

104 WORKERS ARRESTED IN COIMBATORE SATYAGRAHA

Sixty-two men, thirty-eight women and four children were arrested at Coimbatore when satyagraha was launched afresh on September 15 for reopening of the Kaleeswarar Mills.

The settlement arrived at earlier with the Administrators appointed by the High Court to re-open the mill was sabotaged by the millowners who are intent on getting the mill liquidated so that it may be bought over again far below cost.

The Coimbatore District Mill Workers' Union which is leading the satyagraha has therefore called up-

AITUC'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 2)

leaders of the workers who are not liked by the mine owners, is going on unchecked. Hundreds of arrests of mine workers and their leaders, refusal of the owners to recognise the trade unions who do not obey their dictates show to the workers what kind of democratic freedoms they have got under the present regime.

What is needed to overcome this state of affairs is, of course, the unity and solidarity of all workers, and organised, democratic, peaceful struggle against the attacks of the owners and the Government on the mine workers.

The tasks before the Federation today seem to be:

1. First and foremost, to defend their democratic rights and civil liberties.

2. To build unity around their common demands.

3. To put forward new wage claims and to demand a Wage Board for all miners, in view of the fact that production, profits and prices have gone up.

4. To demand the enforcement of safety regulations, the violation of which by the mineowners is leading to most disastrous accidents and tremendous loss of life, as was shown in Amlabad, Newton Chikli, Burra Dhemo and Chinakuri.

5. To demand of the Govern-

ment on the Government to take over the mills under the Industries Development and Regulation Act.

Com. N. K. Krishnan, President of the Union, in a statement said that the satyagraha has been forced upon the workers "as the only way of moving the Government to act in the matter. On September 9, when Com. Parvathi Krishnan, M.P., and myself met the Hon. Minister for Labour, Madras, in this connection, we were assured that Government was seized of the urgency of the matter." The Central Government also failed to act quickly and avert the closure.

ment that they introduce a system of inspection through inspectors elected by the mine workers themselves.

6. To campaign for the observance and implementation by the Government and employers of all the laws and regulations which have been adopted for the benefit of the workers, but are violated by the employers.

7. To campaign for the nationalisation of all mining interests.

It is well-known that we cannot achieve the development of our national economy without the development of mining on a large scale. At present, this development is utilised by the capitalists in the private sector for their own selfish interests, setting aside the needs of the country. Not only they refuse to satisfy the interests of the workers, they even dictate unconscionable prices for our products of mining, fleece the consumers and build up their own private fortunes.

Mining is such a key industry that if it continues to remain in the hands of private owners and run as it is today, the needs of the country will not be fulfilled, despite increase in production. It is the duty of the workers to see to the development of national economy while guarding their own interests.

We hope that the Federation will be able to guide the workers correctly in this double task.

Gudur Mica Workers' On Strike

Five hundred workers of the Seetharam Mica Mine at Kalichedu, Andhra Pradesh, are on strike from September 11.

The conditions of service of mica mine workers are, indeed, unconscionable. The wages are very low. There is practically no bonus and implementation of labour legislation in the mica belt in Andhra Pradesh remains one of the vital demands of the Andhra Pradesh Mica Workers' Union.

The strike in Seetharam Mica Mines was precipitated by employers by their refusal to reinstate eighteen workers, despite the Union's attempt at an amicable settlement.

The Andhra Pradesh Mica Workers' Union has also demanded issue of service cards to all workers immediately showing their full period of service and grant of leave with wages under Section 51 of the Mines Act of 1952.

The strike has been going on peacefully but the Government has imposed Sec. 144 and it is reported that workers are being arrested in order to suppress the strike.

HUNGER STRIKE IN BEAWAR

The hunger strike by Com. Kesrimal, Secretary, Textile Labour Union, Beawar, which began on September 1, is continuing. (See *TUR*, 5-9-58).

Com. Kesrimal and Com. Sant Singh who joined the hunger-strike later, were arrested by the police on September 11.

There was a complete strike in Beawar textile mills in protest against the arrests.

The hunger strike has brought forth new support from the people of Beawar in support of the workers' demands which mainly relate to mass retrenchment in the local textile mills.

Following the arrest of Com. Kesrimal, Com. Mallaji has begun the hunger strike from September 12.

SMMS LEADERS ON HUNGER STRIKE

In accordance with the decision of the Anti Mill Closure Conference held on August 24, the Suti Mill Mazdoor Sabha (SMMS), the united organisation of textile workers of Kanpur, has launched a movement demanding immediate re-opening of the closed units.

Leaders of the SMMS, Coms. Vimal Mehrotra and Ravi Sinha have gone on a hunger strike for twenty-one days, beginning on September 7.

Nearly ten thousand workers in the Kanpur textiles are at present jobless.

The Cawnpore Cotton Mills declared lay-off on December 2, 1957 and has been closed for about nine months now. The Atherton West Mills declared lay-off in the month of April last and still remains closed. The Muir Mills stopped their third shift working in the month of December 1957 and nearly 800 workers remain laid-off since then.

The workers of the Atherton West Mills have not been paid their dues since the closure was declared and the same is the case with other re-trenched workers.

The internecine quarrels between sections of capitalists in Kanpur, it is widely known, have mainly contributed to the crisis in Kanpur textiles.

The SMMS has demanded: (1) Notification of the date to restart the Atherton West & Co., Ltd., and Cawnpore Cotton Mills Branch of the British India Corporation. Ltd., and the third shift of the Muir Mills Co., Ltd., Kanpur; and (2) Payment of arrears of wages of Muir and Atherton West workers for about a fortnight and lay-off compensation for the lay-off period of the Atherton West workers since 31-3-58 and Muir Mill workers since September 1957 to December 1957.

At the 16th Indian Labour Conference held at Nainital, the sub-committee on closures had recommended

appointment of a special Expert Committee for Kanpur to enquire into the existing conditions of units located there and to suggest remedial actions. It was further recommended that the Government of India should favourably consider any request coming from the State Government for enquiries under the Industrial (Development & Regulation) Act. It was further recommended there that where the Government was convinced on competent advice that a mill, company or a unit could not be worked unless ownership was changed, some measures—legal, if necessary—may be devised for an early completion of the liquidation proceedings or the sale by transfer or open auction of such property even before liquidation so that the new party would restart working of such mills.

The Conference further decided that in the interim, the Government should work the mill as a measure of unemployment relief with such conditions as agreed to between the Government and the employer and the workers concerned. In such cases, it was decided that steps should be taken to overcome the difficulties caused by the normal financial procedures of the Government.

None of the above recommendations have been implemented as far as Kanpur mills are concerned. The Textile Enquiry Committee which has already submitted its Report to the Government of India did not go into these recommendations and the agony of Kanpur's unemployed workers continues.

The Nainital Conference also decided to immediately remedy the lacunae in the present provision for lay-off compensation whereby labour could be denied compensation by working nominally for some days in a week after 45 days' lay-off to avoid payment of compensation. Since this decision was taken, nothing has been done though it was specifically men-

AITUC Circular To All Unions
No. 9|58

NEW AFFILIATION CERTIFICATES

The AITUC is issuing new Affiliation Certificates to Unions. The certificates will be issued only to those Unions which have sent copies of their Annual Returns, to the AITUC. Copy of the return is necessary to fill in all relevant details in the certificates.

K. G. Sriwastava,
Secretary, AITUC.

CIRCULAR NO. 10|58
TO ALL UNIONS IN CHEMICAL
INDUSTRY

INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE ON CHEMICALS

The Government of India has decided to constitute an Industrial Committee on Chemicals. According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, "the functions of the Committee, in general will be to study and discuss problems special to the Chemicals Industry with a view to bring about a better understanding between the parties and reaching workable formulae agreeable to both workers and employers."

Unions in the Chemical Industry are hereby requested to forward suggestions to the AITUC Office, on subjects they would like to be raised in the Industrial Committee on Chemicals. Notes from Unions should reach the AITUC Office by October 5, 1958.

K. G. Sriwastava,
Secretary, AITUC.

tioned therein that 'in the meantime, such practices should not be resorted to.'

The Government of India could have issued an Ordinance on the question till the pending Bill could take shape of law but that has not yet been done.