added to this figure, further attacking the purchasing power of the people. This is why the business index is falling. Coming to expenditure, the *per capita* expenditure on revenue account on social services is far less than that of even Mysore (See table below).

| | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53* | 1953-54† |
|-----------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| Hyderabad | 3-10-3 | 3-9-11 | 3-13-1 | 4-4-9 |
| Mysore | 6-14-5 | 5-11-6 | 6- 3-7 | 7-2-3 |

* Revised Estimate.

† Budget Estimate.

A study of the budgets for the last three years reveals that they invariably spend more than the sanctioned amount on the police and less than the sanctioned amount on social services.

BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS

(In lakhs of rupees)

| Items of Expenditure | 1951-52 | | 1952-53 | | 1953-54 | |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Est. O.S.* | Actual I.C.† | Est. I.C. | Act. I.C. | Est. I.C. | Act. I.C. |
| Police | 548.59 | 592.82 | 368.57 | 397.90 | 338.57 | 344.69 |
| Education | 490.00 | 409.28 | 442.11 | 424.35 | 475.76 | 465.00 |
| Medical | 118.00 | 91.27 | 107.63 | 100.18 | 111.64 | 110.00 |
| Health | 60.00 | 56.07 | 56.14 | 52.69 | 75. 8 | 72.50 |
| Agri-culture | 30.00 | 77.50 | 75.11 | 55.48 | — | — |
| Industry | 21.47 | 18.17 | 20.18 | 18.21 | — | — |

* Hyderabad State Currency.

† Indian Union Currency.

The agrarian policy of the Government of Hyderabad perpetuates feudal backwardness which is the root cause of the ruin in the countryside and the collapse of the huge internal market. Of the 22 lakh tenants in Hyderabad, hardly 5 lakhs are protected tenants. The overwhelming majority of the rest have been evicted. Even the protected

tenants face eviction as the law itself provides that if they refuse to purchase the land that they occupy within two years of such an offer made by a landlord, the landlord can evict them. When it is already universally accepted that the common peasant needs money for investment in land, any agrarian reform, to be of real use to the peasant by way of increasing his purchasing and investing power, should include the basic factor of giving him the land free of cost and render him fuller help to produce from it.

That is why, after three years of the Five-Year Plan, it is now the target of universal criticism and the very framers of the Plan are now its critics. Revision of the Plan is recognised by all as a necessity. The Plan has to be revised, and revised basically, with a view to increasing the purchasing power of the people by improving their wage and living standards and thus ensure an expanding internal market for the consumption of our industrial and agricultural products.

Even a cursory analysis of the reasons for the difficulties our industry is facing will reveal that the grip of foreign capital, mainly British, on our Banks, foreign trade and many of our key and basic industries, and the feudal backwardness of our countryside are the twin eternal enemies of our prosperity. The excessive profits being garnered by the monopolistic groups within our own country, represented by the notorious managing agencies that breed corruption and waste, add to the difficulties.

We see our oil industry in difficulties due to the grip of foreign imperialists on our oilseeds trade. The Americans literally dictate the prices.

We see the indigenous match industry in trouble due to the complete monopoly of the Swedish, Western India Match Company. The import of matches has increased in Hyderabad from Rs. 5.6 lakhs worth in 1939-40 to Rs. 69.6 lakhs worth in 1951-52 while many local match factories have collapsed.

We see the bidi industry in trouble due, on the one hand, to heavy excise duties on tobacco and, on the other, to the grip of the British, Imperial Tobacco Co. (owners of the Char Minar Cigarette Factory). This grip has to be liquidated if the sufferings of the peasants, the merchants and the industry are to be mitigated.

We see the soap industry collapsing while import of soap in Hyderabad has increased from Rs. 6.24 lakhs worth in 1939-40 to Rs. 67.91 lakhs worth in 1951-52. And the soap

industry is in distress all over India. Even Tatas had to complain against Lever Brothers for their monopolistic grip.

The conclusion that flows from this is that it is urgently necessary to liquidate British domination by confiscating their capital. A beginning has to be made, however, by curbing them and banning the export of profits and forcing them to plough them back into industries in our country. This has become an urgent need.

Monopoly and the managing agency system have to be curbed through suitable legislation and by putting a ceiling on profits at 6½% and utilising the amount saved for development purposes.

These basic steps apart from certain other urgent steps are required to save our sinking industries.

The Sanat Nagar industries can be saved only if the Government boldly comes forward to liquidate all the heavy debts that only go to inflate the cost of production. Tripartite investigations have to be carried out to probe into the working of the concerns in distress and to expose and rectify corruption and mismanagement.

Immediate financial aid has to be given by the Government to the needy concerns. The Government policy of withdrawing from industrial obligations and handing industries over to private bosses to run as they please is spelling ruin.

A properly co-ordinated plan has to be prepared to integrate basic development projects and industries with consumer industries like the leather industry, for which we have a market both for raw materials and manufactured articles.

Lastly, the Government's own purchases have to be ordered from the local industries to afford them a market. From April 1952 to March 1953 the Government purchased Rs. 11,26,023 worth of its requirements from local industry, Rs. 14,69,711 worth from cottage industry, Rs. 40,52,267 worth from industry in other parts of India and, lastly, Rs. 44,67,689 worth from foreign countries. No comment is required.

That the trade unions have come to these unanimous conclusions out of their own experience is proved from the decisions of the All-Trade Unions Conference in January this year when, to combat unemployment and save industry from collapse, it was demanded that retrenchment and closures be banned; that tripartite enquiries be held into the affairs of mismanaged concerns; that export of profits be banned and a ceiling be put on the profits of monopolistic concerns; that Government render aid to needy concerns,

the Nizam's Privy purse, compensation to Sarfekhas and big jagirdars being stopped to find money for purposes of development. Government should place orders on local industry for its needs.

It is gratifying to note that a similar programme was adopted by the recent Anti-Unemployment Conference.

That, from out of the fiasco of Government plans, a common alternative programme is emerging is evident, that it has a universal appeal is also evident but that we have to make strong efforts in order to make it irresistible has to be realised by us.

STRUGGLES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WORKING CLASS

The 1951-54 period opens with the release of AHTUC leaders like Comrades V. D. Deshpande, Syed Kasim, T. B. Vittal Rao, Syed Makhdoom, A. S. Nagapurkar and, in November 1951, of Com. Makhdoom Mohiuddin and Choudhary. Many actives of the AHTUC were also released on the eve of the general elections.

These releases and the subsequent general elections and the activity of the working class in the elections have all led to a magnificent revival and revitalisation of the AHTUC and its unions. By the time our convention met in March 1952, not only many of our unions were won back to vigorous life, but much new strength was also added to the AHTUC.

The great Shahabad Strike put the AHTUC at the head of the rising curve of the post-election working class struggles.

The official figures themselves, which exclude the struggles in the mines, speak of the rising wave of working class struggles in which the AHTUC and its unions have a proud place. The figures are given below:

| | Total No. of Disputes | No. of workers Involved | No. of Man-days |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Oct. 1950-Sept. '51 | 34 | 27,615 | 31,228 |
| " 1951- " '52 | 68 | 56,204 | 1,34,934 |
| " 1952- " '53 | 146 | 79,019 | 2,74,628 |

CEMENT

In 1952, the Shahabad cement workers, as in 1946, initiated the new wave of working-class struggles. Their

struggle centred mainly round three demands: wage increase, enhancement of DA and recognition of the Union. In spite of the reference of all their other demands to the Industrial Court, they continued their strike for 48 days to get their Union recognised. The law does not consider recognition of a Union as an industrial dispute at all. But the dogged struggle revealed the workers' urge for getting their union recognised and has spotlighted a serious defect in labour legislation. Under existing legislation, a Union that is recognised by law can, with impunity, be ignored by an employer. The question of recognition of the Union has subsequently arisen and arisen very sharply in Hutti, in Nanded textiles, in the Old Mills and elsewhere.

The cement workers' battle was really heroic. Curfew, Section 144, lathi-charge and even firing—they faced everything courageously. They could neither be bent nor broken.

The Industrial Court subsequently granted them D.A., declared their strike illegal and awarded strike-period wages. The employers appealed to the Appellate Court. The case dragged on. Meanwhile arrests, cases, victimisation, harassment and other forms of sniping continued. The Appellate Court rejected strike period wages and ended with granting some enhancement in D.A.

But there are other achievements of the strike. Apart from the fact that it demonstrated how vital a trade union right is the recognition of the trade union for the workers, electrified the entire countryside around Shahabad and even inspired the gold miners in Hutti.

It was after this that Hutti began to stir and the Hutti Union was won to the AHTUC.

GOLD WORKERS' STRUGGLES

Hutti gold miners have for long been fighting an epic struggle against the British administration of a virtually State-owned concern. They conducted a magnificent struggle for housing and other demands. They suspended their satyagraha after the Home Minister's assurances, yet six of their leaders were externed and Section 144 was promulgated. 150 workers were arrested for defying Section 144. Militant mobilisations are the tradition of the gold miners at Hutti. When a few workers' leaders were arrested, they went in a strength of 1,500 to Lingsugoor and secured their release.

The Union's achievements consist of an increase in the

basic wage of surface workers from 10 as. to Re. 1 and in the wage of an underground worker from Re. 1 to Rs. 1-4. The workers also got an increase in D.A. from Rs. 18 to Rs. 24 for those drawing below Rs. 40 and from Rs. 22-8 to Rs. 28 for those drawing a basic wage above Rs. 40.

The struggle to get the externment orders against leaders cancelled was, however, countered by the employers by a lock-out. The Government came down with a heavy hand, with arrests, lathi-charges and Section 144. The Hutti area bore the appearance of a war camp. Peasants from surrounding areas came to the support of the workers when their rations were stopped by the Company. To prevent even this aid, the Government arrested the kisans.

After a long-drawn-out struggle, the mine opened, the leaders returned, but the company victimised many workers.

The struggle for the recognition of the Union and reinstatement of leaders has continued for the last year. Many skirmishes have taken place in this period and many more have been victimised. But the workers are undaunted. In spite of the efforts of the British company and its stooges, the workers are united. The Union has recently submitted a memorandum of demands. And, in spite of terror, efforts at disruption etc., the Union continues to lead the workers. Hutti that was a neglected far-off spot is now in the news due to these dogged struggles of the resurgent working class. Today it has inspired democratic activity in Lingsugoor and even Raichur and has drawn the peasants in the surrounding villages into activity.

COALMINERS' STRUGGLES

The Singareni Collieries Workers Union has led many struggles and has many outstanding achievements to its credit. It secured the reinstatement of 30 trade union leaders and actives released after 1 to 3 years in jail. It secured overtime allowance for the monthly-paid staff which the management was refusing to concede. It secured the implementation of the Miners' Act and won 7 days' leave with pay. Both these achievements meant a net gain of Rs. 1,13,000 to the workers. The Union secured arrears of compensation to the sum of Rs. 13,500 in about 22 cases. And finally, when the soaring rise in the cost of living had become unbearable and, since 1949, when the Jadhav Committee fixed the present pay and DA

scales, distress had increased, the Union put forward a memorandum of demands, conducted a strike for about a month in June-July 1953. The employers refused to consider the wage and DA demands and even the modified demand of interim relief. The Central Government refused to refer the demand to a Court. The State Government clamped down Section 144 and resorted to lathis, tear-gas and arrests. The HMS Union in Bellampally refused to make common cause with our Union. They pitched their tent on only the demand arising from demonetisation of Hyderabad currency. We had raised all the pressing demands of all the workers. The HMS withdrew, and we were faced with a suddenly-lowered bargaining-power. Nevertheless, we won a grain concession, which was subsequently applied in Bellampally too, and other concessions.

The Company is regularly provoking the workers. They refused to pay even half the strike-period wages granted by the Regional Labour Commissioner, taking shelter behind the Chief Labour Commissioner's Award against it, even though they had paid it in Bellampally when, according to themselves, the strike was even illegal. They have sabotaged special bonus to Kottagudem even though they have paid it to Yellandu and Bellampally workers. They have paid the usual bonus to Kottagudem workers but are denying it to Bellampally under the pretext of an illegal strike. Thus they are trying to play between union and union. And the HMS leaders, instead of drawing lessons from this and working for unity between the Singareni and Bellampally unions, are trying to split the Kottagudem workers and weaken their union and bargaining strength.

And this at a time when the Government of India has appointed a Board for revision of wages, DA and service conditions for all the mine workers of India. Surely the appointment of this Board is a victory for the miners, a victory that the Singareni Strike that had raised all these demands, had played its part in achieving. It is now urgently required that all the miners' unions in India come together and fight unitedly. Our Union is moving towards this. The workers' interests demand this step.

Five workers' leaders of Bellampally have been victimised for leading a procession on the death of a worker who had committed suicide, unable to bear the torture of unemployment inflicted on him by the Company. They and their families are literally starving. But our friends of

the HMS refuse to take up their case, even though the workers want it to be taken up and are, at the moment, maintaining the victimised workers through small donations.

COTTON TEXTILES

In the cotton textile group, the Old Mills workers in Hyderabad dominate the scene by their continuous, courageous and dauntless struggle against retrenchment, unemployment, repression and disruption.

Our Union here was born in peculiar circumstances. This was the first union in the city of Hyderabad. It was established in 1943 and later became one of the foundation stones of the AHTUC. Taking advantage of the repression launched against the Union and the arrest of its leaders in 1949, the HMS gentlemen quietly stepped in. When, in 1951, the workers demanded elections, as Coms. Agamiah, Narayan, Advamma etc., all their leaders had come out, they consistently refused to hold them. The workers gave notice of elections and when this was ignored, they themselves conducted the elections. But the Registrar of Trade Unions refused to register the Union and demanded a change of name, obviously to have two Unions and play between them. But our Union consistently struggled for unity by building up issue-to-issue joint committees with the other union as in the bonus struggle and the struggle to reinstate 18 reeler women in May 1952. But the HMS leaders always went back on these commitments and refused united action. They were encouraged both by the Labour Department and the Management to enter into separate negotiations and compromises. But the thorough, prepared and alert defence that we put up in the Industrial Court, the constant mobilisation of the workers that we worked up to increase their bargaining-power and the solidarity and support we gathered for the workers showed an alternative path of unity, mobilisation and struggle. The HMS leadership refused to draw any lessons from this and slowly went on recoiling into a shell.

At this stage, they began taking to beating up AHTUC militants and actives. Com. Papamma's head was broken. And this when we were fighting the battle against closure in the Appellate Court and mobilising people's support in various localities. In December last year they beat up Com. Samba Moorthy.

At this point, faced with the anger of the mass of workers and due to the intervention of outsiders like Mr. Laxminarayan of Kavadiguda, they agreed to put up ballot boxes to take the verdict of the workers. Even here we offered a composite union executive to unitedly fight the battle. But they refused. The result was that the workers gave their verdict in the favour of our Union. This was in December 1953.

Since then one Union has been working. But the HMS leaders and actives are not only not co-operating but are taking a positively hostile attitude.

In the entire glorious struggle of the workers against closure from January 8, 1954, the HMS is seen nowhere. Not even a supporting statement or a statement condemning repression came from their office.

The workers of the Old Mills are our proud brothers who have won a place of esteem due to their relentless struggle against unemployment and closure.

The Old Mills is a classic example of how a corrupt management has made illegal money on worn-out machinery and ruined the entire financial position of a concern. Better-off concerns could jolly well absorb some corruption and continue to pay to the owners, but worn-out machinery coupled with corruption brought losses and ruin to the Old Mills.

The Union offered to take over the mills and invest workers' gratuity amounting to Rs. 3½ lakhs in it. But the Government would not move in that direction. The owners offered to lease out the mills, but the Government would not move and much less was a private capitalist expected to make bold offers.

Even such an elementary demand as that of distributing relief from the accumulated amounts of Provident Fund had to be bitterly fought for. A worker had to go in for a hunger-strike for nearly a month. The workers had to brave a lathi-charge and a heavy tear-gas attack on March 29, 1954 in which 70 workers, including old women, were injured. Their Secretary, Com. Amalak Ram, was beaten so much after his arrest that his left knee-cap was fractured into three pieces.

The Chief Minister says that the Government of India has agreed to release the amount, and the Labour Department says it will take three months to release the first pie out of it.

Meanwhile the owners have gone into liquidation.

The Old Mills workers, through their glorious struggle, won the hearts of our people. And the credit of rousing many democrats in Hyderabad to take active steps to combat unemployment goes mainly to them.

This struggle has brought a significant victory and still more significant lessons for the trade union movement. A cheap-grain concession was won, thus enthusing all the employed to fight to win this realisable demand. They have won in principle the battle for drawing relief from the accumulated amounts of the Provident Fund. Their struggle is a book of lessons in the battle for unity, in organisation and in gathering support and building solidarity. To preside at their solidarity meetings in bustees have come men like Mr. Guru Murthy, Mayor of Secunderabad and Presidents of the bustee Congress Committees.

In spite of significant victories in Aurangabad and Nanded textiles in 1951-52 and early 1953 such as reinstatement of Ibrahim and 13 others in Nanded in spite of an industrial court award against it, securing in Aurangabad the implementation of the 1949 award conferring wages for the lockout period, dismissal of a corrupt weaving master, the winning of a bonus in 1951 equivalent to 1½ months' wages, increase in DA, the winning of an attendance allowance of Rs. 10 for weavers and Rs. 6 for spinners through dogged and constant struggles, the fact stands out that the battle of the entire textile industry today is one against rationalisation, increased workload and retrenchment.

The Nanded mills threaten to retrench 1,000 and for this purpose are doing everything to snipe at the union in order to weaken it. Leading Union workers have been suspended. The right of representation and collection of Union dues in mill compounds are being attacked.

The textile workers all over the country are waging a serious struggle of all-India importance. We have to make serious efforts, in our own interests, to revitalise the All-India Textile Workers' Federation and ourselves conduct a co-ordinated, concerted struggle of textile workers and also seek the co-operation of the people in general and the ginning industry and the textile merchants in particular.

The INTUC Union of Ramgopal Mills and the HMS Unions at Azamjahi Mills, Warangal and the M.S.K. Mills, Gulbarga, have to be approached and serious efforts have to be made specially to draw the latter two into united action.

ROAD TRANSPORT

The 16-day strike of the RTD workers commencing from August 10, 1953 stands out as a magnificent battle fought on behalf of the entire trade union movement.

Led by their great union, which is friendly to us, the RTD employees have secured many concessions. They got the Equation Committee recommendations implemented. A driver who was getting Rs. 38 in 1946 is now drawing Rs. 100 to Rs. 150. A second grade driver is getting Rs. 87 to Rs. 127. A conductor who got Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 in 1946 is now drawing Rs. 64 to Rs. 104. Mechanical staff drawing Rs. 15 to Rs. 26 in 1946 are now getting Rs. 36 to Rs. 64. The working hours have been reduced from 9 to 8. All the staff is getting a weekly off. Casual leave has been increased from 15 days in the past to 45 days now.

Nevertheless, the Administration tried to sabotage and liquidate these gains by increasing the workload. And from this flowed the demand for bonus. Because, in spite of the wage-increase, the earnings of the department had increased enormously.

There were other demands like the demand for the same pay to post-April 6, 1952 staff and to the staff employed before that date.

But the Government which was the employer in this case forced two issues before the entire trade union movement. One was their contention that the employees of Government departments could claim no bonus and the other was the misuse of their power under the Trade Disputes Act. They referred only some of the demands to the court, refused to refer the bonus demand and threatened that any post-reference strike would be illegal. But the RTD employees took up the challenge. They faced lathi-charges and arrests—at least 200 of them were arrested in Hyderabad City alone. Yet they continued undaunted. They resumed work only on a specific assurance at the highest level.

The RTD strike drew magnificent support from the Press and the people. The avowed Government Press could only take a defensive stand. In the out-depots, the RTD workers' meetings drew peasant audiences and in towns the support of other trade unions, mainly of the AHTUC. In Nanded it was a joint battle of textile and RTD workers. So great was the support in Bid that Section 144 was proclaimed and arrests effected. In Aurangabad all the

AHTUC Unions rallied behind them, and the same story was repeated in Karimnagar and elsewhere.

The RTD struggle has spotlighted the demand for bonus and the question of trade union rights and misuse of powers by the Government.

The Union has secured through the court equality of grades between the pre-and post-April 6, 1952 employees. The casual workers on strike were discharged. The Union has secured their reinstatement through the court.

Other achievements include the implementation of the Factories Act for mechanic staff and the acceptance of the principle of overtime for running staff for the first time.

MUNICIPALITIES

Led by AHTUC Unions, the municipal workers of Aurangabad and Nanded have won wage and DA increases. With the PDF in power in the Adilabad municipality, the AHTUC-led Union of municipal workers was able to secure better living conditions and a wage increase. The Hyderabad Municipal workers won house-rent allowance.

Nevertheless, all the municipal workers, throughout the State, face low wages and increased workload. The Government Minimum Wages Committee has submitted its recommendations. In themselves not wholly satisfactory for the workers, even these recommendations are not being implemented. Municipalities are resisting the implementation of these recommendations on grounds of bad finances. The municipal and local bodies' employees of Aurangabad district met in a conference on April 4, 1954 to demand the publication and implementation of these recommendations.

The Municipal Workers' Unions have to rally unitedly and fight for this, linking up their demand with the demand of Government aid to municipalities. They must demand that the Government should stop appropriating 12½% of the income of municipalities and that a better tax structure that would afford relief to the poor and draw money from those who can afford to pay it, should be introduced.

The fact that representatives of trade unions and working class are present in the municipalities everywhere should only strengthen this battle.

CIGARETTE WORKERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

The Vazir Sultan Tobacco Co. Workers' Union is one of our major Unions in the tobacco group. These workers

work in a British-owned concern, and their employers (the British Imperial Tobacco Company) have a monopoly grip over tobacco, dictating prices and directing trade.

Our Union here has secured wage increases and an enhancement in DA as follows:

| | Basic Pay Rs. | DA Rs. | Bonus (in months' wages) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Male | | | |
| Before increase | 29-4 | 40 | 6 |
| After increase | 30 | 57-7 | 3 |
| Female | | | |
| Before increase | 26 | 40 | 6 |
| After increase | 28 | 57-7 | 3 |

The DA is linked with the cost of living index. The workers get Rs. 6 for a 15-point block. Even a single point increase over 170 gets them Rs. 6 which continues up to 185. The Rs. 6 D.A. will likewise continue until a 15-point fall is complete.

They also got further concessions in leave facilities of both categories—casual and sickness.

In November 1952, precisely at a time when the Union was conducting delicate negotiations with the management, rowdies attacked workers at the factory gate and regular battles began. The workers heroically defended their unity and their Union. Many workers were injured.

BIDI WORKERS' STRUGGLES

The bidi industry is facing a serious crisis. The bidi factory owners want to intensify the fleecing of their workers. That is why the resistance of the bidi workers has grown. There were big battles in Vaijapur, Aurangabad and Armour led by our Unions. In every case we won wage increases. In Aurangabad we secured the reinstatement of victimised workers by a skilful combination of hunger-strikes and mass demonstrations. The struggles also secured cheap grain facilities.

Recently, led by the HMS, the bidi workers of Jalna have fought a 45-day strike and secured a wage increase.

Bidi workers of Armour, led by our Union, fought a one-month strike recently and secured a wage increase and payment of arrears of pay.

Bidi workers of Chitapur won a wage increase after a strike in November 1953.

While the bidi industry is in distress, tobacco being in the monopoly grip of the Imperial Tobacco Co. the bidi workers are faced with a difficult situation. Even the Minimum Wages Committee is reported to have made unsatisfactory recommendations, in which case certain bidi workers might even face wage-cuts.

The bidi workers, therefore, need maximum unity and support from the general public to win their demands. They have also to take up the larger question of the imperialist grip over tobacco and the annihilating excise duty on it.

CIVIL SUPPLIES EMPLOYEES

Three thousand employees of this Department face retrenchment due to the notorious decontrol policy of the Government. Here our union has been conducting a relentless struggle against unemployment.

Earlier last year, the union secured a wage increase for the cleaners from Rs. 15 to 25 and also a night-out allowance of Rs. 1-5-4 per night. It got 250 retrenched staff absorbed in the Central Storage of the Government of India and many individual cases were won.

Today, 60 per cent of the employees face retrenchment. The Union is fighting for no retrenchment until suitable employment is provided elsewhere and to secure priority in absorption in Government of India Departments, credit for past service and continuation of the same emoluments after absorption in a new branch of service.

PWD EMPLOYEES

We have many road workers' unions, the Building Division Union, the Drainage Employees' Union and the Bidar Military Works Workers' Union, all coming under the PWD.

The road workers all over the State are fighting for permanency which is denied even though the nature of the job—maintenance of roads—is permanent. 50 year-old workers are classified as boy coolies and paid low wages.

Our Union in Hyderabad has fought a consistent struggle for the workers' demands and observed two protest strikes and staged many demonstrations. Before the Ministry was reshuffled, the PWD had agreed to the demands but the Finance Department had rejected them. Now

the ex-Finance Minister is the Member for Public Works, and he is not finding his way to see the justice of the demands. He is taking cover behind the fact that all over India road workers are temporary.

Recently we secured the appointment of a Minimum Wages Committee for road workers on which Comrade Satyanarayan Reddy represents our Union. This should help us to carry forward the struggle and win our just demands.

The Military Works Workers' Union, Bidar, submitted a memorandum of demands about a year back demanding permanency, reinstatement of 3 workers, revision of grades etc. But the Government has done nothing so far. Every time the reply is that the Executive Engineer has not yet sent his report.

The drainage employees have secured many demands such as permanency, two turbans instead of one, two cakes of soap instead of one, Rs. 2 dirty-work allowance and bi-annual medical examination.

Recently the Union had to wage a veritable battle to secure representation in the Wage Board which was illegally given to some other gentleman. It was a question of trade union rights and the victory on this question is significant.

The road workers, the drainage employees and the building division workers' unions are moving towards a PWD Employees' Federation to fight a united battle and win urgent demands. The HMS unions of ED, PWD workshop and Water Works are being approached. We hope they will realise the need and urgency of taking such a step.

CHEMICAL GROUP

In the chemical group of workers, the outstanding struggle is that of the Zinda Tilsmath workers. Since the formation of their union in June 1952 they have been fighting a dogged battle for trade union rights, employment and living conditions. They secured a basic wage of Rs. 26 for adults and Rs. 16 for adolescents with a D.A. of Rs. 20 for all. Formerly there was anarchy in the wage structure which started with Rs. 10 and there was no D.A.

But more significant than this is their struggle for trade union rights. Out of sheer hostility against the Union, the then owner attacked the workers, victimised them and employed gangs of rowdies to attack them. He did not reinstate the leaders whom the Appellate Court had directed him

to reinstate. The culmination of this battle was the closing down of the factory in December 1953.

The workers fought a struggle doggedly through demonstrations, mobilisation in bustees, a signature campaign among citizens, vigilance against illegal preparation of the drug within the premises or outside and finally the workers won. The factory opened on April 4, 1954, all the workers employed at the time of closure being taken back. The Union has been recognised.

The workers of our other two unions in this group, the unions of the Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works and J. & J. De Chane have secured significant gains. The Rege Committee recommendations have been accepted from 1-1-53. Bonus for 1952-53 equal to two months' wages, 16 days' holidays per year, permanancy after 6 months' service and abolition of the contract system, are among the other gains.

The Chemical and Pharmaceutical workers have secured permanancy, regularisation of output of Infantone, rate of commission on extra output, recess of one hour instead of half an hour in the past and 16 days' holidays in the year. Their struggle for bonus, increments, and reinstatement of victimised employees continues.

SHOPS AND ESTABLISHMENTS

This is becoming the most difficult and the most vexing sector of our trade union activity, particularly in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The employers refuse even to countenance the existence of a Union. Taking advantage of the widespread unemployment, particularly of the unskilled, and the ambiguous Section 9 of the Shops and Establishments Act, they simply dismiss workers out of hand. Our union has mainly to take up the question of gratuity. The gratuity so far secured for dismissed workers amounts to Rs. 15,000 and more. Wages among this section of workers are horribly low and the working hours, despite the Act, are heavy. It should be noted here that Labour Department officials, most of them in this section, actually brief the owners and betray the workers.

The struggle of the Grand Hotel workers in 1952 and that of the Secunderabad Hotel workers in 1953-54 are very important struggles. The Grand Hotel owners dismissed all their workers and employed others. The Sunder Rao group of hotel owners, who dominate the hotels, is doing everything possible to suppress the workers. The Union is conducting a consistent and dogged struggle in spite of arrests,

lathi-charges and other forms of police repression. The Secunderabad Hotel workers' struggle has thrown up a form of struggle of this section of workers. The victimised worker takes to picketing or even hunger-strike; the Union mobilises processions and demonstrations and support from other quarters. The Mayor of Secunderabad too intervened in one of the cases when a city cafe was closed. But this did not move the owners.

In this situation, we urged the acceptance of a comparatively mild amendment to the Shops and Establishments Act saying that before dismissal there should be an enquiry and the worker should have the right to appeal. Such a provision exists in the Madras Act. But after hurried consultations with the owners, the Department briefed the Minister to reject the amendment and he reproduced "His Masters' Voice" on the floor of the Assembly, without even looking into the merits of the case, we dare presume.

Then there are innumerable small but important struggles conducted by our Unions of which we have no reports. The Watan Soap workers, for example, won a battle for wage increase. The press workers of Hyderabad fought against lockouts in Neta Press and the Commercial Press. In the latter, a compromise has been arrived at. The former is now running with new workers. The Court awarded against the workers. In the Sentinel Press, the workers were made to suffer for no fault of their own. The original owner sold the press to the Congress. When the liquidator came, the Congress took over its property but the workers lost even earned wages. The Union pursued the matter and recovered their dues.

THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND ITS ACTIVITIES

This brings us to the behaviour and efficiency of the Labour Department.

First and foremost, we feel that the post of "Deputy Labour Minister" is redundant and only an addition to the labour bureaucracy. He takes no decisions as a Minister does, nor does he prepare a case, which is the job of a secretary. On the other hand, where more people are needed, we have only one person. The Labour Commissioner is also the Payment of Wages Authority, the Labour Secretary and the Registrar of Trade Unions.

There is a serious shortage of hands in the Establishments Section which is the chief bottleneck preventing the

extension of the scope of the Shops and Establishments Act and its application to all the important towns.

Then, the Labour Department officials are absolutely helpless in summoning the owners. They have no judicial authority in this respect nor the executive authority subsequently to get awards implemented. We have suggested that whenever a Labour Department official takes up the position of Enquiry Officer, the Enquiry Commissions Act should automatically apply to this enquiry which will give him quasi-judicial authority.

We have also to draw attention to the hostility of some of the Department's officials towards labour. They openly plead for the owners and even brief them. An official of the Establishments Section attends meetings of the Secunderabad Hotel Owners' Association and advises them. Sometimes they discriminate between Union and Union and the Deputy Labour Minister himself openly advised them to encourage certain types of Union and discourage certain others.

Lastly, there is gross inefficiency in dealing with cases and settling them. The following figures furnished by Government sources themselves reveal the position.

**INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES RELATING TO FACTORIES
SETTLED AND PENDING**

| <i>Month</i> | <i>Pending</i> | <i>Settled</i> | <i>Current</i> | <i>Settled</i> |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| May 1952 | 115 | 64 | 79 | 15 |
| June 1952 | 104 | 43 | 83 | 31 |
| July 1952 | 112 | 43 | 238 | 23 |
| June 1953 | 153 | 66 | 99 | 40 |
| July 1953 | 142 | 50 | 76 | 12 |
| June 1953 * | 146 | 63 | 126 | 64 |
| July 1953 * | 141 | 44 | 94 | 40 |

* Individual shops and establishment cases.

Such is the efficiency demonstrated in settling cases.

GENERAL STRUGGLES AND OBSERVANCE OF DAYS

Apartment from observing May Day, October 31, the foundation day of the AHTUC, and other days which the AHTUC fixed from time to time, such as unemployment day etc., there are certain general struggles we have waged.

In May 1952, when the food subsidy was being withdrawn, we participated in the general struggle of the United Peoples' Food Committee. It should be submitted, however, that our unions were then in the process of revival, and effective participation could not be organised.

In August 1952, we participated with processions and meetings in the Anti-Sales Tax Increase Agitation.

In September 1952, our Unions came out with a protest tool-down strike and meetings protesting against the firing and killing in Hyderabad city.

Our Unions all over observed protest strikes or tool-down strikes on the death of Potti Shree Ramuloo and demanded the formation of linguistic States.

In January 1953, our Unions in Hyderabad City initiated an anti-retrenchment campaign, but it could not be pursued beyond the holding of some meetings. Nevertheless, it made people sit up and think over the issue.

In the months of February-March 1953, came the demonetisation issue. The AHTUC rightly took the initiative in examining the question in the background of the general worsening living conditions of the workers. Demonetisation was only the finalisation of the financial integration of Hyderabad in the Indian Union that had already taken place. Nevertheless, it was going to affect, and subsequent experience shows that it did affect, prices adversely in many cases, so far as the people were concerned. But sudden demonetisation and withdrawal of all the O.S. currency would have brought a convulsion in the retail market particularly. The workers were jealously guarding their wages and living conditions, a further attack on which would only ruin them. They were pushing forward wage demands. The AHTUC, therefore, took up the case and, so far as demonetisation was concerned, demanded retention of the Hali small coin for some period to avoid disturbances in the retail market and allow the people time to get accustomed to the exchange value and the use of the Indian Union Currency that has 4 pice in an anna as against 6 in the Hali and that exchanges at Rs. 100 (Indian) to Rs. 116-10-8 of Hali currency. Nevertheless, we also emphasised the general wage demand and the necessity for granting relief for the distress caused by demonetisation. We had put forward the demand of equal wages as against equivalent wages to suit the demands of the HMS and INTUC, but persuaded them to join us in demanding gradation and a limit, such as equal wages up to a wage of Rs. 250 and, for those drawing in Indian Currency a 10 per cent allowance etc. Nevertheless, we stressed relief

and tackling basic wage demands etc. that were pushed in the forefront by demonetisation.

We were in the field holding meetings etc. But our friends of the INTUC and HMS chose to set up a joint Co-ordination Committee excluding us. This happened in spite of our efforts for unity and, we learn, in spite of the pleadings of the INTUC leaders. We then decided to co-ordinate our struggle with theirs and postponed our procession to coincide with theirs. But when Section 144 was proclaimed and our factory gates, especially in such factories as the Char Minar, were swarming with armed police and when, in spite of our efforts, the INTUC and HMS leaders would not take us into confidence and let us know whether they were defying the ban, we could only hold meetings and pass resolutions. But defiance came and workers were lathi-charged at Basheer Bagh.

Next day, we came out with a protest tool-down strike.

On 29th March the INTUC-HMS Committee called for another protest demonstration. We joined in the call. Our procession of Char Minar workers that had joined the RTD procession was stopped at Lingampally, but our drainage workers were able to go up to the Public Garden Gate. While E.D. employees were being heavily tear-gassed at one end, the drainage workers were being chased by policemen with lathis at the other. Many workers were injured, many, including innocent passers-by, were arrested. And the drainage workers' Union leader Comrade Venkat Swamy was chased for half a mile and arrested and beaten so much that his head cracked besides being injured on his hands and back.

Nevertheless, this struggle won for the workers the retention of the Hali sicca for two years and slow withdrawal as we demanded, and Wage Boards to tackle basic wage demands.

In the months of April and May 1953, we came out in solidarity with the workers of Taj Glass, Sarfekhas, Agricultural Farm and Firpur who, led by the INTUC, were facing savage repression. In a joint protest demonstration the HMS leader actually threatened to quit if an AHTUC spokesman was to address it, thus putting the INTUC leaders in an embarrassing position. We withdrew our speaker. But the effect of our solidarity was great. Since then, we can safely state, the wall between the AHTUC and INTUC crumbled and an era of mutual understanding and co-operation began.

June, July and August 1953 were months of coal miners', RTD employees' and Old Mills textile workers' struggles.

The last-named were mobilising against a threatened closure.

From these struggles against repression and retrenchment and from the appointment of Wage Boards and statutory Minimum Wages Committees for sweated labour flew the urgency of united struggles for security of employment, better wage conditions and trade union rights.

That is why on January 9 and 10, 1954, the Wages, Anti-Retrenchment, Anti-Repression Conference was jointly organised by the unions of the AHTUC, the INTUC and independent unions like the RTD.

This Conference was a landmark in the struggle for the unity of trade unions in the fight for urgent vital demands and the WFTU has noted this achievement and has written to us congratulating the workers of Hyderabad for achieving this unity, thus taking a step that will facilitate further steps here and similar steps elsewhere in India.

The AITUC and Comrade Dange also wrote to us hailing this step.

The HMS leaders refused to join and have all along treated our invitations with contempt. They did not even reply to our letters. Our efforts to contact them through common friends too have failed to bring success.

On March 2, 1954, we observed "Demands Day" against retrenchment, victimisation and for wages and trade union rights. There was great enthusiasm and mobilisation, particularly in Hyderabad City and Shahabad.

From this, on our initiative, the workers of Hyderabad went forward towards the All-Parties' Anti-Unemployment Conference on March 28 and 29, which was another big step and an even bigger demonstration of the unity and will of the workers of Hyderabad to combat the scourge of unemployment.

MAIN PROBLEMS FACING THE WORKERS

A rapid survey of the problems will reveal to us that the trade union movement has to simultaneously fight:

1. Against retrenchment and increased work-load;
2. For better wages and working conditions;
3. For measures of social security and
4. For trade union rights.

We have already registered significant advances in all these struggles except the battle for measures of social security, which we can neglect only at our own peril.

Our battle against retrenchment and unemployment has to be intensified and the All-Trade Unions Co-ordinating Committee and the Anti-Unemployment Committee are great weapons forged during the course of this struggle which should be further strengthened.

Our battle for wages has reached a new stage and new strength with the appointment of Wage Boards and Minimum Wages Committees and the Wages Co-ordinating Committee of our Unions and the Unions of the INTUC.

The work of the Minimum Wages Committees has generally come to an end except that of the Committee for Road Workers which has just begun its work.

In this field, the job is to fight for the publication of reports, rectification of anomalies and injustices done and, in some cases, as in municipalities, for immediate implementation of the recommendations.

In the Wage Boards the work is proceeding. But we have vigorously to work for co-ordinated mobilisation and struggle for winning wage concessions and preventing the employers and Government from sabotaging the Wage Boards either by abridging their powers and recommendations or unnecessarily prolonging their deliberations. Already they are heavily weighted against the workers, with Government-employers' combine ranged against them and, with a little negligence on our part, they could peg wages, worsen conditions and ruin the workers.

PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SECURITY

The struggle of the working class for security against old age, sickness, accidents, unemployment and death and for maternity benefits and adequate housing etc. acquires added importance and significance in today's context of a cracking economy and growing unemployment.

PROVIDENT FUND

The Government has at long last come out with a compulsory scheme for Provident Fund, but it applies only to six industries—textiles, iron and steel, cement, paper, engineering and cigarette. The scheme has serious defects and even clauses inimical to workers' interests. It is applicable to workers only after one year of service; it provides that participation in an "illegal strike" is to be treated as a break in service; it does not give the worker the full company contribution no matter when the worker leaves

service or how he leaves—five years' service entitles him to claim one-fourth of the company contribution and only after 20 years' service can he claim the full Company contribution. The worker cannot draw loans on the Provident Fund except for paying insurance premiums or for building a house. Lastly, with today's wages, the workers' contribution on the Provident Fund becomes an unbearable wage-cut.

DETERIORATING HEALTH

The workers' deteriorating state of health can be seen from one simple fact: in one single Dabirpura T. B. Clinic in Hyderabad, in one single year from the two cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad alone, 800 cases of lung T. B. were reported. Of these 300 were women, 250 middle-class employees, 250 workers and 100 children. We do not know how many reported in other hospitals and of how many with other varieties of this one disease alone, and how many cases were undetected.

The following official statistics for urban areas tell their own story.

| Year | No. of Hospitals | Beds Available | | Daily Patients Treated | | Total Treated per 100 of Population | No. of I. P.'s Deaths |
|---------|------------------|----------------|--------|------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Male | Female | I. P. * | O. P. ** | | |
| 1945-46 | 166 | 1,890 | 1,810 | 3,043 | 24,902 | 18 | 2,899 |
| 1948-49 | 167 | 1,921 | 1,671 | 3,269 | 27,942 | 22 | 2,878 |
| 1952-53 | 233 | 1,798 | 2,224 | 4,374 | 38,490 | 29 | 3,704 |

* In-Patients ** Out-Patients

With hardly any increase in facilities, note the increased number of deaths in the hospitals. It reveals a story of lack of care, lack of proper medicines and lack of proper diet. The Osmania General Hospital is granted a shameful amount of 12 as. per patient per day for diet, and, allowing for rampant corruption, we can imagine the nature of "nourishment" a patient receives.

The statutory provision of medical aid facilities in factories is implemented only nominally. The ruined condition

of the institutions and the capacity, and efficiency of personnel employed in many cases is a matter of our daily experience and needs no comment.

HOUSING

The appalling condition of urban and particularly of industrial housing can be gauged from the following official figures:

| | <i>No. of Occupied Houses in cities</i> | <i>No. of Persons per house</i> |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1941 | 4,79,779 | 4.6 |
| 1951 | 5,43,895 | 6.4 |

The number of houses has increased as has the number of persons per house, showing the overcrowding.

Housing conditions in Hutti, Shahabad, in the collieries particularly, and in all the industrial centres generally, is appalling and short of the most minimum requirement. In Hutti, in a single-room tenement, 3 to 5 families are herded together. The British management has built 24 quarters at the cost of Rs. 45,000 whereas officers' quarters were built costing Rs. 45,000. Some of the latter are vacant and are allotted to the police.

In Shahabad, during the last five years, 100 houses were built for labour and 6 bungalows for officers.

In Singareni, 6,500 workers live in huts and only 40 per cent live in pucca quarters.

The Government have built quarters in Musheerabad at a cost of Rs. 30,00,000 and have pitched the rent at Rs. 22 monthly.

The Government of India have a scheme of subsidising, to the extent of 50 per cent of the cost of construction, employers or registered co-operatives which undertake industrial housing construction. If individual workers come forward to build their own houses, the Government gives a 25% subsidy, 25% loan—50% of cost of building.

Under the Five Year Plan, the Government of Hyderabad have a scheme to build 10,000 houses in 5 years. The houses are allotted as follows:

| | | | |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Hyderabad | 5,000 | Nizamabad | 200 |
| Aurangabad | 800 | Gulbarga | 800 |
| Nanded | 800 | Reserve | 450 |
| Jalna | 200 | Warangal | 1,200 |
| Latur | 150 | Khammam | 200 |
| Raichur | 200 | | |

During the first year they had planned to build 500 houses in Musheerabad, 300 in Sanatnagar, 200 in Bakaram, all in Hyderabad City. The rent was to be Rs. 10 for workers and Rs. 17-8-0 for better-paid staff.

The construction planned is extremely inadequate; districts have been allotted poor quotas. Even the projected building is not being expedited, the first year's quota for the city itself remaining unfulfilled. The rent is too high for the workers.

Such being the state of affairs, we can very well appreciate the urgent need for a proper formulation of demands in respect of housing and measures of social security and a vigorous campaign to win them.

FIGHT FOR LINGUISTIC STATES

The working class supports, and it is in its own interests also to fight for, the demand for reorganisation of States on a linguistic basis. The realisation of this demand would mean that administration, education, the Courts and the Legislature would be conducted in our own languages. This will enable us to participate effectively in these activities of the State. Secondly, this demand helps in unification of disrupted linguistic communities in our country and a growth of their culture and democratic life. Thirdly, and this is vital for us, linguistic States mean an end to the hated feudal rule of the Asafjahi dynasty, the disintegration of Hyderabad State and a serious breach in the feudal-imperialist structure—the prison of peoples—the artificial State of Hyderabad. Lastly, disintegration of Hyderabad would mean a restoration of the natural economy and internal trade of the Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnatak areas of our country and put an end to a serious dilemma that is facing even the present State Government, which has been deprived of the right to levy customs duty etc. after financial integration and which can continue export duty and surcharge etc. only at the cost of trade, naturally again diminishing returns.

The working class, however, will never allow the whipping-up of national animosities by interested sections and will protect and fight for just democratic religious, national and cultural rights of all minorities.

THE FIGHT FOR PEACE AND AGAINST THE AMERICAN THREAT OF ENSLAVEMENT

The US-Pak war pact and the pact between Pakistan and Turkey, American imperialist intrigues in Kashmir, in Goa under the cover of the Portuguese—their NATO ally, and in Pondicherry, with French imperialism another of their NATO friends, in Ceylon and in the Pacific—all meant to encircle India, Burma, China and the Soviet Union and carry forward the encirclement of Europe to Asia and Africa, and the entire globe. These moves constitute a serious threat to peace in Asia and the whole world. They are a serious threat to our freedom. And lastly, the Hydrogen Bomb experiments constitute a serious threat to the very existence of humanity itself and all the cultural and other values it stands for.

In recent months, our country has become alive to this danger, but the participation of our Unions in this struggle is still very meagre.

We have to intensify our activity in respect of the fight for peace and against American threats and mobilise the workers for a Five-Power Peace Pact, for inclusion of China in the UNO, for peace in Viet-Nam and Malaya, for recognition of freedom of all peoples, for a ban on the Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs and biological warfare and destruction of all stocks of these deadly weapons.

We have to intensify our struggle against American intrigues in Pakistan and the frantic efforts to penetrate our own country.

We have to intensify our fight for clearing foreign pockets in our country which are a serious breach in the unity and solidarity of our people and our country and a breeding-ground for intrigue.

BROAD LESSONS FOR UNITY, ORGANISATION AND STRUGGLE

A review of our experience of re-organisation of our Unions and the struggles we have fought reveals to us the need for:

- dogged struggles in defence of workers' rights and living conditions;

- unity of trade unions and united struggles;
- general mobilisation of democratic sections to support, strengthen and win vital working class struggles and demands.

The first thing, the need for dogged defence of workers' rights and living conditions, brings us to the question of the organisational strengthening of our Unions and the AHTUC and AITUC.

Many of our Unions are still very loosely knit. They do not take seriously the question of recruitment, of collection of dues and donations, of maintaining offices and files, of detailed study of the industry, of proper formulation of demands, ignoring no section of workers and no serious demand, of democratic functioning by drawing workers and actives into the activity of the Unions, holding proper periodical collections after discussing reports and shortcomings in our work, by maintaining proper accounts and, lastly, of taking up other cultural, educational and relief activity for the workers.

The second question, unity in the trade union movement, brings us to the question of further intensifying our struggle to achieve this. The All-Trade Unions Co-ordinating Committee is a big gain. It has to be activated and advanced.

The fact that the Government and the Congress leaders are bringing undue pressure on the INTUC leadership to desist from united struggle has to be noted and properly exposed. This is an attempt to commit the INTUC to the discipline of a political party and tie it to Government policies. This is extremely dangerous for the workers' interests.

Efforts should be made to draw HMS Unions into joint activity. Proper exposure of the dogmatic, disruptive attitude of the HMS leadership has to be carried on among the workers and the struggle for unity carried forward.

We have to organise co-ordinated trade and industry-wise struggles. These struggles are not only urgent but will also be helpful in bringing together the unions of varying affiliations or of no affiliation, but belonging to the same trade. Belonging to the same trade and the extreme similarity and urgency of problems facilitate this task of bringing all the unions together and, in return, pay good dividends, winning demands for the workers.

And the third task, general mobilisation, brings us to the question of holding bustee meetings, conducting signature campaigns etc. in support of workers' demands, drawing in other democratic sections. This also means that we should skilfully use the legislative forum and the local bodies to mobilise support for our demands and struggles.

We are using the Assembly to some extent by putting questions, ventilating grievances in debates on budget and appropriation bills, and by special resolutions, protest demonstrations etc. The entire opposition has stood unitedly behind the working class on many vital questions. Many of the members of the ruling party have expressed subdued sympathy for our struggles. We have to extend this sphere of activity through proper co-ordination. At the same time, we should not forget that legislators and municipal councillors belong to various political parties but, nevertheless, they are the public faces of the respective parties. They have to face the people, render them help or get discredited and fast lose the confidence of the people and then quit political life itself. We should note this position of every MLA and draw him into our struggles for urgent demands. The Party affiliations of this group of public men should not make us hesitate in approaching them.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, we are today a fraternity of more than 50 Unions. Among them 2 are in mining, 1 in cement, 1 in engineering, 9 in Government Departments (8 in the PWD) 2 in presses, 3 in textiles, 1 in a cigarette factory, 4 in the bidi industry, 8 in establishments, 10 in municipalities, 6 among hamals, 5 in various small factories and 3 in the chemical group, uniting more than 50,000 workers in one great family. We have registered significant advances in organisation, mobilisation and the battle for trade union unity to win urgent demands and the rights of the working class.

We have improved our functioning in general, both at the Union and at the TUC level as also in the legislature.

The tasks facing us demand tireless efforts on our part constantly to improve our style of work, of agitation and mobilisation.

Let this Second Conference of the AHTUC guided by such an outstanding trade unionist as Comrade K. L.