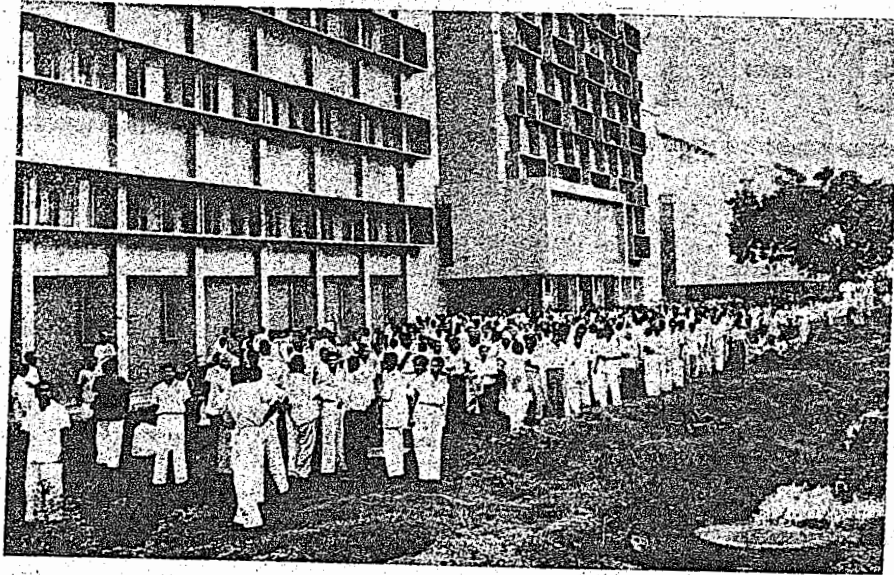


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A view of the Accountant General Central Revenue office in New Delhi when the employees came out on strike on July 14.

EDITORIAL WE PROTEST

"Any person who instigates, or incites other persons to take part in, or otherwise acts in furtherance of, a strike which is illegal under this Ordinance shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or both."

—Clause 5 of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance, 1960.

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NEW AGE

COMMUNIST PARTY WEEKLY

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THE STRIKE

—Just The Facts

As we go to press news comes of the smashing success of the July 14 general strike in Calcutta. Even the heavily distorted newspaper reports indicate that the entire city responded with one heart and will. The only other information received so far shows that Bombay has also expressed wholeheartedly its solidarity with the Central Government employees. There, too, normal life came to a halt for the day.

REPORTS from all over the country indicate that the Government has mobilised all the wide-ranging power of its coercive apparatus to intimidate and brow-beat the Central Government employees. In addition, a tremendous barrage of misinformation and misleading propaganda has been let loose.

One-Sided News

Extraordinarily elaborate briefing arrangements have been made. All-India Radio blares forth utterly distorted and one-sided news. Senior officials have gone out of their way to grant "interviews." Everywhere veteran journalists remark that the method and the content of the news brings back memories of the official British briefings of the 1942 days.

The entire Congress has been mobilised for "voluntary" strike-breaking activities in all places. Apart from

comic opera stunts of postal deliveries in motor cars by pampered and pomaded ladies, there was pressure worked up which can only be called intimidation.

In spite of all these unprecedented steps and the doctored news in all the papers, the Times of India of July 14 editorially had to admit that of the Government employees "fifty per cent have stayed away from work." And the Statesman of July 13 (New Delhi) came out with a headline on its front page "Strike Tempo Increases." Of course, this did not prevent these very same papers on those very dates from doling out the official handouts across all the other pages. Still truth broke through, albeit because of inconsistency.

Only a partial picture of the strike position can be presented.

Civil Aviation —Complete

Nobody dares to deny the fact that in every single airport the Civil Aviation employees have come out solidly. The planes have all

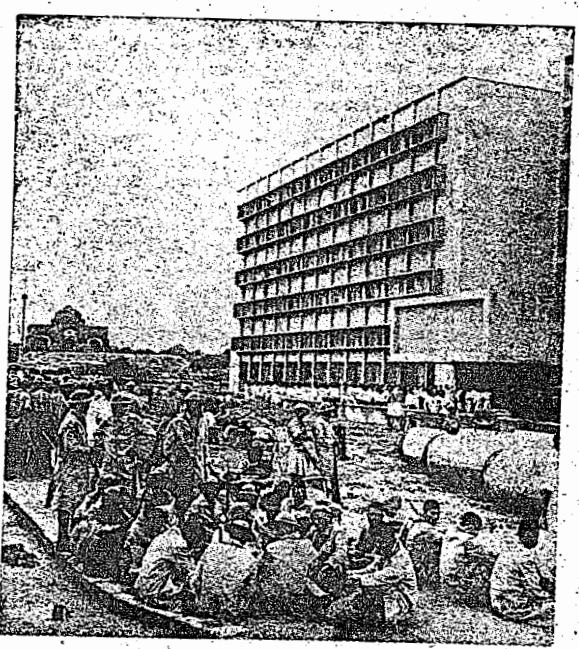
to be run with military help.

In a statement issued on July 12, just prior to arrest, P. S. R. Anjaneyulu, Secretary-General, National Federation of P. & T. Employees said: "The reports received so far about the first day of the General Strike on July 12, 1960, indicate that the majority of the P. & T. staff in important centres have participated in the strike wholeheartedly and made it a complete success.

"In Bombay the work in the Posts, Telegraph, Telephones and R.M.S. has come to a standstill due to the entire staff having gone on strike. Similarly, in Calcutta, Nagpur, Bangalore and other places, the P. & T. employees came out of the offices in large numbers and struck work.

"In Delhi, the strike has been a complete success in Telephone Revenue Offices as not even a single employee turned up for work. In the R.M.S., while the New Delhi R.M.S. was closed by the authorities themselves, nearly 90 per cent of the staff work-

This is where our comments on the Central Government employees' strike would have appeared. We leave it blank in protest.



The police concentration in front of the AGCR's office—
Photos: VIRENDRA KUMAR

* SEE CENTRE PAGES

THE STRIKE -ITS SWEEP, SCOPE AND FORCE

FROM FRONT PAGE

ing in the Delhi R.M.S. absented themselves."

As for the civilians working in the Defence establishments and factories, complete success is reported from such key centres as Kirkee, Jubbulpore, Bombay, Ichapore, Panagarh, Jamnagar and five of the more important workshops in Delhi. At the time of walking, news comes of walk-outs in Kanpur, where the authorities had stooped to the level of getting forged withdrawal statements issued.

On the railways, apart from the stoppages in the Eastern and Western Railways, a remarkable feature has been the large-scale actions in the railway workshops in Bombay, Bikaner, Chittaranjan, Bhavnagar, Baroda, Lalguda (Hyderabad), Perambur, Jamalpur, Lucknow, Jagadhri (Punjab), Mysore and Villupuram (Madras). Even the trucks away reports in the daily Press indicate that the clerical employees in the Income-Tax, Accountant General's Office, etc., have come out in large numbers.

Calcutta

Calcutta actually began striking into action from July 7.

July 7 presented an unforgettable sight as over 50,000 Central Government employees, including hundreds of women, paraded the streets, undeterred by the threats held out by the Centre, in preparation for the proposed General Strike. It was raining heavily, but not a single employee left the ranks of the disciplined demonstrators.

The one slogan that echoed and re-echoed through the splatter of the rain and the hissing of the gusty wind was: "Our demand must be conceded; otherwise the strike will take place."

The main captions of the innumerable posters carried by the demonstrators symbolised the unity and solidarity of different categories of the employees. These were:

"From the midnight of July 11 —

The wheels on the railways won't move;

The drone of the planes won't be heard;

The dash and the dot won't be flashed across the wires;

The telephone won't buzz." Thousands of people, literally drenched to their bones, lined the streets to greet the massive demonstrations, which poured in from all directions in seemingly endless streams, on their way to the Maidan, where a huge rally was held in observance of the "Demands Day." The call for it had been given by the All-India Joint Council of Action.

Deven Sen, M.L.A., Chairman of the Local Joint Council of Action, presided over the rally and Nath Pai, M.P., Chairman of the Confederation of Central Government Employees, was the principal speaker.

The Maidan looked like a vast sea of umbrellas. The ground was covered with slush and mud, and the downpour continued incessantly. Yet, the vast gathering remained standing for well over two hours, listening to the speeches. During the past week, in-

tensive preparations for the proposed strike were made by all sections of the Central Government employees throughout West Bengal. Hundreds of meetings and demonstrations were held, volunteers were enrolled and collections made for the strike fund.

The public support for the strike had been steadily growing in the teeth of the barrage of misleading propaganda launched against the employees by the Government and its apologists.

The BPTUC, HMS and UTUC, scores of trade unions, the State Kisan Sabha, BPSF, the State Committee of the National Federation of Indian Women, Provincial Bank Employees' Association, All-India Insurance Employees' Association, Calcutta, and 21 United Citizens' Committee Councilors of the Calcutta Corporation extended their full support to the strike.

The Central Coordinating Committee of the West Bengal Government Employees' Associations and Unions in a letter urged upon the Chief Minister, Dr. B. C. Roy, to see that no attempt was made by the State Government to deploy its employees in Central Government offices in case the proposed strike takes place.

A big mass meeting of the State Government employees, held on July 9 supported the demands of the Central Government employees and fully endorsed the letter written by the Central Coordinating Committee of the West Bengal Government Employees' Associations and Unions.

The Marxist Forward Bloc, RCPI, Workers' Party and the Bolshevik Party issued statements supporting the strike.

A 15,000-strong rally of workers and employees was held in Calcutta on July 8 to express solidarity with the strike by the Central Government employees.

The rally was sponsored by the Dalhousie Square Coordination Committee and was supported by the BPTUC, UTUC and HMS. Prabhat Kar, M.P., presided. It condemned the Ordinance and the banning of the strike and demanded immediate withdrawal of the repressive measures.

Several thousand workers and employees came in processions, raising slogans supporting the strike and condemning the Ordinance.

A meeting of prominent citizens was held at about the same time at a different place. A Public Relations Committee to mobilise broad-based public sympathy for the strike was formed with Sasanka Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, M.L.C., and Prof. Nirmal Bhattacharya, M.L.C., as President and Secretary respectively of the Committee.

Zero Hour

The results of these intensive preparations were visible as zero hour struck on July 12. The wheels of the Central Government's machinery in large parts of West Bengal came to a grinding halt. All the P. & T. employees, telephone operators, civil aviation workers and others ceased work.

For some hours, trains ran, though with almost completely empty coaches. But soon enough they, too, very largely came to a halt, especially in the Sealdah and Howrah Junctions. A short while later, the Burdwan, Assansole and Nalhati sections were affected. Suburban trains hardly functioned. The great Chittaranjan works came to a complete stop.

In the morning it was clear that office employees in all the sectors of the Central Government apparatus were not lagging behind. The usually overcrowded establishments presented a ghostly and silent picture. In Ichapore and Cossipore the call of the strike reached out with good impact.

A remarkable feature of the strike situation in West Bengal has been its sustained character and its continuous spread. Reports indicate that the long-distance trains have now been severely affected and the whole system is coming to a state of paralysis.

An indication of the severity and completeness of the strike can be had from the fact that the Calcutta daily papers do not reach any other part of India, trunk telephone contact cannot be made and even the teletype line is functioning far from normally. The unfortunate part of this situation is that detailed news is just not available.

Bombay

In Maharashtra and Gujarat, the strike has gone forward with a tremendous

swing. From Bombay, the Free Press Journal itself reports that over 90 per cent of the 90,000 Central Government employees began the strike as scheduled and have continued to stay away from work. The Joint Council of Action has every right to claim that the strike was a "thumping success" just as the Congress circles could not but express to the Press their "grave concern."

The huge Victoria Terminus and Bombay Central stations witnessed the spectacle of hardly any ticket collectors, any station staff and workers. The Parel and Matunga railway workshops observed complete strike. Civil Aviation employees at Santa Cruz walked off to a man, while only some 20 out of 600 of the Overseas Communication Service reported for duty.

Over 95 per cent of the GPO, CTO and telephone staff abstained from reporting for work. Similar was the situation with the clerical staff of the Naval Dockyard as well as of the Income-Tax, Audit Accounts, Customs, Mint, Defence establishments, Canteen Stores, etc.

The suburban train services which are the pride of Bombay run sporadically and with very frequent stoppages. Their number has been reduced by over 100 and on the evening of July 12 they came to a complete halt for several hours. The Central Railways at Kalyan and Kuria responded completely to the strike call while almost complete stoppage was observed on all stations between Bombay and Kalyan.

What the FREE PRESS

JOURNAL described as a "tense situation" continues to the time of writing, with the authorities quite unable to bring about any "improvement" in the situation. On the contrary, the militant mood of the people of the urbs prima of India was manifested in the huge turn-out on the Kamgar Maidan on July 13. The meeting was illegal and yet close on 10,000 persons gathered and showed their anger when the police swooped on S. S. Mirajkar who had come to address the meeting. Similar excitement and mass demonstration attended the arrest of George Fernandez.

In Maharashtra, Sholapur and Aurangabad also had successful strikes.

Nagpur

In Nagpur, on July 11, a nearly two-mile-long procession of the Central Government employees joined by other sections of workers numbering about 15,000 collected at the stroke of five in the evening before the AIR station and marched in a disciplined procession through the main thoroughfares of the city and ended in a meeting at the Chitnis Park. The meeting was convened under the joint auspices of the local Joint Council of Action and the United Trade Union Council, representing 45 trade unions affiliated to the AITUC, HMS, UTUC and Independent Federations like the Bank employees and Life Insurance Corporation employees. Besides unions many

sections of the people attended the meeting.

Local State transport authorities tried to depute State buses for transport purposes but the employees led by the drivers and conductors refused to undertake any job that would tantamount to acting as blacklegs.

The strike of P & T employees and other Central Government staff in the city has been very successful.

Gujarat

Dohad in the Panch Mahal District of Gujarat lost seven lives when the police tried in vain to break the strike by a bloodbath. But over 90 per cent of the railway workers firmly stood by their decision to continue the strike. Ahmedabad's railways, telegraph and telephone offices went completely "dead" on the stroke of the midnight hour of June 11.

In Baroda, some 10,000 employees struck work and complete success is reported from the railway loco shed and divisional workshop. Five passenger trains, including the Janata Express, could not proceed from Baroda.

A closely parallel situation developed at Rajkot, Bhavnagar and at the Military Engineering Centre at Jamnagar. Passenger trains could not run between Surendranagar and Bhavnagar, while Surat witnessed a complete postal strike. Nothing functioned at the

CTO in Rajkot. The marshalling yards at Sabarmati were completely idle.

Everybody acknowledges that, together with West Bengal and Maharashtra, Gujarat is one of the areas of what the Statesman described as "mounting tempo".

Reports from Madhya Pradesh make it evident that Post and Telegraph employees have been in the forefront of the impressive turn-out. In Raipur, Bilaspur, Raigarh and Durg, to mention a few towns, the turn-out of strikers has varied from between 80 to 90 per cent.

Apart from the stoppage in the Civil Defence establishments, 80 to 90 per cent of the employees at the railway workshops at Jubbulpore have not reported for duty since July 12.

Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, the pacemakers in the strike have been the P. & T. employees, more particularly the R.M.S. workers. Jaipur, Bikaner and Ajmer have been witness to really heroic scenes in the face of the severest repression the State has ever known. But it is not only the Postal and Telegraph staff who have been affected. The Bikaner Railway workshops could not operate, since only ten per cent of the workers turned up for duty. The important station of Abu Road also saw close to complete stoppage of work.

Uttar Pradesh

The strike has been gradually spreading in Uttar Pradesh. Fride of place has to be equally shared with the Chabugh Junction and workshop in Lucknow and the Post and Telegraph employees, more particularly in the districts of Lucknow, Allahabad, Banaras, Ballia and Gorakhpur. Even the official circles admitted on July 13 that the strike situation in these four districts were "causing concern."

In Kanpur the postmen walked out on July 13 in protest against the firing at Dohad. The Accountant-General's office at Allahabad has been at a complete standstill for three days now. An important new development is the report of partial stoppages and dislocation of work at the railway junction of Moghulsarai.

Bihar

In Bihar the stoppage has been complete at the GPO, telephone exchange and among the subordinate staff of Patna aerodrome. The postal employees showed an over 80 per cent response at Jhajha and Gaya. The Eastern Railway centre at Dhanbad was partially paralysed. No up-trains could steam into Jamalpur, where the loco shed workers also came out cent per cent.

In the Punjab news so far received shows that 80 per cent of the employees in the Accountant-General's office at Simla heeded the strike call. Only slightly less was the response in Ludhiana. As mentioned earlier, the strike

C.P.I. STATEMENTS PROTEST AGAINST ORDINANCE

THE Secretariat of the National Council of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement in New Delhi on July 8, 1960:

The Central Secretariat of the Communist Party of India condemns the Ordinance issued today. It is an attack on the freedom of organisation and collective bargaining, on the precious rights which the working people have won through their struggles.

The Ordinance and the subsequent Order issued by the Union Home Ministry not only declares the strike of the Central Government employees illegal, not only imposes heavy fines and imprisonment on persons who give assistance to the said strike, but also confers on any "Police Officer" authority to "arrest without warrant any person who is reasonably sus-

pected of having committed any offence under this Ordinance."

That the Government has to go to the extent of giving such arbitrary powers to any and every Police Officer in the country in order to face the strike of the Government employees makes a mockery of the claim made by the Government that it is determined to adopt the method of negotiations and settlement of disputes with its employees.

The Communist Party is confident that all the democratic-minded sections of the people will raise their voice of protest against this repressive policy and put pressure on the Government to abandon this method and to adopt the method of negotiation and settlement in its relations with the employees.

Repression Condemned

THE Secretariat of the National Council of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement in New Delhi on July 13, 1960:

The Secretariat of the National Council of the Communist Party of India is shocked at the firing on the striking workers at Dohad on the Western Railway. This is the inevitable result of the policy pursued by the Government of India.

A trade union issue pure and simple has been sought to be painted by the Prime Minister as an attempt to challenge the civil authority, in order to justify the heavy repression that it has resorted to.

That the Government should come out with an ordinance within a few hours of the Prime Minister's broadcast clearly showed that the Government was relying mainly on its coercive apparatus. Within the course

of twentyfour hours since the strike started over 2,000 leaders and workers have been arrested; intimidation and threats on the widest scale have been resorted to; and the propaganda machine of the Government—the Radio and the press—has been utilised to distort the demands of the employees and to suppress the correct news of the strike with a view to demoralise the employees.

The Government will be committing the biggest mistake if it thinks it can win a victory this way. The permanent sense of discontent that these measures will leave on the employees is a thing that no Government can contemplate with equanimity.

The Secretariat appeals to the Government to give up these measures, release the arrested persons and enter into straightforward and direct negotiation with the Joint Council of Action.

Severe repressive measures

THE strike of the Central Government employees which began at midnight on July 11 has been one of the biggest actions this country has seen. The Government had brought out its entire repressive armoury to crush the strike. That this repression has not gained its ends does not in any way detract from the severity of Government's measures.

The Prime Minister's broadcast came on July 7, and was followed the next day by the promulgation of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance by the President, banning the strike and holding out stringent penalties.

The Army was asked to stand by and a notification under the Armed Forces (Emergency Duties) Act, 1947, was issued on July 9.

Five senior officials of the Government of India of the rank of Secretaries to the Ministries, armed with full powers, were sent to various regions of the country to deal on the spot with any situation.

Armed police guards were posted at all Central Government establishments and at other strategic places.

In Calcutta, over 30,000 policemen, members of the Railway Protection Force and the National Volunteer Force had moved out on the morning of July 11. And in Delhi

alone, the administration posted on July 10 nearly 4,000 steel-helmeted policemen, 2,000 special police officers and 1,000 members of the Territorial Army, while the newspapers splashed—"Suspension on Arrest", "Dismissal on Conviction" and the like.

With the morning of July 12, reports of large-scale arrests, lathi-charges and police firings started pouring in.

In Bombay, on the evening of July 11, 40,000 people had assembled in the Shivaji Park in defiance of the police ban and the 3,000 steel-helmeted policemen cordoning off the Maidan since noon. S. M. Joshi, M.L.A., and Nath Pai, M.P., members of the Joint Council of Action were arrested as they went on the dais to address the meeting. A number of other persons were arrested on the spot, including six women, among whom were Ahilya Rangekar, Vimal Ranadive and Maina Gavankar.

About 60 trade unionists, including nine members of the Joint Council of Action were arrested by the Bombay police before zero hour had struck. Among them were Maniben Kara, President of the Western Railway Mazdoor Union, Samuel Augustine and B. W. Vaidya, President and Secretary of the Joint Council of Action, Bombay; Jagadish Ajmera, Secretary of the Western Railway

Employees' Union; K. N. Joglekar, President of the Maharashtra Trade Union Congress, E. X. Joseph, Secretary-General of the All-India Audit and Accounts Staff Association.

Similar large-scale arrests were reported from Calcutta as well.

In Delhi, police raided the houses of strike leaders, arresting 27 of them including Om Prakash Gupta, General Secretary, All-India Telegraph Engineering Employees' Union, and Gopal Singh Joshi, Assistant General Secretary, All-India Postal Employees' Union. The President, Secretary and another office-bearer of the Central Government Clerks' Union were suspended.

The sweep of arrests over the entire country was not confined only to trade unionists and Government employees. For instance, reporting the arrest of 122 persons in Jubbulpore "as a precautionary measure", the Hindu of July 12 went on to admit that "none of the arrested persons is a Government employee."

Within 24 hours of the strike, according to Press reports, over two thousand persons were already behind the bars. In Dohad in Panch Mahal district of Gujarat the police resorted to firing on the first day of the strike itself. Seven persons were killed and 13 injured. On that day in Gujarat, 45

persons were arrested. At the Lal Darwaza Garden in Ahmedabad, police cane-charged a meeting and arrested the speaker, Karsondas U. Parmar, M.P. Lathi and cane-charges were resorted to in Calcutta and in Bombay at the Elphinstone Road Station, Matunga and Parel workshops. In Assansole in West Bengal, police clashed with workers in the loco shed. Arrests there alone totalled 115.

In Bombay, Peter Alvarez, railwaymen's leader, was arrested at his residence in the night of July 12. Deven Sen, Chairman of the West Bengal Joint Council of Action was taken into custody in Calcutta.

With the strike striding into its second day, reports of police repression also increased. Firing in Burdwan, four lathi-charges in Bombay and several hundred more arrests were reported on July 13.

S. S. Mirajkar, President of the AITUC, P. S. R. Anjaneyulu, a member of the Joint Council of Action Standing Committee, Jatin Chakravarty, M.L.A., West Bengal, George Fernandez, Chairman of the Railway Mazdoor Sangharsha Samiti and office-bearers of the Port and Dock Workers' Union of Bombay, were among those arrested on the second day.

S. S. Mirajkar was arrested while addressing a workers' meeting at Kamgar Maidan in defiance of the ban. The police resorted to repeated

lathi-charges on the protesting workers, while the AITUC President was being led away. Over 25 persons were arrested on the spot.

The Free Press Journal gave a vivid picture of police violence at the time of the arrest of George Fernandes at Dadar station.

The report said: "Shri Fernandes, who lay prostrate across the railway line, was slung across platform No. 2 and severely beaten by half-a-dozen constables and officers of the Special Reserve Police, while hundreds of onlookers shouted angrily to restrain the steel-helmeted police. Shri Fernandes was seen bleeding from head injuries and his arm was reported to have been broken."

A partial picture of police repression after two days of the strike, as emerging from Press reports, was that arrest figures had crossed the 500 mark in Calcutta and 150 in Bombay.

In Rajasthan, over 1,000 Central Government employees were under arrest. Of these 200, mostly P. & T. staff, were arrested in Jaipur, 100 in Mount Abu and 151 in Ajmer. In Bikaner, 232 railway employees and one Communist worker, who had assembled in a meeting were all reported to have been arrested.

In Jabalpur, the total number of arrests had reached 315. Out of these 17 were women, who were arrested for

"holding back their men from going to work."

In Nagpur, total arrests were 348.

In Hyderabad, 22 strike leaders have been arrested so far including N. Satyanarayana Reddy, General Secretary of the Joint Council of Action in Andhra Pradesh. The total arrests figure so far is 78.

In U.P., more than 750 people had been arrested, Lucknow alone accounting for 400. In Delhi the figure is 51, in Orissa 44.

In Patna, about 150 P. & T. and Railway Employees have been arrested, while reports from Punjab are that 200 are under arrest (after hundreds have already been released).

From Kerala, the total number of arrests reported is about 1,000 which includes the arrest of 233 Central Government employees in Trichur. At Ernakulam, all the 23 members of the P. & T. employees' Action Council were arrested while they were meeting.

As we go to press, reports have come of the arrests of Communist and trade union leaders M. R. Venkataraman, M. Kalyanasundaram, A. S. K. Iyengar and others in Madras, S. G. Patkar in Bombay and S. M. Banerjee, M.P., in Kanpur.

In Jabalpur, the total number of arrests had reached 315. Out of these 17 were women, who were arrested for

July 14, 1960

clerks, none of the staff turned up for work at the railway workshops.

Delhi

In the Capital of the Republic, the initial success of the authorities has not prevented the Income-Tax and Accountant-General's office from taking to the path of strike action in the afternoon of July 14. The employees in a meeting rejected their previous leaders who had failed to give a lead and resolved to join their brothers and sisters all over our wide land. On the spot Rs. 1,400 was collected as Strike Fund.

Even a partial and necessarily cramped survey as the above reveals that all the show of force and repression—to say nothing of the tremendous ideological offensive—has not prevented the strike assuming sweep, scope and force. The Government needs to read the writing on the wall.

In Mysore, barring a few

(July 14)

PRIME MINISTER, THE STRIKE

★ by P. C. JOSHI

The Prime Minister commands more popular confidence than anybody else in his Government. Indian public opinion thinks that he can feel the pulse of the nation and find a reasonable and acceptable way out, in any crisis. This time too it looked to him to produce a just and peaceful solution to the demands of 22 lakh Central Government employees and avert their general strike.

The Prime Minister's broadcast of 8th, however, shattered popular hopes. The Ordinance banning the strike appeared next day and the strike of the 11th became inevitable. The Prime Minister banged the door on negotiations, called for 'hands up', and much worse.

Pandit Nehru is a master of words but this time as I heard his broadcast, I found them empty and hollow, threatening and untruthful. He was using them to achieve a purpose that the Indian people do not associate with his name.

THE Prime Minister, melodramatically, began by referring to his latest trip to Ladakh and played up the "vigilance, efficiency, determination and calm courage" of the Indian soldiers manning the borders. He contrasted this picture with the "threat of a general strike" and stressed that "they contradicted each other" and "led to the weakening of our defences".

He neatly forgot to mention that the Joint Council of Action had exempted the whole operational area, including Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh and much more from the strike.

Again, if the national sentiments associated with the sentinels of our border are used to deny the demands of workers and employees, is the Prime Minister not creating however unwittingly, and for a temporary partisan gain an atmosphere under which the armed forces begin to consider themselves above the people. To create a cleavage between the army and the people is no way of saving democracy, as old and new historic experience amply reveals.

Demagogy Didn't Work

Pandit Nehru went further and referred to "unfriendly outposts on the other side." Everybody, however, knows that there have been no incidents on our borders for long months, and that solemn guarantees have been forged between the Prime Ministers of the two countries, to keep the common borders peaceful. To play internal politics at the cost of our neighbour does not enhance the credit of our country abroad or go down with our people any more.

The slogan of the Chinese threat has been misused so often and so long, and it is so bereft of reality, that even when used by Pandit Nehru at a critical moment in our country's life, it fail-

ed to impress Indian public opinion and failed to move the strikers. It is good that demagogy does not work for long under Indian democracy.

If all that Pandit Nehru said about the danger on our frontier was true, the lakhs of employees of his own Government should obviously agree with him. He knew that they thought otherwise and hence he advanced the argument, "It must be through

thoughtlessness that they have drifted to the wrong course". To call the Defence employees who have boosted up production by 24 per cent, the railwaymen who have fulfilled all the targets of the Plan, and their other brethren who run the Central Government apparatus and more, thoughtless, is no sign of wisdom or responsibility. If the mass of his employees were thoughtless, the villain of the piece had also to be invented, who was moving them from behind the scenes. Pandit Nehru also discovered the evil agency, it was our Party. But he dared not name us. "We know that there are some amongst us, who, perhaps feel little the passion that is called patriotism or nationalism, and who would even welcome the weakening of our country."

Our Stand

The stand of our Party has been open to the public. We are on record for stating that the stand of the employees is just and within the framework of the policy announcements of the Government itself and that the Government must negotiate and settle the dispute.

There are Communists amongst the strikers and

Pandit Nehru's Government knows better than anybody else that they are loyally and devotedly working under the leadership of their respective trade unions, the great majority of which are not under Communist leadership.

Red-Baiting Fails

Pandit Nehru's Red-baiting slogans did not catch on with the public, and least of all with the strikers themselves. They, however, gave a helping hand to the highly paid columnists of the Times of India and Statesman to hang a few of their common canards on and try to sell them as based on "inside information."

Pandit Nehru's anti-Communist slogan failed to strike a wedge between the Socialists and Communists at any level or in the strike leadership. Dange from his sick-bed wrote to Labour Minister Nanda before the strike began that here was a pure and simple industrial dispute, which must be settled through negotiations, and the Government must honour its own commitments. Asoka Mehta reached home from abroad after the strike began and

guarantee their existing standard of living and offer some improvement through mutual discussions and negotiations. It is the policy of the big stick against the workers and employees, within sight of tax concessions and profit incentives to the bosses, that has provoked the strike.

The Central Government's case against its employees is a bad one on any count. And even when the Prime Minister sought to popularise it among the public he put his foot on soil familiar to the stalwarts of Indian reaction and had to mouth their slogans and arguments!

The Government case has not made sense nor its policy of strength carried public opinion with it. Some reflection of Indian public opinion, however distorted and pale, can be read in the editorials of the Right-wing papers themselves.

The Free Press Journal (Bombay) in its July 8 editorial, "The Count Down", characterises the Prime Minister's broadcast as "unfortunately too one-sided". Again in its editorial of July 12, entitled "Explosive Days" it wrote: "The situation is such that the slightest spark can

unfold a situation which no sensible person desires.

The strike on the whole has been remarkably peaceful, for a strike of this character, and this only shows the patience of the strikers. But to play with it is to play with fire.

Stop Repression

The daily Press reports disclose that repression is widespread and intense. The known leaders are being rapidly rounded up. Lathi-charges and tear-gas attacks are quite common, and even firing to kill is being resorted to.

The experience of our freedom struggle and of the last thirteen years is enough to conclusively prove that repression cannot cow down any section of the Indian people. It can only provoke and disturb the peace of the country and strengthen anti-democratic and authoritarian forces in our public life.

Japan has just passed through a greater popular upheaval. But the Japanese police managed the situation

AND THE WAY OUT

despite Pandit Nehru's broadcast he too has characterised the strike as an industrial dispute and called for negotiations and settlement.

False Plea

Equally false and fantastic was Pandit Nehru's characterisation of the strike as "sabotage" of the Plan and disruptive of the national endeavour through which "we may emerge from the valley of the shadow of poverty to the bright sunlight of welfare."

Pandit Nehru misrepresented the demands of his own employees by stating that they would cost Rs. 700 crores during the next five years and could not be conceded if we are to have a Third Plan.

He knew that in the last stage of negotiations all that the Central Government employees demanded was that their standard of living be adequately safeguarded against the rising cost of living. They wanted the minimum wage as formulated by the 15th Labour Conference to be accepted in principle. They wanted more dearness allowance so that their real wages may not fall, but get compensated against rising inflation. Their demand was not for more welfare for themselves than the nation could rightly afford but against the depression of their living standards which it was the duty of the Government itself to prevent.

It is the case of a Government that concedes the incentives demanded by the capitalists but refuses them to its own workers and employees! It is a refusal to

touch off a holocaust which will be harmful to the strikers, to the Government and to the country at large. It is to avoid this spark that both authorities and strike leaders should now do everything in their power."

The Statesman in its editorial of July 9, stated, "We are surprised at the air of complacency which seems still to prevail fairly widely and at the spirit of blimpishness also expressed... there is scope for compromise."

The Tribune, July 8, wrote: "Best solution will be obviously an honourable compromise."

The Times of India, July 9, wrote, "It is true that some of their grievances are genuine and the Government has much to answer, for having allowed things to come to this sorry pass."

Popular Sentiment

The popular sentiment for a just and quick solution of the strike is so widespread that even our leading dailies associated with the Right-wing and by no means pro-labour are pleading for a settlement. They, of course, make as usual, criticism of the strike and the strikers, but they are also pressing the Government to settle the dispute soon.

The Government, however, refuses to budge and read the sign of the times aright and heed public opinion. It is yet relying on the traditional bankrupt policy of disruption and repression to crush the strike. This is playing with fire. Drift is dangerous. It can

far differently than the Indian police are doing. The first and foremost necessity for the Government is to end all repressive measures and promptly and unconditionally release the strikers and their leaders and start negotiation.

Govt.'s Responsibility

All responsible people who have followed the course of negotiations know that a practical solution, honourable to all parties, is possible. The gap between the workers' demands and what the Government has already conceded and should be further prepared to consider is narrow enough to be bridged by the voice of reason and the sentiment of good will.

Pandit Nehru said, "It would be an irony of fate if we cannot keep peace in our own country and settle our points of difference in a civilised and peaceful manner." The leaders of the strike were prepared to talk. It is the Government that remained adamant. It is the strikers who remain peaceful despite a "1942" against their leadership and the movement. It is the Government that is being repressive as under the British.

It is the Government that must respond to the public demand for an immediate settlement, heed the justice of the demands of its own employees and act in a responsible way. Indian peace, planning and democracy will be strengthened and not weakened through an honourable and just settlement.

July 14, 1960.

FOUR-PAGER

We are sure our readers will appreciate the fact that only a four-page issue was possible and confined to reporting the strike of the Central Government employees.