



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

STEPS AGAINST CLOSURES

Industrial Disputes (W. Bengal Amendment) Bill—1984

The CITU and other trade unions had been demanding of the Central Government to enact a comprehensive law against lockouts, closures and retrenchments which severely affected the jobs of the workers. The Union Labour Minister while evading the responsibility of the Central Government to bring in such a law, desired in the last Labour Ministers' Conference held in September, 1983, that the states could make their own laws on the subject. The Working Committee meeting of CITU held at Jamshedpur on November 30-December 2, 1983, desired that such bills should be brought in by the State Governments in order to protect the workers from these offensives. The W. Bengal Assembly has passed a Bill, viz, The Industrial Disputes (West Bengal Amendment) Bill (Bill No. 27 of 1984) on April 23, 1984, the salient features of which are being published as follows. The Bill was furnished to the CITU office by Manoranjan Roy, General Secretary of the W. Bengal State Committee of CITU.

For the states where such Bills have not been brought, the CITU unions, in cooperation with other trade unions, should try to pressurise the respective Labour Ministers to introduce such Bills. If they refuse efforts should be made to bring in Private Member's Bill on the subject. The provisions of the W. Bengal Bill should be given wide publicity.

Statement of Objects and Reasons

Chapter VB of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 makes special provisions relating to lay off, retrenchments and closure in bigger establishments. The provisions of section 25-0 and section 25R of this Chapter dealing with cases of closure have been struck down by the Supreme Court.

By the Industrial Disputes (West Bengal Second Amendment) Act, 1980 certain provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 were amended in their application to this State. In particular, by an amendment to section 25K, the provisions of Chapter VB were made applicable to establishments engaging not less than 50 workmen. The Govern-

ment of India while communicating President's assent requested to have the section so amended that the provisions are applicable to establishments engaging not less than 100 workmen.

The recent increase in the number of closures and absence of adequate protection for workmen in such cases have been causing concern to the State Government. Parliament have since passed the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act, 1982 wherein certain special provisions regarding closures in establishments engaging not less 100 workmen have been made. States like Orissa and Maharashtra have also introduced similar provisions. The aforesaid Central Act of 1982 has not yet been given effect to. In the above context the need for legislative provisions to protect workers in situations of threatened closure, has assumed urgency. It is also necessary to ensure that workers get their dues and compensation in case of closures. It has further been felt that the suggestion of the Government of India for making chapter VB applicable to establishments engaging not less than 100 workmen should be accepted. The Bill has been drafted with the above objects in view and, in particular, to provide for:

(a) amendment of Section 25K, making provisions of Chapter VB of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 applicable to establishments engaging 100 or more workmen;

(b) amendment of the provisions of Section 25-0 and 25 R prescribing detailed procedure, with guidelines that have to be followed in the case of threatened closure and the penal provisions for non-compliance thereof;

(c) amendment of Section 25-0 to ensure that workers of closed down units are not deprived from receipt of their dues and compensation in time; and

(d) amendment of Section 25 P for making special provisions to empower the State Government to direct re-starting of those units which were closed

COAL WORKERS' STRIKE ON JUNE 4 & 5

down prior to the passing of the Bill into law.

The Bill

1. This Act may be called the Industrial Disputes (West Bengal Amendment) Act, 1984.

2. The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 (hereinafter referred to as the Principal Act) shall, in its application to West Bengal, be amended to the manner hereinafter provided.

3. In section 25 K of the principal Act, in sub-section (1) for the word "fifty" the words "one hundred" shall be substituted.

Procedure to be followed for closing down an undertaking of an industrial establishment.

4. For Section 25-0 of the principal Act, the following section shall be substituted :- 25-0 (1) An employer who intends to close down an undertaking of an industrial establishment to which this Chapter applies shall, in the prescribed manner apply, for prior permission at least ninety days before the date on which the intended closure is to become effective to the appropriate Government stating clearly the reasons for the intended closure of the undertaking and a copy of such application shall also be served simultaneously on the representatives of the workmen in the prescribed manner:

Provided that every application for permission to close down an undertaking shall, having regard to the first proviso to Section 25FFF, contain the particulars of the quantum, mode, manner and time of payment of compensation to the workmen, in the manner prescribed, and such employer shall furnish such guarantee as may be required by the appropriate Government to discharge his liability for payment of compensation and other statutory dues to the workmen in the event of such permission being granted under sub-section (3)

Provided further that nothing in this sub-section shall apply to an undertaking set up for the construction of buildings, bridges, roads, canals, dams or for other construction work.

(2) Where an application for permission has been made under sub-section (1), the appropriate Government may, having regard to the reasons adduced in such application and the interests of the undertaking and the concerned workmen, issue such directions as may be necessary for maintaining normalcy and continuity of work during the notice period.

(3) Where an application for permission has been made under sub-section (1) or under sub-section (4), the appropriate Government, after making such enquiry as it thinks fit and after giving a reasonable opportunity of being heard to the employer, the workmen and the persons interested in such closure, may, having regard to the genuineness and adequacy

of the reasons stated by the employer, the interest of all concerned including the parties and the general public and all other relevant factors, by order and for reasons to be recorded in writing, grant or refuse to grant such permission and a copy of such order shall be communicated to the employer and the workmen.

(4) Where a notice has been served on the appropriate Government by an employer under sub-section (1) of Section 25FFA and the period of notice has not expired on the date of commencement of the Industrial Disputes (West Bengal Amendment) Act, 1984, such employer shall not close down the undertaking but shall within a period of fifteen days from such commencement apply to the appropriate Government for permission to close down the undertaking.

(6) An order of the appropriate Government granting or refusing to grant permission shall, subject to the provisions of sub-section (7), be final and binding on all the parties and shall remain in force for a period of one year from the date of such order.

(7) The appropriate Government may, either on its own motion or on the application made by either of the parties, review its order granting or refusing to grant permission under sub-section (3) or refer the matter to a Tribunal for adjudication:

Provided that where a reference has been made to a Tribunal under this subsection, it shall pass an award within a period of thirty days from the date of such reference of such extended period as may be determined by the appropriate Government.

(8) Where no application for permission under sub-section (1) is made within the period specified therein, or where the permission for closure has been refused, the closure of the undertaking shall be deemed to be illegal and void from the date of closure and the workmen shall be entitled to all the benefits under any contract, agreement, award or settlement or any law for the time being in force as if the undertaking had not been closed down.

(9) Where an undertaking is permitted to be closed down under subsection (3) every workmen who is employed in that undertaking immediately before the date of application for permission under this section, shall be entitled to receive, in addition to all legal dues (including gratuity), compensation which shall be equivalent to fifteen day's average pay for every completed year of continuous service or any part thereof in excess of six months.

(10) Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing provisions of this section the appropriate Government may, if it is satisfied that owing to such exceptional circumstances as natural calamity or accident in the undertaking or death of the employer or the like, it is necessary so to do, by order, direct

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Meeting of CITU Secretariat

A meeting of the Secretariat was held at the Central Office on May 9. The following members were present: B. T. Ranadive, Samar Mukherjee, Niren Ghosh, P. K. Ganguly, M. K. Pandhe, Nrisingha Chakraborty and Mohd. Ismail. B. T. Ranadive presided over the meeting.

Nrisingha Chakraborty read out the letter of May 5 from the Chief Labour Commissioner (C) which announced the results of verification as on December, 1980. The Government also desired to go in for verification of the membership of 1983. In the letter it also agreed to discuss the procedure for verification as demanded by the N. C. C. subject to the condition that any change in the procedure would have to be approved by the Indian Labour Conference. The Secretariat rejected the results of verification which have drastically brought down the membership of CITU. The meeting decided that all unions which have been excluded from the list furnished by the Government, should submit copies of their Annual Returns for 1980 to the Central Office to furnish proof of the membership to the Government. The meeting also decided to write protest letter to the Government and approach AITUC to do the same. (*The joint letter is being published hereafter.*) The meeting also decided to ensure that all CITU unions should submit their Annual Returns for 1983 with a copy to the CITU Centre.

M. K. Pandhe reported about the preparations of the conference of the All India Coal Workers' Federation to be held at Ranchi on May 25-27. Preparations for the coalminers' strike on June 4 and 5 are being made which would be further geared up after the conference.

The meeting discussed the question of an all India textile workers' conference as proposed by Dutta Samant. In view of the mounting offensives on the textile workers and the increasing closures and the problems cropping up in the NTC mills also, it was felt that an all India programme was necessary, Comrades from W. Bengal, Tamilnadu and Punjab had also expressed this view. However, in view of Datta Samant's attitude to bypass the Maharashtra State CITU, it was decided to take the final decision in consultation with the Maharashtra State Committee of CITU.

Nrisingha Chakraborty reported that the Rajasthan State Committee had accepted to host the General Council meeting at Jaipur some time in July or August. The final dates will be fixed by the State Committee in consultation with W. Bengal to ensure the presence of Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of W. Bengal and Vice-President of CITU to address the rally. In view of the General Council meeting, the Secretariat decided that all State Committees and federations should send their reports by June 30 to the Centre.

Nrisingha Chakraborty reported about the struggle in J. K. Synthetics in Kota. The management, in league with the Dhanda group and BMS elements, have launched offensives on the CITU activists. It has imposed seven day's wage cut for one day's strike. Despite repeated representations, neither the Central Government nor the State Government has taken any steps in this respect. A programme of relay hunger strike has been taken. The next course of action will be decided in a meeting to be held on May 15. It was decided that Nrisingha Chkraborty would attend the meeting.

The meeting decided to nominate S. N. Solanki and two other comrades to be suggested by Delhi State Committee to attend the National Workers' Education Seminar being organised at Mussourie by ILO from May 21 to 31.

The Secretariat also decided that P. K. Ganguly would attend the next meeting on Workers' Participation in Management to be held on May 25.

The Secretariat nominated the following comrades to comprise the delegation to visit China at the invitation of the ACFTU:

Kamal Sarkar and Md. Amin from All India Jute Workers' Federation; Lalji Babu and Asit Dutta from All India Plantation Workers' Federation; and M. M. Lawrence and K. K. Roy Ganguly from the Water Transport Workers' Federation of India. The Secretariat also nominated M. K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU to be the leader of the above delegation.

M. K. Pandhe reported about the meeting to discuss the report of the Seal Committee on the new series of the Consumer Price Index Numbers. The Secretariat decided to place its views to the Government in the next meeting opposing the move to introduce the new series. Cooperation of other trade unions would be sought in this respect. P. K. Ganguly was entrusted to prepare the note in this regard.

Regarding the delegation to the ILO conference, M. K. Pandhe reported that there was no unanimity yet. The Government is expected to call the final meeting in this respect shortly.

Joint Letter of CITU and AITUC dated May 12 to the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) regarding the verification results of 1980.

Dear Sir,

This has reference to the so called verification results for the year 1980 supplied to us by the Government of India.

As we have already stated we have objected to the verification procedure itself and did not co-operate with the Government in verifying the membership of our organisations. Yet the membership was announced by the Government. We would like to reiterate that we do not accept these results. As a matter of fact, the results of verification of membership have confirmed our apprehensions.

We are surprised to note that the basis of findings the Government regarding our membership has not even been supplied to us by the Government. The list of registered unions as taken from the record of Registrar of Trade Unions was also not given to us by the Government. From our record of Registered unions it appears that the figures released by the Government is a gross understatement.

We would therefore request you to supply us a list of registered unions as noted by your officials

(Contd. from page 2)

that the provisions of sub-section (1) shall not apply in relation to such undertaking for such period as may be specified in the order. Every such order shall also indicate for reasons to be recorded, the extent to which compensation computed under sub section (9) shall be payable in the case, having regard to the facts and circumstances of the same and for securing such payment, the appropriate Government may obtain such information and guarantee as has been specified in the first proviso to sub-section (1) as may be considered necessary.

Special provision as to restarting of the undertaking closed down before the commencement of the Industrial Disputes (West Bengal Amendment) Act, 1984

5. For section 25P of the principal Act, the following section shall be substituted:

25P. If the appropriate Government is of opinion in respect of any undertaking of an industrial establishment to which this Chapter applies and which is closed down before the commencement of the Industrial Disputes (West Bengal Amendment) Act 1984:

(a) that such undertaking was closed down otherwise than on account of unavoidable circumstances beyond the control of the employer;

(b) that there are possibilities of re-starting the undertaking;

(c) that it is necessary for the rehabilitation of the workmen employed in such undertaking before its closure or for the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community to re-start the undertaking or both; and

(d) that the re-starting of the undertaking shall not result in hardship to the employer in relation to the undertaking,

from the office of the Registrar of Trade Unions. So that we can produce before you the evidence of our submission of annual returns which do not find place in your list. We will require six weeks time from the date of submission of the list of our registered unions by your office. We will however not produce records before your officials since the Govt. has not evolved agreed procedure as demanded by us earlier.

We have noted the decision of the Government to discuss with the trade unions the procedure for verification of membership as an 31st December, 1983. If the agreed procedure acceptable to all is evolved it may be possible to overcome all the difficulties in the next verification of membership.

Thanking you,

Sd/-
Parvati Krishnan,
Secretary, AITUC

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/-
M.K. Pandhe,
Secretary, CITU

it may, after giving such employer and the workmen an opportunity of being heard, direct, by order published in the Official Gazette, that the undertaking shall be re-started within such time (not being less than one month from the date of the order) as may be specified in the order.

Penalty of Closure

6. For Section 25R of the principal Act, the following section shall be substituted:

25R. (1) Any employer who closes down an undertaking of an industrial establishment without complying with the provisions of section 25-0 shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both.

(2). Any employer who contravenes any direction or order given under section 25-0 or section 25P shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both, and where the contravention is a continuing one, with a further fine which may extend to two thousand rupees for every day during which the contravention continues after the conviction.

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Strike by LIC Employees

OVER fortyfive thousand class III and IV employees of the Life Insurance Corporation went on one day's countrywide strike on May 8. The strike was a part of the series of actions including one hour and two hour strikes protesting against the Corporation's proposal made on March 8 and 9 envisaging reduction of wage and fixation of dearness allowance at Rs. 1.30 per point. The strike actions are being jointly launched by All India Insurance Employees Association, National Organisation of Insurance Workers, All India Life Insurance Employees Association and All India LIC Employees' Federation, demanding settlement of their charter of demands through collective bargaining. As per reports, the strike was complete all over India. The striking employees held rallies at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Bangalore, Patna, in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and other places. The rallies were addressed by leaders of other trade unions also.

Saroj Chaudhury, General Secretary of All India Insurance Employees Association in a statement issued from Calcutta on the day said that the proposal for wage revision made on by the LIC management on March 8 and 9 was in fact a proposal for wage cut and wage freeze which no union can accept. The new entrants in LIC according to the latest offer, would suffer a loss of over Rs. 1100/- when they would reach the maximum of the scale. The four unions in a meeting held at Bombay on May 16 planned to launch indefinite strike from the first week of June.

GIC Employees' Strike

The employees of General Insurance Corporation all over the the country also went on one hour's strike on May 8 demanding immediate implementation of the Supreme Court judgement. On March 21, the Supreme Court delivered the judgement quashing the 1980 scheme of service conditions which were arbitrarily and unilaterally imposed on the GIC employees by the Ministry of Finance.

Conference of HSCL Workers' Union

THE sixth Annual Conference of Hindusthan Steel Construction Workers' Union was held at Durgapur on March 11 and 12. A presidium consisting of Kesto Ghosh, Sisir Mukherjee and P.K. Mukherjee conducted the proceedings of the conference.

Jacky Parry of the British TUC addressed the conference. Greetings were sent by the workers' organisations from DSP, NBCC, SMP, DSM, etc, apart from SFI, DYFI and Ganatantrik Mahila Samity.

Addressing the conference M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU and Working President of the Union,

called upon the delegates to intensify the united struggles against the policy of the Government in this public sector undertaking which resorted to retrenchments, violation of agreements, etc.

The conference adopted resolutions on struggle for peace against danger of war, on price rise, on the divisive and secessionist forces, on contract system and on the nationalisation of the jute industry. The conference elected a 32-member committee with Samar Mukherjee, M.P. as President, M.K. Pandhe as Working President and P.K. Mukherjee as the General Secretary.

The open session was held on March 12, where Sujit Mukherjee briefed the decisions of the conference. Addressing the open session, Samar Mukherjee explained the national and international situation and called upon the workers to forge united struggles for peace and against the anti-labour and economic policies of the Congress (I) Government for an alternative change.

Highhandedness of Indian Airlines Management

VIOLATING the agreement with the Air Corporation Employees' Union and the statutory rules formed in pursuance of the convention of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the management of Indian Airlines suspended 8 cabin crew on May 7. There is an agreement with the union which specifies that in case of delayed flights terminating after zero hours, the cabin crew/attendants shall operate the normal flights after 12 hours' rest. A provision of weekly off on the seventh day of flight had also been signed by the management under the agreement. Moreover, as per the convention of ICAO, the cabin attendants should be trained personnel capable of tackling all inflight emergencies. The Government of India had given statutory recognition to the decisions of the convention.

According to the statement issued by the union on May 18, the Flight No. IC-185 which was scheduled to leave Bombay at 17.15 hrs on May 6, actually left at 23.40 hrs. and reached Delhi at 1.20 hrs on May 7, which was also the 7th day of their flight. At Bombay itself the cabin crew made Log entries mentioning that the following day was their weekly off as well as that as per the agreement they would require 12 hours' rest. But to their utter surprise, on their landing at Delhi they were asked to go back to Bombay by Flight No. IC-184. Despite their repeated entreaties, the fatigued and harassed crew and attendants were refused transport, accommodation and food even at their own cost to be debited later on. On their refusal to submit to the management's highhandedness, they were suspended and replaced by untrained volunteers to act as cabin attendants. While determined to fight the illegal actions of the managements, the union in its statement has brought to the notice of the people the dangerous risks that the Indian Airlines management has taken in flying the aircrafts with untrained attendants.

Trade Unions Oppose Introduction of New Price Index Series

THE Union Labour Ministry convened a meeting of the Central Trade Unions on 27 April to consider the report of the Seal Committee which suggested measures to introduce a new series with 1981-82 as the base year.

The meeting was attended by Kanti Mehta (INTUC), M.K. Pandhe (CITU), B.D. Joshi (AITUC), B.N. Sathaye (BMS), Vasant Gupte (HMS), Anil Das Chowdhury (UTUC), Pritish Chanda (UTUC-LS) and Naren Sen (NFITU).

Veerendra Patil Minister of Labour presided over the meeting. At the outset he referred to the letter addressed to him by the constituents of the National Campaign Committee which demanded a meeting of the Central T.Uns to discuss the Seal Committee Report.

The trade union representatives criticised the Government of India for not correcting the 1960 series as unanimously recommended by Rath Committee. They also pointed out that the Seal Committee invited Universities and State Labour Departments to appear before it but not a single trade union representative was given opportunity by the Committee to express the workers viewpoint before the Committee.

They criticised the Seal Committee for ignoring the black market prices and the deterioration in quality of eatables while compiling the price data. It also did not give credence to the recommendation of the Rath Committee to associate worker's representative at all levels of compilation and preparation of index.

The trade union representatives pointed out that the acceptance of Seal Committee Report by the Government would only keep the index depressed and workers would suffer due to this. The House Rent Index would be extremely on the lower side and real rise in house rents will not be reflected in index if Seal Committee recommendations are accepted by the Government.

They emphasised the need for restoring the credibility of the index among the workers since it is moving much slower than the actual rise in prices.

The Labour Minister requested the trade unions to give their views in writing so that the Government could consider them before taking any final decision. (The note submitted by CITU is being published hereunder.)

Note of CITU on the proposed New Series of Consumer Price Index Numbers

With the linking of D.A. to the Consumer Price Index numbers in almost all the wage settlements as a measure to check erosion in real wage due to rise in prices, questions were raised about the accuracy in compilation of the Price Index numbers. The organised labour had repeatedly pointed out that because of the fraud in the compilation of Consumer Price Index, 1960 Series, millions of workers have been deprived of crores of rupees in Dearness Allowance. Moreover, there has been no family budget survey since 1958-59. Due to widespread protests the Government of India ultimately announced setting up of the Rath Committee in the Tripartite National Conference in 1977, to go into all aspects of compilation of the Consumer Price Index Numbers. Representatives of labour were included in the Rath Committee.

Report of the Rath Committee

The Rath Committee which submitted its report in 1978, had pointed out that the 1960 series was faulty by 8 points as on 1977 though some members claimed that it would be more. It also recommended inclusion of trade union representatives in the price collection machinery as well as with the work of the price index. The Committee further recommended that trade union representatives should be associated with the Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics of Price and Cost of Living. It also recommended tripartite state level committee for price collection work. The Rath Committee had also recommended to use black market prices in the statutory rationed areas which would give the correct reflection of the price in the index. The other recommendations of the Rath Committee included increase in the honourarium and travelling expenses of the price collectors and appointment of full time and trained price collectors.

Government Rejects Rath Committee Reports

The Government of India did not accept the unanimous recommendations of the Rath Committee. Despite trade union demands to call meetings with the Central Trade Unions, discuss the Rath Committee report, the Government unilaterally decided to introduce a new series with 1981-82 as the base. It deliberately did not correct the index by 8 points since it would mean payment of higher D.A. to both public and private sector employees. It also curtly bypassed the question of inclusion of trade union representatives in the price collection machinery.

The Seal Committee

The Government appointed the Seal Committee in 1980 to go into the question of preparation and compilation of the new series. There was no representative of labour in the Committee. Apart from Dr. K.C. Seal, the Chairman of the Committee, who is the Director of the Central Statistical Organisations, the other members of the Committee consisted of officials from the Planning Commission, Finance Ministry and the Labour Ministry. The Committee did not consult the trade unions on the new series. It consulted the Director of different State Bureau of Economics and Statistics and selected economists and statisticians. It even invited universities and State Labour Departments to place their views on the new series. Thus the workers who are the victims of the faulty price collection and compilation of index had no say in the matter.

Report of the Seal Committee

The Seal Committee has made no reference at all of the necessity of correction of the 1960 series by 8 points as recommended by the Rath Committee. Thus it went on with the preparation of the new series with the fraud of 8 points perpetuating in it.

It has also rejected Rath Committees proposal for association of trade union representatives in the price collection work. The proposal for tripartite state level committee has also been rejected by the Seal Committee. On the contrary, it has recommended a committee comprising of only officials at the state level to scrutinise and supervise the price data. It has not even touched the question of association of trade union representatives with the Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics of Price and Cost of Living.

The Government conducted the family budget studies for the 1981-82 survey in 60 centres only as against in 75 centres according to Govt.'s own admission. Thus a number of important working class centres was excluded, like, Kandla (Gujarat) Gwalior and Korba (M.P.), Kota (Rajasthan), Bhadravati (Karnataka) etc. These were included in the 1960 series. The Seal Committee has noted that the number of centres was brought down due to financial constraints.

The sample size of the family was also reduced arbitrarily in 25 centres though the number of workers had gone up in these centres. This was also not done in a scientific manner. While in a small town like Gudur 864 families would be surveyed, in Vishakhapatnam there would be survey of only 216 families. Similarly in Bihar, the number of families to be surveyed would remain the same as in 1980. According to Seal Committee, "on the basis of coefficient of variation, the sample size for some of the centres may have been reduced as compared with the sample size in the 1958-59 survey". According to the data given by the report itself, despite increase in the working class population during the last two

decades, the sample size of the families have been brought down at Doom Dooma, Tinsukia (Assam); Jamshepur Monzhyr-Jamalpur, Noamundi (Bihar); Ahmedabad (Gujarat); Sri Nagar (J&K); Bangalore (Karnataka); Alwaye (Kerala); Balaghat (M.P.); Nagpur, Sholhapur (Maharashtra); Amritsar (Punjab); Ajmer, Jaipur (Rajasthan), Coimbatore, Madras, Madurai (Tamilnadu); Kanpur, Varanashi (U.P.) Asansol, Darjeeling, Howrah, Jalpaiguri (West Bengal) and Delhi.

The Seal Committee has not taken into account the black market prices in the statutory rationed areas while compiling the price data. This is an open violation of the decisions of the ILO Conference which categorically suggested to collect black market prices wherever prevalent. The Labour Bureau had also stated that they were collecting blackmarket prices. But this was not done as per the directive of the Government. This was obviously not done to keep the index figures low.

The experience of the workers about fair price shops is that the supply of commodities are generally not available. But they create an impression that the goods are supplied at cheaper rates. The employers use this mechanism of fair price shops to supply wrong price data, while the workers continue to purchase the commodities at black market prices or higher prices elsewhere.

The Seal Committee has also ignored the fact the quality of the edibles always deteriorated with rise in prices. The recommendation to continue the present practice of compiling the index on rationed commodities without taking into account the quality differences would only keep the index depressed.

The collection of data on house rent also is faulty. At present only the old houses are taken into consideration for collection of data. Although the Seal Committee has suggested annual survey to find out rent for newly constructed houses, the correct datas are not collected where Rent Control Acts are applicable. Since the landlords do not adhere to the Rent Control Act, the real rise in house rents will not be reflected in the index.

Regarding the clothing items the Seal Committee states, "In centres where the well known mills have opened their shops, the price index in clothing may be compiled on the basis of prices collected from these retail shops". It is known that the workers do not necessarily purchase their clothings from the particular mill retail shops. They make their purchases from the general markets. Moreover, the mill retail shops manipulate the stocks and keep certain stocks only for the purpose of collection of data for the price index. Thus, the directive to collect prices only from the mill retail shops would only perpetuate the existing malpractices and will not reflect the prices of clothing actually consumed by the workers. The Expert Committee on Bombay Price Index headed by Prof. Lakdawala also noted

this shortcomings of the data collection from the mill retail shops.

The same faulty procedure has been adopted with regard to the prices of handloom products. The Committee has recommended collection of the price data from the handloom co-operatives. But the workers do not necessarily make purchases from the co-operatives. Therefore, the real prices of the handloom products are not reflected in the index.

Apart from above, another drawback in compilation of price index is price collection machinery itself. The report of the Committee has itself admitted that the price collectors do not visit the second shop for want of time and repeat the prices collected in the first shop. This tantamounts to giving concocted report not based on reality. The report also admits that the quality of price collection is poor and attributes it to the lack of proper supervision. The price supervisors do not visit the markets even for once in a month as required under the instructions of the Labour Bureau. This is because of their pre-occupation with their regular work. The price collectors are generally, State Government employees and they are given half a day off per week for this work. For this they are paid a pittance of honourariums of Rs. 45 per month and a travelling allowance of only Rs. 5 to Rs. 10. The Seal Committee has rejected the Rath Committee's recommendations for full time trained price collectors.

The consumption of liquor by the workers cannot be ignored by the price collecting authorities. The Committee has also taken note of view that "Consumer Price Index Numbers should reflect change in prices of all goods and services which are reported in consumption and no distinction should be made between the commodities as essential and non-essential" (Page 32). Yet the Committee recommended, "If prohibition is introduced during the lifetime of the Consumer Price Index Series, after the base period, liquor should be excluded altogether from the index and price charged for any illegal sale should not be considered. The weight of liquor should be pro-rata distributed to all the other items in the index". One should note that if prohibition is introduced the prices of liquor will go up much faster than all other items of consumption!

The Seal Committee has changed the weightage diagram arbitrarily against the interest of the workers. Inclusion of durable items like TV in the price collection schedule will act as a wage depressor; because such items are priced high in the beginning. As time wears on, the prices start falling. So, where every item of daily necessity is getting costlier, the Consumer Price Index Numbers will show a different picture if there is fall in the prices of durable items due to market conditions.

The automatic linking of D.A. with Price Index has come to stay. It is therefore necessary that the system of collection of prices and the compilation is done in co-operation with the organised labour, as otherwise the mechanism will continue to be used to fraudulently depress the wages of the workers. What

objection can be there now when the Government is preparing big schemes for employees' participation in management? The workers cannot be deprived of the right to get the real Dearness Allowance in commensurate with the real prices, nor can they be deprived of the right to be associated with the price collection and compilation machinery that affects their emoluments.

Hence, CITU rejects the recommendations of the Seal Committee and demands of the Government to drop the idea of a new series and convene meetings with the Central Trade Unions to discuss the recommendations of both the Rath Committee and Seal Committee to correct the existing series and malpractices.

Bank Employees' Struggle

THE Central Committee of the Bank Employees' Federation of India in its meeting held at Delhi on April 16 and 17 reviewed the developments regarding negotiations of its charter of demands. In view of the black agreement arrived at with the AIBEA-NCBE on September 8, 1983, the Indian Banks Association and the Government have been maintaining silence regarding BEFI'S participation in the negotiations.

It was revealed that on similar lines as in LIC, the bankers have proposed dearness allowance at Rs. 1.30 per point in sharp contrast to BEFI'S demand for making good the erosion due to price rise. Over and above, the bankers have demanded larger workload; lowering down of retirement age from 58 years to 55 years; enlargement of the voluntary retirement scheme, which obviously has a bearing on the agreement on computerisation; increase in working hours by half an hour; wage cut for late attendance — whatever may be the circumstances; stringent disciplinary actions; minimum one third direct recruitment for promotional posts; changes in the dates of weekly off; withdrawal of city compensatory allowance on transfer to non-CCA areas, etc.

At the same time, the bankers are out with their multi-corner schemes in terms of the notorious 8th September agreement, to introduce various types of sophisticated machines and computerisation of numerous jobs now being manually performed, including operations in clearing houses and clearing sections in every bank.

The meeting decided to bring the danger inherent in the schemes to all bank employees irrespective of affiliations. An all out campaign programme was planned to be carried forward systematically to halt the bankers' game. As per the decisions of the meeting, all units and their constituents are to hold meetings in every bank office to explain the developments to all sections of employees during the period upto May 10. Campaign literatures are to be published in large scale and distributed among the employees. Thereafter, demonstrations to be held in all units and their constituents on May 11 and 17. The meeting also decided to prepare for another strike action if the bankers do not desist from their nefarious games.

New Phase of the Struggle in J.K. Synthetics

SUSTAINED struggle of the J.K. Synthetics workers at Kota, which started as Dharna from February 13, 1984 and then relay hunger strike from 1st May '84 with one day's token strike on 21-3-84 in between, is already affecting the management. This was noted from the fact that in the "Quality circle" meetings which have been started by the management after the duty hours in order to win over some workers by providing sweetmeats/snacks and tea, the sustained agitation has become a subject of discussion.

Equally weary have become those very forces who had broken the six month long struggle of the workers. They are also trying to project that the resistance by the workers is on the wane. Some of them even predicted that very soon an indefinite hunger strike would be announced so that the movement could die down.

Both the management and the strike breakers are feeling uncomfortable under the continued attention of the people about the naked attempt to disrupt a militant trade union which stand exposed to day. Repeated representations from the CITU Centre as well as Samar Mukherjee, M.P. leader of the CPI(M) Group in Parliament and the sustained struggle have also created some pressure on the Rajasthan Govt.

In this background, the executive committees of three unions in the plants jointly met on May 16 and decided to continue the relay hunger strike till June 1, on which date, a jatha of about 20 workers will start on a "Pada Yatra" to Jaipur halting at several places and explaining the genesis of the struggle to the people explaining how the Rajasthan Govt while holding that the retrenchment is illegal have placed the entire repressive strength of the State Govt at the disposal of the J.K. management.

The "Jatha" will reach Jaipur on June 11, when it would court arrest along with the volunteers of the opposition parties who are courting arrest on that day throughout Rajasthan.

Announcing this programme in the gate meeting held on May 17, which was addressed by Nrisingha Chakraborty, Secretary, CITU and Prem Krishan Sharma, General Secretary of Rajasthan State Committee of CITU among others, it was said that the labour laws are being trampled underfoot. The resistance of the workers will continue in a long drawn battle. The programme announces a new phase of movement intended to secure the support of the democratic masses against the 3rd richest monopoly house in India.

State Government Employees Struggle

The National Executive Committee of the All India State Government Employees' Federation, in its meeting held at Delhi on April 16 and 17, decided to step up agitational actions in pursuance of its long pending demands for bonus and interim relief. The other demands include parity of wages with the central public sector employees, D.A. at the Central rate, end to victimisations, withdrawal of all black legislations against the employees, check in price rise, etc.

The meeting decided a programme of mass dharna on May 29 all over India and then go in for one day's strike in the third week of July.

The meeting condemned the Central Government for its economic policies which boosted up the prices of all essential commodities continuously. At the same time the Government refused to accept responsibility to compensate the state government employees for the price rise. This has brought down the wages of the state government employees at the lowest ebb in comparison with those of the Central Government and public sector employees. On the question of bonus, while it has conceded to the principle of bonus to all, only the state government employees have been deprived of the same. While some of the state governments are willing to give bonus, interim relief and D.A. to the employees, they are being refused funds by the Central Government to meet the demands.

Under such circumstances the meeting demanded of the Central Government to shed its discriminatory attitude and make increased allotment to the state governments to enable them to meet the demands of their employees. The exact date of the strike will be decided in the next meeting of the National Executive Committee of the Federation to be held at Bombay on June 10 and 11.

FDGB Delegates Visit CITU

A delegation of the GDR Trade Unions, FDGB visited the Central Office of CITU on April 30. The delegation consisted of Dr. Horst Schneider, member of the National Executive of FDGB and Director of the college of FDGB; Werner Voigt, Head of the section of African, Asian and Latin American countries in the International Department of the National Executive of FDGB and Juergen Maennicke, the Third Secretary in the Embassy of the German Democratic Republic in India, who also acted as the interpreter.

On behalf of CITU, B.T. Ranadive-President, Sushila Gopalan, M.P. Vice President Nrisingha Chakraborty and P.K. Ganguly-Secretaries, Vimala
(Contd. on page 10)

Massive Peace March at Tripura

ON April 24 Agartala witnessed the biggest peace march in recent years. The last peace march was held on October 15, 1982, but the April 24 march surpassed the previous record. People from all parts of the state converged at the capital. The march was organised by the Anti-War Peace Movement Committee. Innumerable processions started flowing in from the morning to the Children's Park.

The huge march started at 2 P.M. after two white doves were released by two children. The procession started with the sky rendering slogans "Down with U.S. imperialism's war machinations," "We want peace, not war". The procession was led by two motor cyclists with two huge white flags. Next followed a big red banner with the slogan "Unite against the number one enemy of the world—the U.S. imperialists". Then followed 50 volunteers in white uniforms. After this were the Chief Minister, Nripen Chakrabarty, the Deputy Chief Minister, Dasarath Deb, the left front chairman, Bhanu Ghosh and other leaders. The procession carried three well decorated tableaux. People from all walks of life joined the procession—workers peasants, doctors, lawyers, artists, letterateurs, tribals, fire brigade workers, Government employees, teachers, students, youth, auto workers, fishermen, leather workers, cinema workers, jute workers, tea garden workers, brick kiln workers, carpenters, building workers, bank and LIC employees, medical representatives, press workers, beedi workers and others. The significant feature of the march was that the women constituted 50% of the procession. The procession marched through the streets of the Capital reverberating with the anti-imperialist slogans and came back to the Children's Park for the meeting. The gigantic size of the procession can be well imagined from the fact that when the head of it came back to the Children's Park, the tail was still there to start.

The rally was addressed by Nripen Chakrabarty, Dasarath Deb and Manik Sarkar. The leaders emphasised that the struggle for peace against war was integrally linked with the struggle for livelihood and democracy. The aim of U.S. imperialism was to destroy the socialist system, democracy and peace. Therefore the Reagan administration was coming forward to target nuclear missiles so that it could dominate the world with its superiority in nuclear armaments. It had been able to instal military bases wherever democracy had been trampled underfoot. It was trying to surround India with military bases at Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. It was trying to dismember the country by conspirating with the divisive and secessionist forces. The speakers pointed to the growing authoritarianism on the part of the Congress(I) Government at the Centre which was trying to gag the voice of democracy at every stage and collaborating with the same divisive forces which were being helped by imperialism to tear apart the unity of the country. To suppress

the organised movement of the working class it had unleashed unprecedented offensives on it by resorting to closures and lockouts. The Government had committed itself to the IMF to strengthen the hands of the monopolists and the multinationals to mount further offensives on the working class. It was compromising with the feudal elements to unleash ruthless exploitation on the peasantry and the agricultural workers. It was making political discriminations against the left front governments and ceaselessly trying to topple the non-Congress(I) Governments. It was proceeding in a planned manner to scuttle all democratic processes and instal a Presidential form of Government. With all its nefarious designs to trample democracy, the government was refusing to raise its accusing finger to the U.S. imperialists for spiralling the arms race and continuously trying to confuse the people by the so called two super power theory. Nripen Chakrabarty and Dasarath Deb urged upon the people to realise the inherent dangers lying in the bourgeois-landlord rule under the Congress(I) and the policies pursued by it. The people must realise that this would be a life and death war between the two systems — imperialism with its policy of war, destruction and domination and socialism with its policy of peace, development and democracy. They said, the power of the people only is supreme. History has proved that it is only the people who through its unfettered unity can bring down the enemies of democracy and the forces of war to the knees. The socialist camp was brought to reality through unremitting struggles of the toiling people led by the working class. The international situation ravaged by the depredations of the U.S. imperialists demands stepping up such united struggles upholding the banner of proletarian internationalism. They reminded the mass that the 24th April Peace March was not the end, but the beginning of the united struggle to halt the war mongering imperialists, to consolidate and broaden the achievements of socialism, to fight for democracy and defeat the designs of the authoritarian centre and compel the Government to pinpoint the U.S. imperialists and play its genuine role as the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement.

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Ranadive—Working Committee member and Sushil Bhattacharjee, M.P. General Secretary of Delhi State CITU were present. Discussions were held on the international situation and efforts to carry forward the struggle for peace against the danger of nuclear war created by the USA. B.T. Ranadive explained the efforts of CITU to bring in the trade unions to wage united struggle for peace as well as against the anti-labour policies of the Govt. of India. The discussions covered various other subjects like participation of working women in trade unions, computerisation and automation, social security measures, etc.

Tripartite Meeting on Workers' Participation in Management

A tripartite meeting on workers' participation in management was called by the Union Labour Ministry on May 25. Before this, the Ministry had two meetings with the representatives of the Central Trade Unions on February 20 and April 7 and also held separate meetings with the representatives of the various managements of the public sectors. The tripartite meeting was called to "confirm" the resolution adopted by the Ministry on December 30, 1983 on the issue.

CITU was represented by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary. The other Central Trade Unions represented were INTUC, AITUC, HMS and BMS. The meeting failed to produce unanimity on several points. The main hitch was on the question of mode of representation of workers in the participative forums. While the non-INTUC trade unions maintained their earlier stand for the democratic method of electing the workers' representatives by secret ballot, the INTUC, the Government and the managements' representatives rejected the idea and stuck to their opinion that the representations should be made on the basis of "consensus" arrived at between the managements and the trade union leaders in the undertakings. And, their idea of such a "consensus" revealed during the course of the arguments, at times heated, that only the recognised unions should be authorised to nominate their representatives in the forums. Although the Labour Secretary, who presided over the meeting, had assured in the previous two meetings that the paragraph on representation would be modified, even redrafted if the trade unions want, the assurance made a volte-face as only the INTUC did not want it. Over and above, the Labour Secretary maintained the Government's earlier stand that neither the present state laws like the Bombay Industrial Relations and M.P. Industrial Relations Acts would be disturbed with regard to giving recognition to unions, nor the scheme will be applied to the undertakings where JCM like bipartite forums are operating.

The non-INTUC trade unions rejected the Government's adamant stand. Arguing on the points, P.K. Ganguly said that the Government's rejection of the proposal of elections made it clear that it wanted to fill the forums only with those who would be towing the Government's line. Utilisation of the notorious acts like BIR and M.P.I.R meant giving arbitrary powers to the patronized unions and the self-installed individual leaders to utilise the participative forums to impose more work loads on the workers and institutionalise the anti-labour policies of the Government under a fake "consensus" of the workers. He asked the question as to why the Government rejected the proposal of elections. He also asked what would be the alternative if

there is no consensus? The replies exposed the Government's motive behind the scheme. The managements' representatives replied that election would pose new problems to the managements since it may produce another set of leaders in the undertakings. So in addition to the set of leaders through the "recognized unions", the managements will have to deal with the elected leaders also. P.K. Ganguly said that the reply confirmed the non-INTUC unions' contention that the so-called "recognized leaders" did not enjoy the support of the majority of workers. On the second question the Labour Secretary replied that in case of absence of consensus, "the Government will force the managements and the workers to arrive at a consensus". The remark of the Labour Secretary gave rise to fresh spurt of arguments. P.K. Ganguly said that it further proved the non-INTUC representatives' contention that the scheme was a fait accompli and the Government is going to utilise force on the workers to only say "yes" to all the points of the resolution. He said that the same pressure was being applied to the non-INTUC trade unions in this tripartite meetings also. Even their suggestion to refer the cases where there was no consensus to this tripartite body was rejected. P.K. Ganguly explained the CITU's stand that workers' participation in the management of industries must be with equal status at all levels including at the Board level with equal rights on question of policy matters and making decisions with regard to sale, purchase, production, pricing, accounts, technology, including the right to hire and fire. The managements' representatives rejected the contention arguing that those were deeply related to the question of policy making which the "Government alone could take in the interest of the country". P.K. Ganguly said that the Government has to function only with the co-operation and confidence of the people and the workers. The workers who are producing the daily necessities are the equal champions for the cause of the country and the people. So if they are not taken as equal partners in the management of industries, no scheme of workers' participation can be successful. Thus the meeting ended without any unanimity at the same points where it started on February 20. CITU, AITUC and BMS recorded their disagreement on the clauses in the resolution. HMS although recorded its similar views in the first session of the meeting was conspicuous by its absence in the second session. As pointed out, the meeting clearly laid bare the Government's motives to utilise force and try to fill up the participative forums by representatives of its patronized unions. All CITU unions must gird up their loins, fight the Government's designs in co-operation with other trade unions and demand representatives in the forums through elections and participation in the managements with equal status.

Observance of May Day

MAY Day this year came in the wake of the world wide observance of the death centenary of Karl Marx. His lessons on proletarian internationalism got added significance in view of the heightened danger of a nuclear war created by the U.S. imperialists and their NATO allies by sabotaging the Geneva peace talks and deploying the new Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in England, W. Germany and Italy. The May Day celebrations conveyed to all sections of workers the great mission to save mankind from the barbarity of the new imperialist slaughter the USA is preparing with its savage vengeance against the socialist system and its frenzy for global domination. Simultaneously, it focused to the working class the deepening crises of the capitalist planning in India, the mounting offensives of lockouts, closures and retrenchments, and the consistent attempts of the Congress(I) Government to submerge the democratic values under its growing authoritarianism. The celebrations called upon the working class to further forge ahead with the united struggles to effectively check the offensives and fight for an alternative policy, while at the same time develop the zeal for proletarian internationalism and wage unremitting struggles for peace and expose the zingoist policy of the imperialists headed by the USA.

The CITU centre had specified the slogans, of May Day and sent to all State Committees. The reports of the observance are as follows:

Delhi

At the Central Office of CITU, P. Ramamurti, Vice President, hoisted the red flag in the morning. In his brief speech, he explained the significance of the May Day in the context of the present national and international situation.

In the afternoon a big procession jointly organised by CITU, UTUC and various other trade unions marched from the Ramlila Grounds to Firoz Shah Kotla where a rally was held. The AITUC which had agreed to participate in the joint programme with the joint resolution, however withdrew at the last moment declining to criticise the anti-labour policies of the Government and held a separate rally. The rally at Firoz Shah Kotla grounds was addressed among others by P. Ramamurti, Jogendra Sharma from CITU, Pratul Chowdhury from UTUC, R.P. Manchanda from LIC and others.

West Bengal

In the morning the red flag was hoisted at the W. Bengal State CITU Office by Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU. In the afternoon, a huge rally was jointly organised at Shaheed Minar, Calcutta by CITU, AITUC, TUCC, UTUC, HMS, 12th July Committee, Bank and Mercantile Emplo-

yees Federation and others. The rally was presided over by Ranen Sen of AITUC. Moving the main resolution Manoranjan Roy, General Secretary of the W. Bengal State CITU, pinpointed the Reagan administration for bringing the world on the brink of a nuclear devastation. He called upon the workers to intensify the struggle for peace and defence of socialism. He also made a scathing attack on the anti-labour policies of the Central Govt. for launching the offensives of lockouts and closures on the workers and urged for further developing the united struggles for an alternative change. Among others who spoke were Nikhil Das (UTUC), Prashanta Das Gupta (TUCC), Arabinda Ghosh (12th July Committee) Paritosh Banerjee (HMS), Indrajit Gupta (AITUC), Md. Amin (CITU), Kedar Bhattacharjee (Mercantile Federation), etc. Rallies and demonstrations were also held all over the state by various industrial unions.

Tripura

A big rally was held at Agartala preceded by a procession. The rally was jointly organised by CITU, 6th February Committee, Co-ordination Committee of Unions, Teachers' and Bank Employees' Association and other trade unions. The meeting was addressed by Dasarath Deb, the Education Minister of the left front Government, Chitta Chanda of CITU, Manik Sarkar of 6th February Committee, Khagen Chakraborty of the Teachers' Association and others. The rally resolved to step up the struggles against the danger of war. It also resolved to mobilise large number of people to participate in the programme, of mass dharna to be staged on May 10 against the discriminatory and anti-people policies of the Central Government.

At Belonia: A six thousand strong peace march, the biggest in recent times, was taken out at Belonia in South Tripura on the May Day, which culminated in a rally at the BKI grounds. The procession was joined by people of all sections — workers, peasants the tribals, women, youth, students, lawyers, doctors, nursers, teachers, litterateurs and others. The rally was presided over by Badal Chowdhury, the Minister of Agriculture, Tripura. Addressing the rally, Nripen Chakraborty, the Chief Minister pointed to the war designs of the Reagan administration to destroy the socialist system and dominate the world. He said that similar vain attempts were made by the fascist Hitler also who himself was vanquished. The Soviet power and the strength of people's united fight can similarly smash the war manoeuvrings of the U.S. imperialists also.

Kerala

CITU, AITUC and other opposition trade unions jointly observed May Day in the state. Big proces-

sions and rallies were held in Trivandrum and other parts of the state. In the capital and other parts of the states most of shops, business establishments and newspaper offices remained closed for the day. Roads were decorated with red flags and buntings.

Karnataka

At Bangalore the workers took out processions and held rallies and pledged for developing united struggles. May Day was declared as paid holiday at Karnataka.

In the Kolar Gold Fields the Bharat Gold Mines Employees' Union (CITU) took out a one thousand strong cycle procession with red flags and went round the main streets in the industrial areas of Marikuppam, Champion, Nundydroog, BEML Nagar, Robertsonpet and Andersonpet, besides the Kolar Gold Field areas. The procession was led by S. Savaridoss, the General Secretary and T.S. Mani, the Vice President of the union. Meetings and cultural programmes were also held at various places.

Tamilnadu

May Day was observed all over the state with militant demonstrations, mass rallies and public meetings. Flags were hoisted over the factory gates.

At Madras, the AITUC having refused to hold joint rally, the CITU organised a massive procession along with other trade unions which was joined by a large number of women workers. The procession started from Mint Junction and culminated in a mass meeting at Tondiarpet which was presided over by S.T. Shanmuham and addressed by Mythily Sivaraman, S.P. Agathialingam, J.L. Vincent, T. Nandagopal and others.

At Coimbatore however AITUC participated in the joint procession with CITU and other trade unions. The public meeting was addressed by N. Sankarayya, MLA and others. In Madurai also CITU, AITUC, and the employees of bank, insurance, P&T, NGOs teachers, etc organised a joint procession and public meeting. At Trippur where about twenty thousand hosiery workers are on strike, CITU and AITUC organised a joint procession and rally which was addressed by V.P. Chintan and others.

Andhra Pradesh

The day was observed in all the industrial centres by holding processions and meetings. A huge public meeting was organised at the Subrahmanya Maidan at Rajahamundri jointly by CPI(M) and 16 trade unions affiliated to CITU. The meeting was presided over by B. B. Naidu and addressed among others by G. S. Balajidas, District Secretary of CPI (M) and Vice President of the State CITU, N. Nageshwar Rao, T. S. Prakash; P. Mutharao, etc. The meeting was preceded by a procession joined by more than 1000 workers from various sectors. 150 red shirt voluntee-

ers and 100 women workers with red sarees marched in front of the procession with red flags and banners. The marchers shouted slogans like "Down with the U.S. war mongers", "We want peace", "Down with NSA and ESMA", "Control price rice", "Nationalise monopoly houses", etc. Red flags were hoisted and meetings were held also at industrial centres like Dowlaiswaram, ILTD, Alcot Gardens, Jampeta, Gopalannagar, Lime Kiln and other places. All the rickshaw and bus stands, fort gate and the main road were decorated with red flags and festoons.

Bihar

Under the banner of the Coordination Committee of Unions and Associations thousands of workers consisting of 19 unions of the private sectors, public sectors and central and state Government employees marched past the thoroughfares of Patna with red flags and banners and assembled at the LIC Office, where a rally was held under the presidentship of Deonath Singh, President of AIIEA, Patna. Among those who addressed the rally were Yogeshwar Gope, President of the State CITU, Radha Rman Sinha, Convenor of the Co-ordination Committee, etc. The members of B.S.S.R. Union presented cultural songs and dramas.

The Bihar Colliery Kamgarh Union (CITU) organised a big procession and rally at Sudamdih Colliery, which was addressed by S.K. Bakshi, the General Secretary, Netai Mahto, Gagan Banerjee, B.B. Dutta, S.N. Singh, Sitram Mandal, Haradhan Mahto and others.

The Dhanbad District Coordination Committee took out a massive procession and held a rally at Dhanbad which was presided over by I.D. Singh. Among these who spoke were U.S. Chanda, the General Secretary, N.K. Shukla of CITU, B. Prasad, A. Gupta, etc. The rally demanded of the Bihar Government to declare May Day as a paid holiday as in W. Bengal. Gate meetings and cultural programmes were also held by various unions under the D.D.C.C. Organised by Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India (CITU), a 500 strong procession was also taken out a Nirsa which was joined by workers from the several adjacent collieries. The programme ended with cultural programmes.

Goa

The CITU and other unions organised a 1000 strong procession at Ponda which marched for two hours in the thoroughfares and culminated in a rally presided over by Luiza Pereira, Vice President of Goa State CITU. The meeting was addressed among others by Anand Betkilar, President and Sitaram Manzrekar, General Secretary of Goa State CITU, Ahiliya Rangnekar, Secretary of the Maharashtra State Committee of CPI (M) and Prabhakar Donde. Various other meeting were also held at different industrial centres.

May Day celebrations were reported from Himachal Pradesh, U.P., Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Kohima and other places also.

AROUND THE STATES

KARNATAKA

Fourth State Conference

The Fourth Karnataka State Conference of CITU was held at B. Koragappa Rai Nagar, Mangalore from May 14 to 17. It was attended by 416 delegates and 22 observers from the affiliated unions of CITU representing 53,464 members. A significant feature of the conference was the participation by 48 women delegates from Beedi, Plantation, Coffee, Cashewnut and Areca processing and other industries. S. Suryanaryan Rao, President of the State Committee hoisted the red flag, which was followed by the delegates paying homage to the martyrs' column. P. Ramachandra Rao, MLA, Chairman of the Reception Committee read out his welcome address.

Inaugurating the conference, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU warmly greeted the State Committee and the delegates for the great advances made by CITU during the last three years since the third conference, both with regard to struggles as well as in terms of membership. He called upon the delegates to further develop the united struggles against the policies of the Government of India for an alternative change. Fraternal delegates like M. Lokayya Shetty, Convenor of Dakshin Kannada District Coordination Committee of trade unions and H.V. Annantha Subba Rao of AITUC also addressed the conference. Others who greeted the conference were C. Kannan, President of the Kerala State Committee of CITU; A. Jayaram, President, Karnataka Circles Branch of A.I. Postal Employees' Union; Vasudeva Baloor of Karnataka Electricity Board Employees' Union, U. Janardhan Naik, Secretary Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha (AIKS); R. Jayakumar, President, Karnataka State SFI and S. Shivaram, General Secretary Karnataka State DYFI. Messages were sent by the Delhi, Bihar and Tamilnadu State Committees of CITU, A.I. Road Transport Workers' Federation, A.I. Insurance Employees' Association, Karnataka Circle Branch of RMS & MMS Employees' Union and the General Secretary Syndicate Bank Staff Union.

In his general Secretary's report, C. Nanjundappa elaborated the struggles conducted in the State by CITU independently and in conjunction with other trade unions in the context of the present state, national and international situation. The report highlighted the U.S. imperialist inspired danger of a nuclear war and the necessity to intensify the struggle for peace and the defence of socialism. The report further dealt with the crisis in Indian economy and the attempts of the Government and the employers to mount the burdens on the working class and the people. It also highlighted the need

for realignment of the centre-state relations and the achievements of the left front Governments of W. Bengal and Tripura. 55 delegates participated in the report. The conference criticised the attitude of the State Labour Minister in dealing with the problem of the workers. It however called upon the delegates to defeat the attempts of the Congress(I) to return to power in the state by engineering defections to topple the Janata Govt. The conference extended full support to the struggles of the peasants and agricultural workers and decided to organise a general strike and picketing on June 11 in support of their demands. The conference also expressed serious concern over the problems of the working women and the need to organise them. Com BTR also addressed a meeting of the women delegates separately.

The conference adopted resolutions on the danger of war and struggle for peace, on price rise, unemployment, on Sri Lanka Tamils, on the demands of the gold mine workers at KGF, etc.

On May 17 there was a huge colourful procession which marched through the main streets of the city and culminated into a massive public meeting presided over by S. Suryanarayan Rao. Addressing the public meeting, B.T. Ranadive analysed the malady of the capitalist planning in India and said that so long the bourgeois-landlord Government was in power, the problems of the working class and the toiling people cannot be solved. He also warned the State Janata Government for hobnobbing with BJP and urged it for getting the support of the working people if it wanted to be in power. He called upon workers to mobilise all the democratic forces to defeat the authoritarian Congress(I) in the forthcoming Lok Sabha election. Among others who addressed were C. Nanjundappa, V.J.K. Nair, N.K. Upadhyaya, etc. Earlier the conference elected a 105 member State Council and a 33 member State Committee including seven office bearers with S. Suryanarayan Rao as President, and C. Nanjundappa as the General Secretary. Eleven women members were included in the State Council and four in the state committee.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Convention of Construction Workers

The South Region Convention of Construction Workers was held at Vishakhapatnam on May 12 and 13. About eighty delegates from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamilnadu attended the convention. Karnataka could not send any delegate because of the State Conference of CITU. Santi Ghatak, Minister of State for Labour, W. Bengal inaugurated the convention. A presidium consisting of P.R. Subhas Chandra, T.H.K. Warriar and Murthy conducted the proceedings of the convention. The convention was greeted by N. Prasad Rao, General Secretary of the State CITU, S. Gangadhar Reddy, Secretary of the District CITU,

Venugopal of LIC, the Coordination Committee of Working Women of Andhra Pradesh and Dilip Mujumdar, President of Steel Workers' Federation of India.

Santi ghatak pointed the lack of job security of the construction workers, lack of their legal protection, trade union rights, etc. He informed the delegates of the decision of the left front Government to introduce a comprehensive law for the construction workers and absorption of 20 per cent of the workers as permanent employees after the completion of a construction. Debanjan Chakraborty, Convenor of the Coordination Committee of Indian Construction Workers' Union briefed about the efforts made by CITU to organise the construction workers which resulted in the formation of the all India committee and the regional committees in East and South. He proposed to hold state and town level conventions to carry forward the campaign with the workers' demands. Narsingh Rao, Convenor of the Preparatory Committee placed the report on which 15 comrades participated in the discussions. The convention decided to organise the quarry and brick kiln workers also and carry forward the united movements against the managements and the policy of the Government.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU addressing the delegates criticised the policies of the Central Government which squeezed the volume of contract work in India. He referred to the sub-contract system and the connivance of the corrupt Government officials with the contractors for the exploitation of the workers. He urged for developing united movements against such ruthless exploitation. A massive open session was held on the first day which was attended by over 5000 workers. The open session was addressed among others by Santi Ghatak, N. Prasad Rao, S. Gangadhar Reddy and others. The convention formed a Co-ordination Committee of eleven members with Narasingh Rao and P.R. Subhas Chandra as Joint Convenors.

WEST BENGAL

Convention Against Lockouts, Closures

The Burdwan District Committee of CITU organised a convention against lockouts and closures at Asansol May 13. The convention was presided over by Byomkesh Banerjee. Among those who spoke were Haradhan Roy and Ajit Chakraborty - both MLAs, representatives of ABK Metal & Engineering Workers' Union, Burn Standard Union, Chairman of Raniganj Municipality, Chairman, Asansol Municipality, D.S.P. Union, 12th July Committee, LIC Union, Durgapur Metal Workers' Union, NPCC Union, etc. The resolution of convention-placed by Bamapada Mukherjee pinpointed against the anti-labour and pro-monopolist policies of the Central Government which led to the closures of a large number of factories like the Bengal Paper Mills, notice of closure of Burn Standard's Unit, Hindusthan Pilkington Glass Workers, and many others. The

speakers condemned the Government for allowing the monopolists to diversify the funds and causing sickness to the industries throwing thousands of workers out of employment. The convention called upon the workers to intensify the united struggles demanding ban on lockouts and nationalisation of the closed units.

Conference of ABK Metal & Engineering Workers' Union

The 14th Annual Conference of Asansol-Burpur-Kulti Metal and Engineering Workers' Union was held at Burpur from May 20 to 22 which was presided over by C.S. Mukherjee. B.P. Mukherjee placed the Secretary's report on which 37 delegates took part in discussions. Among those who addressed the conference were M.K. Pandhe Secretary, CITU, Jiban Roy, General Secretary of Steel Workers' Federation of India and Sunil Basu Roy, Secretary, W. Bengal State CITU. The conference re-elected C.S. Mukherjee and B.P. Mukherjee as the President and General Secretary, respectively. The conference donated Rs. 2000/- for the CITU fighting fund. On May 22, a mass meeting was held at the Bari Maidan which was also attended by a large number of agricultural workers from the adjoining areas. Among those who addressed the open rally were M.K. Pandhe, C.S. Mukherjee, B.P. Mukherjee, Jiban Roy and Sunil Basu Roy.

ORISSA

Mass Dharna before DRM

As per the programme of the National Campaign Committee of Railwaymen, the Zonal Campaign Committee of Railwaymen at Khurda Road staged mass dharna before the Divisional Railway Manager's office on May 8. About 200 workers including retired employees participated in the dharna and demonstration. A meeting was also held before the DRM's office under the presidency of N.N. Behra who was jailed during the 1974 railway strike. Among those who spoke in the meeting were N.W. Redden of LRSA, M.L. Karmakar of S & T Organisations and U.K. Pradhan and Rajendra Panda from CITU. The meeting resolved to step up the struggles for achievement of the demands.

PUNJAB

Dharna by Railwaymen

300 railway employees of Firojpur Division observed May 8 as Demands Day by staging a dharna before the Divisional Railway Manager's Office at Ludhiana. The programme was chalked out by the National Campaign Committee of Railwaymen demanding wage parity with the public sector employees, release of the D.A. instalments, etc. Addressing the dharna, Joginder Singh, Vice President of AILRSA explained the demands and called upon the workers to wage militant struggles

in protest against the ill designs of the railway administration to reduce the number of railway employees from 20 lakhs to 9 lakhs. Harcharan Singh appealed to all the organisations of the railwaymen including the AIRF to come on the joint platform on NCCR and fight the onslaughts of the Government unitedly.

Rallies for Peace and Harmony

Jointly organised by CPI(M) and CPI and supported by CITU, AITUC and other trade unions, rallies are being held at different places in the state appealing to all sections of the people to fight the divisive and secessionist forces and maintain the unity and integrity of the country. On April 25 a joint demonstration was held at Putlighar which was joined by more than 500 people. On May 8 a joint procession was taken out at Cherhata which culminated in a public meeting addressed by the leaders of CPI(M) and CPI. Defying the threat by the Bhrindanwale group, another mass meeting was organised on May 16 which denounced the mass killings by the extremists and appealed to the people to maintain peace and communal harmony. Another joint rally was organised on May 19 at Batala Road. A procession was taken out from Khanna Mills which culminated in a rally at Kampam Bagh after covering 2 K.Ms. The procession was joined by over 1000 people.

Joint Relay Hunger Strikes

CITU and AITUC conducted a joint programme of actions in the state with the demands for minimum wage, for ESI benefits, against power cuts, etc. The actions included relay hunger strikes in various places from April 28. The programme culminated on the May Day with massive rallies and demonstrations in all the places. The next phase of programme includes one day's strike on May 21.

BIHAR

Electricity Workers to Strike

The state electricity workers have decided to launch a statewide strike from June 9. The call for the strike has been given by the Bihar State Electricity Board Field Workers' Union (CITU) demanding 24 hour supply of electricity in the state, abolition of contract system, full utilisation of production capacity, double the power production, supply of electricity at concessional rates to agriculture and middle and small cottage industries, equal representation of workers in the management, welfare schemes, interim relief, end to nepotism, etc. The union appealed to all workers to maintain unity in the fight for the demands.

Attention of the Readers

Com. Md. Ismail, M.P., Vice President, CITU made a tour of the riot torn areas of Bombay. A report of his tour will be published in the next issue.

Seminar on Welfare Management

IN a seminar held by the National Labour Institute on Welfare Management, there was a panel discussion chaired by Dr. H. Pais, Dean of the Institute, on May 25. Nrisingha Chakraborty, Secretary CITU, Col. Rawat of NFL and Vijay Kumar from Govt. of India were requested to participate in the discussion.

Col. Rawat juxtaposed the "Welfare Management" concept with welfare of the Industry "and this naturally led the discussion to the workers' participation in management. The crucial question was involvement of all workers and therefore the mode of selecting the workers' representatives was discussed thoroughly. Nrisingha Chakraborty said that the only way of selecting the workers' representative should be through secret ballot with the workers' right to recall being assured. Col. Rawat informed the seminar that in the Nangal unit of NFL, when all unions gave in writing that they were prepared for recognition being granted through secret ballot, such a ballot was held. But the INTUC union after losing majority in the secret ballot went back on their earlier commitment and wanted the secret ballot results to be disregarded. He wondered how even secret ballot can help in such circumstances. Nrisingha Chakraborty pointed out that Govt. patronage to INTUC has led to this situation. He said that the concept of workers' involvement demands that their views are to be taken into account in all respects. Without eliciting their opinion as to whom they chose as their representative, any method in an undertaking where more than one union is active, is going to be counter productive.

Some of the participants tried to pinpoint all ills to union rivalry and politicising to trade unions. Nrisingha Chakraborty pointed out that all human beings are essentially political beings and as the Govt elected through secret ballot can work in a democracy, there should be no fear in the healthy democratic solution of union rivalry through secret ballot. Otherwise the managements are likely to face a situation like the Bombay Textile Mills when they dealt with the union which the workers have rejected.

Dr. Pais suggested that an "Independent Industrial Relations Machinery" slightly different from what is suggested by the National Commission on Labour may arbitrate on union disputes including verification. Nrisingha Chakraborty pointed out that in a society which is divided in classes, there cannot be any one absolutely "Independent". Every person is subject to influences and class outlook. Direct employer-employee relationship treating the labour as an equal partner in the enterprise can only solve the problems.

Conference of Fertilizer Workers' Federation

THE Fifth Conference of the Fertilizer Workers' Federation of India was held at Bombay on May 12-14. 137 delegates and 98 observers attended the conference.

The Conference was presided over by R.K. Pandey, President of the Federation. The first session on May 12, was an open session in which a large number of contract workers, many women among them, attended. Prabhakar Sanzgiri, General Secretary, Maharashtra State Committee of CITU, who was the Chairman of Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates.

B.T. Ranadive President, CITU inaugurated the conference. He lucidly described the national and international scene. Referring to the rise of divisive forces, he stated that the working class having an all India outlook can only defeat the divisive forces. Referring to the crisis of the national economy, he stated that the fertilizer industry is an example in which a lot of unproven technology has been transferred to us as a result of which the industry is not able to utilise the installed capacity and import continues. The fall in the purchasing power of the peasantry has also caused slackening of demand. He said that there are many aspects of the industry, the mismanagement, corruption etc which need investigation. He stated that the Govt has now realised that they cannot run the modern sophisticated industry without some degree of co-operation from the workers. Hence they are now talking about "Workers' participation in Management". But even then the workers are not being treated with equal status. He called upon the workers to understand the situation and fight against the anti-labour, anti-people policies of the Cong(I) Govt at the Centre. He specifically asked the Fertilizer workers to espouse the cause of the contract labour most of whom are engaged in perennial nature of job. He concluded by sounding a warning about the growing dangers of nuclear holocaust and called upon the fertilizer workers to join the movement for peace. A representative from HMKP and the local M.L.A. of B.J.P. then addressed the delegates.

Greeting the delegates and observers Nrisingha Chakraborty, Secretary, CITU said that the Federation's role in drawing in INTUC and ultimately securing gains through joint efforts even more than the demands placed by INTUC is laudable. It proves that urge for unity among the workers is growing and this should be utilised to broaden the base of the Federation. The Federation's strict adherence to democratic functioning has also made it possible for people of different political beliefs functioning together. He urged upon the delegates to advance the cause of trade union democracy. He explained the background in which the CITU has given a call for formation of a 'Confederation' in which organisa-

tions pursuing different policies could meet together and through discussions hammer out an alternative national policy for development and act unitedly for enforcement of such a labour policy. He referred to the struggle of the workers of Durgapur unit, which resulted in an agreement for absorption of 150 contract workers as regular workers of FCI. He desired that every plant should take up the issues of contract labour.

N.C. Sharma, General Secretary of the Federation placed his report. There was a thorough debate on the report after which it was unanimously accepted. An executive committee of 26 members was elected unanimously with R.K. Pandey as President and N.C. Sharma as General Secretary. K.C. Haldar, M.P. and S.N. Singh, M.P. were elected as Vice-Presidents of the Federation.

CITU Condemns the Maharashtra Government for the Bhiwandi Riots

B. T. Ranadive, President of CITU, has issued the following Statement on May 21:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses serious concern over the communal holocaust which burst out at Bhiwandi and Bombay and condemns the mass killings and arson inflicted upon the minority communities. It denounces the Vasant Patil Ministry for turning a deaf ear to the public warning given by the political parties regarding the conspiracy of the riots which started with the forcible bundh call by the Shiv Sena. It has thus given an indirect encouragement to the communal forces to create rampage over the minorities.

The successive Congress (I) Ministries have been wooing the Shiv Sena utilising it against the working class movement and for terrorising the minorities. The Ministry's collaboration with the Shiv Sena has been proved by the Chief Minister's refusal to hold judicial enquiry into the killings. It is unable to protect the life and property of the minority community and thereby lost the confidence of the democratic forces.

While demanding the Ministry's resignation, the CITU appeals to the trade union movement and the democratic forces in Maharashtra to maintain unity and fight the attack of the communal forces and protect the minorities in the state.

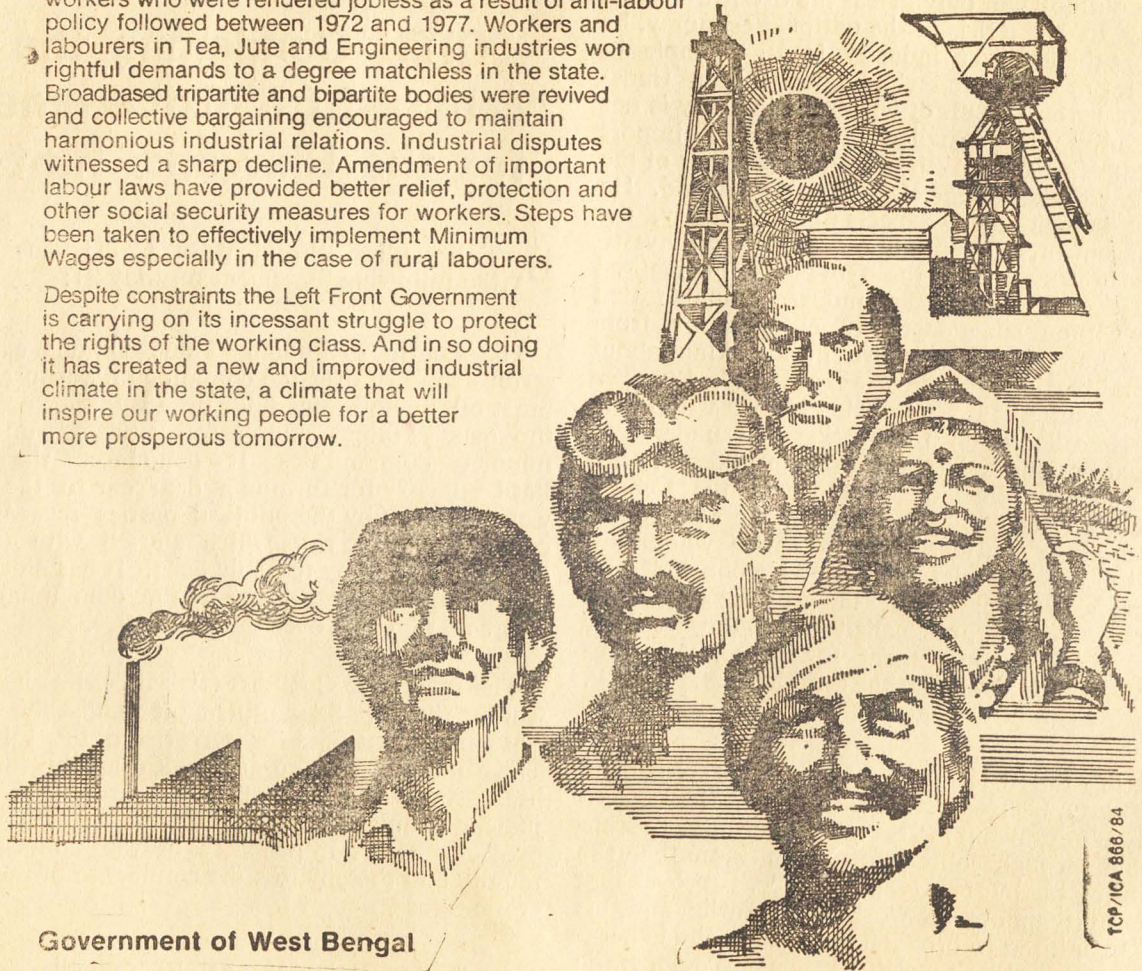
The Left Front Government is ever vigilant to protect the interests of the working class

On historic May Day, the Left Front Government renews its pledge to stand by the working class

Ever since the inception of the Left Front Government in 1977, it has upheld the cause of the toiling masses. The Government sought to promote and ensure trade union rights and legitimate forms of unhindered trade union movements. Police intervention in such matters were stopped and the workers gained self-confidence and self-respect.

The Left Front Government re-instated almost all those workers who were rendered jobless as a result of anti-labour policy followed between 1972 and 1977. Workers and labourers in Tea, Jute and Engineering industries won rightful demands to a degree matchless in the state. Broadbased tripartite and bipartite bodies were revived and collective bargaining encouraged to maintain harmonious industrial relations. Industrial disputes witnessed a sharp decline. Amendment of important labour laws have provided better relief, protection and other social security measures for workers. Steps have been taken to effectively implement Minimum Wages especially in the case of rural labourers.

Despite constraints the Left Front Government is carrying on its incessant struggle to protect the rights of the working class. And in so doing it has created a new and improved industrial climate in the state, a climate that will inspire our working people for a better more prosperous tomorrow.



Government of West Bengal

TCP/ICA 668/84

Huge Rally at Calcutta

APRIL 10 witnessed a huge women's rally at Shaheed Minar, Calcutta. The rally was organised by the Ganatantrik Mahila Samity (AIDWA) in pursuance its 12-point charter of demands to the Central Government. The demands included the right to education and right to work to be incorporated as fundamental rights in the constitution, equal pay for equal work, banning of lockouts and closures, implementation of the Maternity Benefit and Plantation Labour Acts, Amendment and implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act, supply of 14 essential items of moderate prices through the ration shops, etc.

The rally was joined by women by all sections from all the districts of W. Bengal, who started pouring in the city from one day before. Working women from the mines in Asansole and Raniganj, from the plantation in the Darjeeling District, agricultural women workers from Cooch Behar, Adivasi Santhal women from Birbhum and teachers, nursers and office employees from every department converged at Shaheed Minar to demonstrate their determination to carry forward the struggles in pursuance of the demands.

Addressing the rally, Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of W. Bengal said that women constitute fifty per cent of the exploited sections of the society. Without participation of women in the struggles no democratic movement can be successful. He cited the example of mass participation of women in the national movement against the British rulers. He said that the same participation is required for emancipation of women from the bourgeois-landlord rule under the present woman Prime Minister. Explaining the present situation in W. Bengal and the efforts made by the left front Government for the benefit of the women and the other labouring masses, he said that the women's movement and the democratic movement of the people must merge together and carry forward the struggle for an alternative change in the policy of the Congress (I) Government of the Centre.

Kanak Mukherjee, President of the Ganatantrik Mahila Samity presented the 12-point charter of demands to the Chief Minister for forwarding it to the Prime Minister. Among others who addressed the rally were Shyamali Gupta, General Secretary of Ganatantrik Mahila Samity and Nirupama Chatterjee, Minister of Relief and Rehabilitation, W. Bengal.

Dharna by Delhi Women

The Janawadi Mahila Samity, Delhi staged a

dharna before the Prime Minister's residence on April 12. The dharna was staged at the call of the All India Democratic Women's Association demanding immediate introduction of the Dowry Amendment Bill. A procession of about 400 women started from the Boat Club and reached the Prime Minister's place to stage in dharna. A delegation consisting of Sushila Gopalan, M.P., General Secretary of AIDWA, Rita Karat and others submitted the memorandum demanding immediate introduction of the Bill. Addressing the dharna, Sushila Gopalan said that despite repeated assurances, the Government had kept the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee of the Parliament regarding amendment of the Anti-Dowry Act in cold storage. The Government's inaction had given flip to the dowry crazy in-laws to commit ghastly murders of the innocent brides, which have been on the increase, particularly in the capital. She expressed indignation at the murders which were allegedly being done in connivance with the police and then the criminals were set free. She denounced the attitude of the Government which was headed by a woman Prime Minister and urged upon the women to step up their struggles till their demands are achieved.

Dharna by Dahej Virodhi Chetna Manch

Following the dharna by the Janavadi Mahila Samity, another dharna was organised by the Dahej Virodhi Chetna Manch at Boat Club on April 27. About 250 women, including representatives of Janavadi Mahila Samity participated in the dharna. A delegation consisting of Sushila Gopalan and Vimala Ranavide (AIDWA), Vimala Farooqui and Pramila Lumba (NFIW), Pramila Dandavate (Mahila Dakshata Samity), Kunti Sondhi (AIWC), Mary Khemchand (YWCA) and Ambika Soni (Cong-S) met the Prime Minister and submitted a memorandum demanding immediate introduction of the Dowry Amendment Bill. The Prime Minister assured the delegation that the Bill was going to be introduced in the current session of the Parliament. During the course of discussions, the delegation also opposed the Sikh Personal Law and demanded a common civil code for women of all communities.

Anti-Dowry Bill introduced: At last, on May 9, the last day of the Lok Sabha, the Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Bill was introduced by P. Shiv Shankar, the Union Energy Minister. The Bill however did not meet the aspirations and demands of women. Sushila Gopalan (CPI-M), Gita Mukherjee (CPI) and Pramila Dandavate (Janata) described the Bill as a mockery against dowry prohibition.

Government's Interference in National Safety Council

AN extraordinary situation developed in the National Safety Council when the Government of India proposed a change in the Chairman of the Council and wrote separate letters to the members of the Board of Governors seeking their opinion on the proposed change.

The meeting of the Board of Governors held in November last recommended that the present Chairman Shri Harish Mahindra should continue. The Government

of India however proposed that Shri Garware, a wellknown Bombay industrialist should be the chairman of the council. The Government of India even went to the extent of fixing the time limit to the replies with a view to take a decision unilaterally.

The special meeting of the Board of Governors in its meeting held in New Delhi on 19th May expressed its regret at the step of the Union Ministry of

Labour and reiterated its decision regarding the nomination of the chairman.

The meeting also decided that if there is change in the chairman, the post should be given to the representative of the workers as per convention in the National Safety Council.

The proposal for a change in the chairmanship was opposed in view of the forthcoming International Seminar on Industrial Safety to be held in New Delhi in November next.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU criticised the gross interference of the Government of India in the functioning of the National Safety Council.

It is learnt that change in the chairmanship was being proposed at the instance of Shri Rajiv Gandhi.

Teleprinter Workers' Donation to CITU

A well attended gate meeting was held on 30th April at Hindusthan Teleprinters factory at Guindy, Madras, on behalf of Hindusthan Teleprinters' Employees Union.

M. K. Pandhe addressing the meeting reviewed the achievement of the public sector employees' movement and how the united movement of the working class resulted in defeating the BPE guidelines. He also gave an outline of the negotiations in the Tripartite Committee on DA and emphasised the need for organised movement to get a higher rate of D.A.

In the meeting M. K. Pandhe was garlanded with currency notes worth Rs. 671. He announced that the amount will be donated to the CITU fighting fund.

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	Dec. 1983	Jan. 1984	Feb. 1984				
Andhra Pradesh				Bhilwara ('66)	329	334	338
Gudur	486	503	504	Kothagudem ('66)	349	346	348
Guntur	595	610	595	Rourkela ('66)	370	374	370
Hyderabad	558	554	557	All India ('49)	679	684	682
				All India ('60)	559	563	561
Assam				Karnataka			
Digboi	537	553	547	Ammathi	567	576	593
Doom Dooma	467	466	460	Bangalore	625	637	637
Labac	431	442	442	Chikamagalur	570	586	595
Mariani	484	492	488	Kolar G.F.	539	545	582
Rangapara	456	474	474	Kerala			
Bihar				Alleppey	634	629	631
Jamshedpur	526	514	507	Alwaye	614	609	611
Jharia	527	527	517	Mundakayam	577	589	591
Kodarma	584	580	579	Madhya Pradesh			
Monghyr	570	680	583	Balaghat	574	566	574
Noamundi	542	537	523	Bhopal	598	579	595
Gujarat				Gwalior	551	557	553
Ahmedabad	557	562	554	Indore	588	581	580
Bhavanagar	566	568	568	Maharashtra			
Haryana				Bombay	569	576	578
Yamunanagar	558	556	552	Nagpur	569	571	561
J. & K.				Sholapur	607	611	600
Srinagar	579	604	605	Orissa			
Rajasthan				Barbil	519	516	510
Ajmer	543	551	552	Sambalpur	572	576	584
Jaipur	570	581	574	Punjab			
U.P.				Amritsar	540	544	556
Kanpur	536	545	539	Tamil Nadu			
Saharanpur	547	559	560	Madras	562	558	555
Varanasi	629	631	637	Coimbatore	606	606	603
Delhi Territory	561	560	559	Coonoor	630	641	640
Other Centres				Madurai	646	640	631
Berhampur ('49)	775	754	754	West Bengal			
Cuttack ('49)	726	724	717	Asansol	540	537	539
Jabalpur ('49)	751	734	731	Calcutta	525	525	523
Beawar ('51-52)	638	645	640	Darjeeling	469	463	459
Tripura ('61)	474	489	492	Howrah	501	595	492
Goa ('66)	389	401	406	Jalpaiguri	430	442	438
H.P. ('65)	398	399	399	Raniganj	526	517	599
Bhilai ('66)	398	365	367				
Chhindawara ('66)	302	303	302				

(Figure in bracket indicate base year)

Introduce Employer-Employee Relationship in Brick-Kilns

THE organised labour had been repeatedly demanding implementation of the labour laws in brick-kilns, particularly in the Northern region where quite a large number of workmen are employed for 8 months a year. When the Government notified implementation of the labour laws in 1983 the kiln-owners declared illegal lock-out, by not starting the Kilns in 83-84 season.

Since, then the brick-kiln owners have been pressurising the Government for exemption of brick-kilns from labour laws. The Government have set up a Tripartite Committee to consider, the applicability of certain labour laws to the brick-kiln industry. The Kiln-owners have demanded a separate law for regulating working conditions of the workers in this industry keeping in view the special conditions obtaining therein. The CITU is represented in this committee by Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary.

In the first meeting held on May 14, the management pleaded that section 11 to 17 of the Factories Act do not relate to the brick-kiln industry. They pleaded that they employ male labour only. The workers with a view to earning more bring in their wives and children. As the wages are fixed on piece-rate basis, the kiln-owners do not stand in the way of the entire family earning for themselves. They also pleaded that as the workers work in the open, the management have permitted them to work in the early morning hours say 4 A.M. to 8 A.M. or 9 A.M. and 5 to 7 or 8 P.M. in the night. Their total work period is not more than 8 hours. It is only spread over. If the Factories Act is implemented in full, such spread over is not permissible and therefore it would increase the hardship on the workers themselves. They also pleaded that as no machinery are used in manufacture of bricks and sufficient care is taken by the Firemen, safety precautions are not required. Whatever little is necessary is already being supplied to them on the basis of practical experience.

Nrisingha Chakrabarty pointed out that the objections to implementation of the labour laws by the brick-kiln owners arise out of the fact that they refuse to establish employer-employee relationship and employ the workers on a contract basis through contractors or their muscle men. Once they introduce the employer-employee relationship it can be seen that implementation of the labour laws is no problem for the industry as otherwise these could not have been implemented in Tripura, where the State Government has already established certain kilns in the public sector. He also stated that the National Labour Institute has already conducted a study on the subject and their papers will reveal that the labour laws can be implemented in the brick-kiln industry. He pointed out that it was wrong on the part of the kiln-owners to continue to employ labour in sub-human conditions. They must provide atleast a shed for the workers for moulding bricks. The

kilns are permanent, the offices of the management are permanent and Supervisory Staff are also permanent, but the labour employed for manufacture of bricks are all contract labourers for whom no provisions are made and the existing labour laws are being violated. This can not continue. He opposed the idea of the total duty hours being spread upto 14 hrs. as that would go against the spirit of ILO Convention no. 1 which has already been ratified by Government of India. The management must provide for 8 hours work within the maximum permissible period of 10½ hrs., providing sheds for the workers to mould bricks and other measures to carry on their work. This view was generally supported by the INTUC and BMS representatives, who were present in the meeting.

On the question of minimum wages the management plea were (1) the advances given to the workmen should be realised from the workers wages and (2) the wage rate should be fixed every year before starting the season so that the work continues uninterrupted throughout the season.

Nrisingha Chakrabarty pointed out that generally piece-rate system is prevalent in the industry which has been fixed on an adhoc basis, without any relation to the normal productive capacity of 8 man hours and the minimum wage rates prevalent in each states. He said that according to the study made earlier the rates for brick moulding were fixed at Rs. 14 to Rs. 15 per thousand while bricks were being sold at Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 per thousand. This industry is thriving at the cost of sweated labour. Besides there is no provision for retention wages or fall back wages during the lean period when there is no work. If the piece rate of wages is calculated taking into account the normal production in 8 man hrs., there would be no objection to the wages being fixed in the beginning of the season, subject to the stipulation that in case of increase in the Consumer Price Index Number or increase in the sale rate of bricks in the market, the workers are assured of an adequate increase in their wages. As far as the advances are concerned the workers are forced to take some money in advance in order to settle the debts before they move out to the brick-kilns. But what is done later is shameful. Because in most of the cases the workers are paid a pittance as wages during the period they work and their accounts are settled at the end of the season which means that the employers utilise the unpaid wages of the workers as capital for earning profits. The representatives of the management tried to say that even during the work they give more advances for which they do not charge any interest. The management, however, agreed to issue appointment letters to the workmen, stipulate their wages etc. as fixed in the beginning of the season and also pay monthly wages to them.

The meeting was adjourned to May 30 for further discussion.

Increased Efforts to Mobilise Railwaymen

EFFORTS to mobilise railwaymen have been increased. The NCCR had given a call to observe 27th February '84 as "Railwaymen's Unity Day" and also to hold Dharnas on 8th May '84 in all Divisions. The AIRF had given a call for observing Demands Day on March 6 and April 24, along with other Central Govt Employees. Reports indicate that more and more railwaymen are taking part in the programmes.

The programme on March 6, was observed by way of "Dharnas" in all the branches of Central Railway. In Bombay over a thousand workers participated in the programme. This was followed up by mass demonstrations on March 15, throughout the railways. Over 5000 workers participated in the programme at Bombay. According to available reports the Dharna in Northern Railway was observed in Delhi and Lucknow Divisions only. On April 24, massive demonstrations were held in all main centres of Central Railway. The programme at Bombay was attended by over 10,000 workers.

The programme of NCCR of holding Dharnas on May 8 was also enthusiastically participated. In Northern Railway Dharnas were held at Firozpur (About 200), Delhi, Allahabad, Moradabad and Lucknow. In Eastern, South Eastern, North Eastern and North Frontier (barring only one division) Dharnas were held in all Divisions.

Railwaymen's Struggle for Communal Harmony; Meetings, Conference Etc.

All organisations of railwaymen in Ferozpur Division are taking active interest in propagating for communal harmony. For ten days there was intense campaign in Ludhiana in which meetings were held in different parts of the railway colony and work spots. On April 10, this programme culminated in a rally in which over 1500 workers including 50 women participated. The civil authorities did not permit the rally to be held in the town area and as such the rally went round the railway colony area.

Another programme has been drawn up by 20 organisations of Central and State Govt. employees to observe June 4, 1984 as "Peace and Communal Harmony Day" which will be preceded by a campaign for a fortnight starting from 20th May 84.

Annual Meeting of the Commercial Clerks' Association of SE Rly was held at Shalimar on May 5-6, 1984. Samar Mukherjee, MP, General Secretary-CITU, addressed the open session of the conference.

Annual Conference of All India Canteen Emp-

loyees' Federation was held at Madras on May 12-13, 1984 with tremendous enthusiasm. Through persistent efforts over 14000 canteen employees have been treated as Railway employees. The struggle for similar treatment to non-statutory canteens is continuing. Basudev Achariya M.P., and H.K. Banerjee have been re-elected as the President and General Secretary of the Federation.

Palghat Divisional Conference of Dakshin Railway Employees' union was held at Cannanore on May 19 & 20, 1984.

Conferences of Gangmen were held at Amla and Betul, Central Railway, under the auspices of National Railway Mazdoor Union (AIRF)

Construction Workers Fight For Confirmation

Although a circular to create 40 per cent permanent construction Reserve Posts has been issued long back, the authorities have not implemented the same so far. The construction workers of NF Rly have taken up the question seriously and Samar Mukherjee, M.P. has raised the issue to the Railway Minister and also to the State Minister for Railways. The General Manager (Construction), NF Rly was asked to meet the leaders of the Association and finalise the issue. It is now understood that the said G.M. has taken the plea that open line casual labour should also be considered for confirmation against these posts. He also desired that the Railway Board should negotiate. Samar Mukherjee has taken up the issue once again.

Supreme Court Hearing Against 14 (11)

Hearing on the petitions against victimisation under Rule 14 (ii) in 91 cases of Northern, North Eastern, Eastern and South Central railways has been started in a bench presided over by the Chief Justice. Arguments on behalf of the petitioners and reply by the Railway Authorities are over. Rebuttal argument on behalf of the victimised railwaymen (Loco Running Staff) has just started and the case is now posted to July 24 for final hearing. On behalf of the victimised railway workers senior Advocates M.K. Ramamurti, K.K. Venugopal, Bar-at-Law Somnath Chatterjee, Advocates J. Ramamurti, R. Vaigai, Umesh Mishra and H.K. Puri etc. have appeared. R.K. Garg Senior Advocate has appeared as an Intervenor with the permission of the court.

International Struggles

The Easter holidays during the third week of April were marked by massive peace demonstrations in the European Countries particularly in the FRG, Great Britain and Italy where the USA has deployed the new nuclear first strike weapons. Following are the reports:

FRG

The West German Peace Movement organised huge demonstrations in the main cities of FRG. The main slogan at Mutlangen where two batteries of Pershing-2 have been deployed targetted against the Soviet Union and other East European socialist countries, was "End the agreement on the stationing of the new US nuclear missiles". Thousands took part in the 60 Km peace March at Ruhr which passed through the most industrialised towns of Duisburg, Dortmund and others. Along with the red flags of the trade unions combined the violet flags of the Christian peace movement. The banners called for "Jobs and not bombs" and "Education and not arms spending". Several thousand protesters marched to the Pershing-2 missile base near Stuttgart and surrounded the US munition depot outside Frankfurt. The march followed a night of clashes with the police. The police used water cannons to disperse the crowd and the demonstrators threw molotov cocktails at the police.

Over 1.3 lakh W. German shipyard workers marched to Bonn's Hafgarten Square protesting against super armaments and mass unemployment.

Great Britain

A huge peace march after setting off from the Greenham Common airbase, where the nuclear first strike missiles have been based, went past all the major nuclear bases in the South and East of England, and reached the Lakenheath base, near the University of Cambridge, on April 23 where a massive demonstration took place. The march which was organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, brought to the notice of the public the extensive net work of at least 130 military installations on the British soil. The new feature of the peace actions was the participation by a large number of former soldiers and officers.

Italy

April 22 witnessed a fifty thousand strong demonstration in Rome participated by trade unions, political parties and democratic organisations. Shouting the slogans, "For life, peace and disarmament" and "more wheat and less weapons", the citizens yearned for a life in peace without the US nuclear missiles which have been stationed at Comiso, Sicily. After the demonstration, thousands of blue peace balloons were let loose to float over the City.

Denmark

About forty thousand people forming a 4 km.

long line marched through Copenhagen on April 15 protesting against the U. S. plan to deploy Cruise and Pershing missiles in Denmark. Demonstrations took place in 13 other Cities in the Country. Hard pressed by the continuous peace struggles and the opposition, the Danish Parliament on May 11, blocked further payments for the deployment of NATO'S 527 Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in five Western European Countries.

Greece

Committee for International Detente and Peace organised a Peace march from Marathon to Athens protesting against the arms pile up by the USA.

Over 5,000 workers on the shipyards of Skaramangas near Pireus have started a series of strikes demanding wage rise. Similar strike actions were launched by the trolley bus drivers and ticket collectors at Athens.

Australia

About 2,00,000 people demonstrated in the Country on April 15 against the deployment of U.S. Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles. The main rally took place at Sydney where according to police reports, 1,00,000 people took part.

United States

Copper workers at Morenci and Arizona have been on intermittent strikes since July, 1983. The main union at the plant, the United Steel Workers of America organised the strikes against the management's attempts to break the union and force unrealistic concessions. The unions say that victory will come soon as the company has lost 60 million dollars since the strike started.

Belgium

A widespread strike was launched throughout the country on April 3 against the austerity plan started by the Government. The strike was launched by the F.G.T.B. A large number of members of the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions also joined the strike defying their reformist leaders. The austerity move of the Government plans to cut the workers' wages by 2 per cent annually till 1986. A 3.5 per cent cut in civil services will result in the loss of 30,000 jobs. Social security benefits and unemployment benefits are also to be chopped off. Belgium's austerity policy dates back to 1981 since when purchasing power fell by 5 per cent and unemployment rose to 12.5 per cent.

Japan

Five main trade union organisations of the country recently organised a massive rally of over 35,000 workers at Tokyo against the economic policies of the Government. The main resolution of the rally

condemned the rising military expenditure and general militarisation of the country resulting in rise in cost of living and unemployment, the official figure of which has already crossed the figure of 1,700,000. The workers resolved to carry forward the struggle for peace, denounced the plans of the U.S. administration to equip the 9th Fleet with Cruise missiles of the "Tomahawk" variety and demanded a peaceful policy independent of Washington.

Finland

The National Delegation of the Unemployed organised a huge march started from Savukoski in North Finland on March 29 and arrived at Helsinki on April 11. The marchers passed through 30 different places holding rallies and demonstrations, joined by the employed, under-employed and unemployed workers. Unemployment in Finland increased by 1400 in February, 1984 as compared to the same period in 1983. Youth unemployment has reached 11.2 per cent in 1983.

Great Britain

Majority of the schools in England were paralysed when the country's largest Teachers' Union called for strike on May 9 demanding higher wages. The National Teachers' Union and other unions also planned to join the strikes during the summer term which will affect 95 per cent of the schools. The teachers' salaries have fallen by 31 per cent during the last ten years. The Secretary of State for Education and Science admitted that there were large queues of well qualified candidates for jobs and there is likelihood of more disruptions of classes.

Colombia

Organised by the National Federation of Educationists, tens of thousands of teachers went on an indefinite strike from May 8 in the country demanding payment of arrear salaries. The strike affected the study of 3,80,000 pupils.

Spain

Ship building workers in different parts of Spain went on one day's strike on May 11 demanding job security. About 8,000 workers from Galicia, Levante, Cantabria and Andalucia demonstrated on the day before the Shipping Ministry against the Government's plan of restructuring the shipbuilding industry. Under the plan the productive capacity of ship building would be reduced from 8,50,000 tonnes to 500,000 tonnes and 50 per cent of the workers would be laid off.

Argentina

Rail traffic in Argentina was brought to a halt by a nationwide strike of the rail workers on May 9. The strike call was jointly given by four rail workers unions demanding higher wages. Of late, strikes have been frequent in Argentina followed by runaway inflation. Living costs soared up by 87.6 per cent during the first four months of the year. Food prices went up by 100.2 per cent.

Bangladesh

Normal life in Bangladesh was paralysed on April 28 in a nationwide strike called by the Shramik Karmachari Aikya Parishad. Another strike was launched on May 15. The strikes were called in pursuance of the 5-point demands, which included free trade union activities, immediate halt to the de-nationalisation programme of the military ruler, grant of 30 per cent dearness allowance to all employees of public and private sectors, etc. The strike was supported by the 15 and 7 party alliance as well as the militant Chhatra Sangram Parishad, who are spearheading the movement against the Martial Law for restoration of democracy.

South Africa

South Africa's apartheid regime has announced a series of draconian measures to curb down the country's growing trade union movement. The measures were incorporated in the Labour Relations Amendment Bill which was introduced in the all white Parliament without informing anybody outside the Prime Minister's cabinet. The Bill will particularly hit the Black Workers' Unions which launched a series of strike actions since the beginning of the year. Most of the unions have been refused registration.

Peru

Peru was paralysed by a general strike on March 22 jointly called by all the trade union organisations protesting against the economic policies of the Govt. The police swooped on the striking demonstrators in front of the Head Qrs. of the Peruvian General Confederation of Labour at Lima with truncheons, tear gas, pistol and machine-gun fire. Among those injured, was the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Jorge del Prado. The citizens were arrested without warrant, and houses were searched. But none of these repressive measures dampened the spirit of the workers. In a manifesto presented to the people, the unions condemned the Government for surrendering to the IMF which augmented the infiltration of foreign capital and multi-nationals in the country, destroyed the Peruvian industry and agriculture and resulted in closure of many factories and retrenchment of large number of workers. The unions warned the Government of a 72 hour strike if it did not change the economic policies and adopt democratic measures.

Erratum

On page 24 of the March issue under the sub-heading "Who is Encircled", the figures quoted about the number of U.S. Military bases and the number of soldiers stationed overseas were not correct. The World Trade Union Movement has now given the correct figures as 2500 military bases and 5,50,000 soldiers respectively. The error is regretted.

—Editor