



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

JANUARY 19 THE RED LETTER DAY

JANUARY 19, 1982 will go down in the annals of the working class struggles in India as a red letter day. The significance lies not on how much percent of the working class participated in the strike, but on the fact for the first time the entire working class, save and except the followers of INTUC, smashed the political barriers and unitedly launched the strike action not merely on economic demands but on political demands as well—against price rise anti-labour policies of the Government,—against the Essential Services Maintenance Act and the National Security Act.

The strike gave new dimensions to the working class movement in the country. Championing the cause of peasantry, the agricultural labourers and the entire people, the working class hit at the basic policies of the Government—pro-feudal, pro-monopolist and pro-multinational, against deficit-financing and inflation, which are responsible for the spiralling prices heaping miseries on the common people and eroding the very basis of the democratic process.

Students, youth, women, middle-class employees, poor peasants and agricultural workers,—all demonstrated their solidarity with the strike. The message of the June 4 Bombay Convention was translated into action paving the way for the left and democratic alternative against the authoritarian regime.

Government as the strike breaker

All the befooling sweet talks of “socialism” were thrown into oblivion and the authoritarian character of the Indira regime laid exposed when it cracked down on the strikers with a savage vengeance. Starting from the eve of strike, over fifty thousands

were arrested till January 19, including twenty thousand in Kerala alone. Acting as a watch dog to protect the interests of the monopolists, the Government unleashed the police-force and the anti-social thugs to beat up the peaceful strikers with the help of Congress (I) and INTUC-hoodlums, cause clashes and disruption and resorted to firings killing at least ten persons, including agricultural labourers.

The spectre of unity in the working class haunted the Government to send secret circulars to the State Governments asking the authorities to take stern actions against the strikers. It asked the A.I.R. and T.V. to speak lies in a Goebbelian manner that the strike was a flop. Bihar Government gave the “Shoot at Sight” orders (the second within a month).

Workers undaunted

But despite the threats of service break and wage cut, despite the warnings of the Prime Minister, Home Minister and Labour Minister, despite invoking of ESMA and NSA and mass scale arrests of leaders and activists and despite deployment of thousands of police and para-military forces, over twelve million workers participated in the strike. The working class and the people of Bihar gave a slap on the Bihar Government by observing a total bundh on January 19. Similar slap was given by the Left and Democratic forces of Kerala to the reactionary and opportunist forces. A lesson for the minority Government indeed.

The Centre warned the West Bengal Government against the bundh call given by the Left Front. Even the High Court Judge issued strictures. But the Chief Minister Comrade Jyoti Basu rightly declared that neither the Union Government nor the courts can come in the way of the struggle by the working class for the preservation of their

democratic rights. In spite of the desperate bid of the Congress (I) hoodlums, the bundh was total in West Bengal.

The strike was complete all over the country in Banks, LIC and GIC. Even the Reserve Banks and the State Banks could not be functioned despite all efforts by the Government; big empty houses ridiculed the massive police force installed in front of the buildings. The strike was widespread in oil installations, Coal, Steel, Ports & Docks, Engineering, Textiles, Pharmaceuticals, Iron Ore, Mangane, Copper mines etc.

Bombay wore a deserted look. Apart from the industrial areas, the busy commodity markets including foodgrains, cotton, metal, bullion, dyes, chemicals, textiles, jewellery etc. were closed. A massive demonstration was given before A.I.R. Pune for broadcasting fake news about the strike.

Reports from Tamilnadu confirm strike was complete in the industrial belts in Madras and all the districts. Coimbatore observed a successful bundh. Transport was affected in the entire state.

Similar reports have been received from Punjab and Haryana. The enraged employers in Haryana concast and Hansi Spinning Mills have terminated the services of all the two thousand workers.

The industrial belts of Ghaziabad, Kanpur, Varansi, Faizabad, Moradabad, etc. in U. P. also reported successful strikes.

Orissa and Rajasthan also were the resemblance of a bundh. Even transport was paralysed. In Orissa all the courts including the Htgh Court were closed.

Various organisations reported strike from Assam, Madhya Pradeh and Gujarat.

Okhla, one of the biggest industrial estates in Delhi reported total strike. In spite of coercion by the police and the INTUC strike-breakers, overwhelming majority of workers joined the strike in other areas like, Lawrence Road, Mayapuri, Wazirpur, Naraina, etc. The two big pharmaceutical units in Okhla viz. Glaxo and Ranbaxy were reported to have downed their shutters.

In spite of about three thousand arrests Andhra Pradesh reported total bundhs in Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Visakhapatanam and other places. As per press reports, the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and erstwhile Union Labour Minister, T. Anjaiah turned out a newsman from his news conference for reporting "unfairly" that the strike had a good response. Seething with anger he remarked that he would have the "erring" journalists jailed.

In the teeth of lathi charge and hundreds of arrests, strike was successful in Mysore, Bangalore, Devangere, Belgaun and other places in Karnataka.

Another remarkable feature of the strike was the participation of the newspaper, and news-agency employees all over country. Excepting a few like the National Herald (founded by Jawaharlal Nehru), no paper came out in the country. Similar was the participation of the university and school teachers. In most of the States all the educational institutions were closed. The State Government employees, as decided earlier, also joined the mainstream in overwhelming numbers in all the States. The Central Government employees, Defence employees and other expressed solidarity. At Delhi a massive rally was held at Boat Club by the Central Government employees during the lunch time.

On the whole, the strike created a tremendous impact on all concerned throughout the country. Press correspondents thronged the press conferences called by the National Campaign Committee. Foreign correspondents of various countries made repeated enquiries at the CITU Office about the strike.

Congratulating the working class in a press statement, the National Campaign Committee called upon all sections of the workers to strengthen the unity achieved through the strike so that more determined struggles can be launched till the demands are acceded to by the Government.

B.T. Ranadive, President and P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU issued a press statement calling upon the working class to carry forward the struggle for an alternative economic policy.

(More reports will be published in the next issue)

CITU Congratulates the Workers for Successful Strike

Com. B.T. Ranadive, President and Com. P. Ramamurti M.P. General Secretary CITU have issued the following statement on January 19 :

THE CITU warmly congratulates the millions of workers through out the country for responding magnificently to the call of the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions and making the one day All-India General Strike today a grand success. Braving the barbarous repression let loose in various Congress (I) ruled states through arrests of our 50 thousand workers, many under NSA, Police lathi-charge, firings and the attacks made by Congress (I) hoodlums in which several workers died, millions of workers have come out in strike and thus has created a history in the annals of the Trade Union move-

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A Motive to Split the Workers

AS announced by Venkataraman, the previous Finance Minister, the Government has decided to split the monolithic Life Insurance Corporation into five independent units, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Era Sezhiyan Committee. The objectives of the split, as stated by him, were to spread life insurance in rural areas, to reshape the industry into more manageable units; to increase operational efficiency; to cut down expenses and to allow an element of healthy competition and to impart a greater degree of dynamism. The bill for this purpose may be introduced in the coming session.

While speaking out so many laudable objectives, not a word has been uttered for the benefit of the lakhs of policyholders.

Let us critically analyse the objectives doled out by the Finance Minister.

Rural Development :- How the the splitting will help the process of rural development has not been explained. In reality, the development of life insurance in rural areas has suffered because of the policy of the Government itself not to open more branches in the rural areas with adequate powers and functions. In fact, several existing branches have been closed down and proposals to open new divisions have been shelved for years together. Development of busines in rural areas could take place only if the bank pattern of opening more brances with adequate powers and functions is followed. Since, under the present monolithic structure, the more developed areas subsidise the economically backward areas, the split would stop this system and the backward areas

would suffer, resulting in unequal corporations from the point of view of business and operational potential.

Manageable units and Operational efficiency:- The talk of "manageable unit" is a hoax. With this, an attempt is being made to carry the impression that because of its monolithic structure, the LIC has become unwieldy and inefficient. This is a travesty of truth. The giant monolithic State Bank of India, also a public sector financial unit is still going strong, opening branches one after another in the rural areas. At present it is having 5,546 branches with 1,48,000 employees, whereas LIC is the having only 800 branches with 44,000 employees. The deficiency in LIC is not because of its size, but because of lack of decentralisation of powers and functions and erosions of its autonomy by the Government itself. What is required is complete decentralisation of powers and functions. Even after 25 years the powers and functions have not been standardised. Over the years, bureaucracy has been encouraged to build up empires with the attendant conflicts, corruption and bottlenecks.

So far as the operational efficiency and expenses are concerned, they are reflected in the following data :-

	December 1957	March 1980
No of policies inforce	54.17 lacs	220.39 lacs
Investible life fund	410.41 crores	5818.09 crores
Total income of LIC	112.90 crores	1297.78 crores
Annual new business	336.67 crores	2733.11 crores
Overall expense ratio	27.20 percent	24.52 percent
Renewal expense ratio	15.89 percent	13.01 percent
Salaries and allowances	13 percent	9 percent

Whereas the above phenominal growth of LIC testifies its operational efficiency, it invariably reflects on the increased work

load carried over by the individual workers. Whereas in December 1967 an individual employee served 276 policies, he served 606 policies in March 1980. What is required for further improvement of efficiency is adequate recruitment of staff to man different offices, their active involvement by democratisation of the process of administration and ensuring proper industrial relations.

So far as the cutting down of the expenses is concerned the Government cannot explain the rational behind this objective. Since the above data bears the testimony of decreasing expenses. Splitting would rather make the industry further top-heavy resulting in more wasteful expenditure.

Healthy competition and dynamism :- The Finance Minister's plea for "healthy competition defeats the basic objective of nationalisation of life insurance which was aimed to put an end to the evils of cut-throat competition that characterised the industry in the private sector. The healthy competition can be done in the existing structure itself between zone and zone, division and division and branch and branch. Contrary to the objective, the splitting would rather bring back the competition as indulged in the private sector of illegal rebating, under-cutting and other maladies.

Similarly, greater degree of dynamism can be infused not by

splitting the LIC, but only by providing a proper base for effective competition with other
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Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Central Rules, 46

[By a Notification dated 10th December, 1981, the Govt. of India proposed certain amendments in the above rules, asked for objections or suggestions within a stipulated period of 45 days. Central Office circulated the said amendments for comments. Only two unions, both Andhra Pradesh gave their suggestions. After considering these suggestions, the C.I.T.U. had objected to and proposed the following measures—Editor]

THE Government proposed amendment to item 5 of the schedule to the Act vide Clause (ii)

“Quantum of leave and holidays, the procedure for applying and the conditions subject to which the competent authority may grant such leave and holidays”.

The C.I.T.U. objected to the words “conditions subject to which” as stated in the amendment and suggested that the proposed amendment be substituted by the following.

“Quantum of leave and holidays, the procedure for applying, the competent authority which may grant such leave and holidays shall be arrived at after discussions with the Registered Trade Unions in the establishments and the conclusions clearly incorporated in the standing orders of each undertaking.”

In schedule 1(B) vide 1 (i) the Government under the heading “Service Record” proposed the following:-

“Every industrial establishment shall maintain service records of standard size, as far as possible, in the form appended to these orders for the purpose, wherein particulars of every workman shall be recorded and duly attested by an officer

authorised in this behalf together with date”.

The C.I.T.U. suggested that the following should be added after this rule :

“This service record should be allowed to be read by all workmen at least once in six months and in the event any workman is not sufficiently proficient in reading the service record, such workman shall be allowed to have a help either from a trade union official of his choice or any other workman of his choice in the same establishment, and an entry should be made in the service record for having done this with signatures of the officer, workman and the person helping, if any with date.”

After Clause iii) regarding Residential Address of Workman the C. I. T. U. suggested that the following should be added:-

“Within a period of thirty days after the change of his permanent residence”

In Rule 4 under the heading “Transfer” the powers to transfer workmen under the “administrative and exigencies of work” were sought to be incorporated.

The C.I.T.U. opposed this clause and suggested that it should be deleted as employer can utilise this clause to victimise Trade Union Workers.

Similarly, the proposed clause 7 regarding “Secrecy” was also opposed by C.I.T.U. as this may also be utilised to victimise any workman by the employer. The C.I.T.U. suggested that it should be deleted.

In Rule 8 “Exclusive Service” Government proposed—“A workman shall not at any time work against the interest of the industrial establishment in which he is employed and shall not take any employment in addition to

his job in the establishment, which may adversely affect the interest of his employer:-

As normal legitimate trade union activity by workman can be twisted as “prejudicial to the interest of the establishment,” the C.I.T.U. suggested that following words may be deleted from this clause:-

“Shall not at any time work against the interest of the industrial establishment in which he is employed and”.

In Form V & Model Service Record the column under the heading “Details of Disciplinary Action” was sought to be introduced. The C. I. T. U. opposed this and suggested that it should be deleted.

The suggestions placed by C.I.T.U. are backed by cogent reasons. The C.I.T.U. has also asked for hearing before amendments are finalised.

It may, however, be noted that the Unions would also have a chance to oppose the introduction of any of these harmful clauses in their Standing Orders before the Certifying Authority, which should be utilised. □

C.I.T.U. Nomination

D. Janakiraman, a member of General Council has been nominated by C.I.T.U. to attend the I.L.O. Workshop on training methodology of workers' Education to be held in Colombo on January 18-21.

He left for Sri Lanka on January 17. □

Editorial Board

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International Conference on Economic and Social Aspects of Disarmament

A World trade union conference on social and economic aspects of disarmament was held at Paris from December 15 to 27. 206 delegates from 60 countries and 16 international organisations attended the conference.

Jagjit Singh Layallpuri, President, Punjab State Committee of CITU attended the conference on behalf of CITU.

The conference was held in the background of the danger of a nuclear war, aggravated by the announcement of the Reagan administration to produce Neutron Bomb and growing struggle against this policy and for peace.

Huge Waste of Resources

According to analysis made by an American, Marian Anderson, everytime with an increase in the military budget by one thousand million dollars in U. S., 11,600 jobs were lost. From 1970 to 1974 alone the growth of military expenditure in U. S. caused a loss of 907,000 jobs. The following calculations by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics itself show how many jobs could be created with one thousand million dollars in various sectors of economy :-Arms-75,710 jobs; Education-1, 87, 299, wholesale and retail trade - 1, 12, 363; Construction-1,00, 072; Mechanical Engineering-86, 114; Transport 92, 071; Civil Service-86, 977. The same analysis showed that it would be possible to create 2, 45, 000 jobs if the U. S. defence budget for 1980 was cut by 10,000 million dollars.

The U. S. defence budget reached 145 billion dollars in 1980, raised by Reagan to 200 billion dollars for 1982, and for 1986 it would be 400 billion

dollars. The result is for every one to see.

At the end of 1980, unemployment in U. S. A. reached 10 millions according to trade unions there. Unemployment in the imperialist countries crossed 24 millions, Britain contributing to over 3 millions.

Growing Inflation

The conference established that military investment stimulates inflation, illustrated by steep rise in prices. It disrupts the balances between production and consumption, increase deficits in national budgets and limits the role of public services favouring their privatisation for the benefit of big capital.

The armament race in the imperialist countries shot up inflation as follows in 1980: U. K.-22 per cent; Italy-20. 5 percent; Turkey-21. 5 percent; Portugal-15. 2 percent; Spain-15 percent; France-13. 7 percent; Greece-13. 8 percent. In U. S. A. between August 1978 and August 1980 inflation shot up to 26 percent.

The conference further noted that it is the working people who have to pay for the policies of the arms build-up, as the financial resources are essentially provided through heavy indirect taxation, the burden of which fall on the working people and their families.

Falling Real Wage

The real wages of the workers in these countries fell below those of 1980. In U. S. the real wages of the workers fell by 10. 5 percent between 1973 and 1980.

The vast and unprecedented waste is taking place in a world where 50 million people die every year from hunger, one in

six is suffering from under-nourishment, one in five is illiterate, one in three has no access in even the most elementary medical cares and millions are unemployed. On the other hand, the arms build up is a source of substantial profit (2 to 3 times higher than civilian productions) to the transnational corporations, which impose their economic domination and use public money to develop their military production. The profits of 500 largest U. S. monopolies rose by 23 percent 1979, where as the social programmes in USA in 1980 was cut down by 13000 million dollars.

Imperialist War Designs

Under such deteriorating conditions of the toiling people, the United States is leading the war preparations by the imperialist countries and going ahead to encircle the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries from all possible sides. It has established 2500 military bases in about 120 countries, armed with nuclear weapons and manned by nearly half a million personnel. Despite Soviet Union's repeated call for disarmament, NATO in its conference in 1978 decided to increase the military budgets of the member countries by 3 percent each year. Refusing to ratify the SALT II treaty, the U. S. decision to deploy Pershing and Cruise missiles in W. Germany has brought USSR within the range of direct attack from the German Soil.

Starting with Atom Bomb in 1945, USA is progressing in a frantic manner to invent and increase new sophisticated nuclear weapons. The Reagan administration has ordered for full scale production of

Neutron Bomb on August 6, 1981. Soviet Union has not done it, although it has acquired the position to do so.

Not content only by encircling Soviet Union, it is building up a strategic arc around South and South West Asia to contain the growing socialist influence in the area. Its arming of the Pakistan military ruler is threatening India with another war.

U. S. Unmasked

Jagjit Singh Layallpuri in his speech pointed out that the history of monopoly capitalism and imperialism is replete with violence and war. In a short span of 25 years ^{between} 1914 they plunged humanity in two world wars and slaughtered forty million people with a colossal destruction of wealth accumulated through the toil of the working class. He said that these aggressive plans have their origin in the desperate conditions of the capitalist economy which is enmeshed in a severe crisis, worst since 1930. More and more production of arms has thus become a necessity for the sustenance of monopoly capitalism. He said that U.S.A. with its preparation for global domination is the foremost leader of imperialist aggression today. He denounced the two "super-power" theory put forth by USA to confuse the people. While in reality the socialist countries particularly the Soviet Union is compelled to divert a substantial amount for military defence against the threat from the United States. Delegates from Asian, African and Latin American countries sharply criticised the US policy of war preparations and hailed the role of USSR in the struggle for peace and disarmament.

Declaration of the Conference

The final declaration of the conference pointed to the enormous waste of resources-human, financial and material, by their diversion to the manufacture of armaments, cutting down the social security measures, leading to increasing unemployment and impoverishment of millions. It called upon the trade unions to be aware of their growing responsibilities to unitedly struggle to put an end to these dangerous preparations for war and conversion of the world into a gigantic arsenal which is sufficient now to erase the human race itself.

Growing Struggle.

The struggle for peace as against this adventurist path by United States and the imperialist countries are however gaining ground throughout the world. A half million strong protest demonstration was organised by the A.F.L. and C.I.O. at Washington itself against Reaganomics. Similar

demonstrations by the people took massive forms in all the capitals like London, Bonn, Paris, Brussels, Helsinki, Lisbon, Rome, etc. The common slogans have been "peace and not war" and "down with the Neutron Bomb".

Task of the working class.

Under such a perilous situation when the United States is heading to engulf the world in a nuclear holocaust, threatening to annihilate human life itself, the working class must rise to the occasion to accept the challenge. The only alternative left to the working people is mass struggle. The revolutionary forces in all countries have to unite, raise the banner of proletarian internationalism and defend the socialist camp. Struggle against the capitalist clique, against monopoly capitalism, has to be linked with the struggle for peace and disarmament to raise the conditions of life and development of science and technology to ensure social and economic development of the toiling people. □

AUCCTU Greets CITU on Republic Day

Following message was received by CITU from AUCCTU Moscow, USSR :

"DEAR Comrades on behalf of Organized Soviet Factory Office Workers and Collective Farm Peasantry All Union Central Trade Unions sends cordial Greetings to Indian Trade Unions and Working People on occasion of your Country's National Date 32nd Anniversary of proclamation of Republic. Conclusion of Treaty on Peace Friendship and Cooperation between our countries top level Soviet Indian meetings testify to steady development and strengthening of Fraternal relations between peoples of

USSR and India. Historic visit by LI Brezhnev General Secretary CPSU Central Committee President Presidium Supreme Soviet was new important contribution to consolidation of friendship and cooperation between USSR and India which is of great significance to cause of peace and progress not only in Asia but all over World. We wish Indian Working People and their Trade Unions further success in noble cause of building new India.

All Union Central Council Trade Unions"

Comrade Major Jaipal Singh

Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns and expresses its inconsolable grief at the sudden death of Comrade Major Jaipal Singh in Vijayawada on January 25, 1982. He was a member of the Central Committee of the CPI (M) and Secretary of its Delhi State Committee.

'Major Sahib' as he was affectionately called by his comrades, was 65 at the time of his death. He started his revolutionary career at an early age when he was an officer in the then British Indian Army. In 1946, he was court martialled by the imperialist in Fort William, Calcutta, for having allied himself with the surging nationalist movement and supplying it vital information. British imperialist government had a conspiracy to liquidate the incarcerated leaders of the National Congress including Gandhiji, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Md. Abdul Kalam Azad and others. That most secret document was given to the then united Communist Party which published in the Party's official organ 'People's War'. It was this publication and revelation of the plot before the world that stayed the hands of the British Government from carrying out its vicious designs. His daring escape from the impregnable fortress, Fort William, is legendary. He then went underground and played a leading role in the revolutionary armed struggle of the Telengana peasantry

for land and freedom from the Nizam.

Independence led to no respite in his underground life. Warrant of arrest and the criminal case before the military court (Court Martial) issued by the British imperialist were not withdrawn by the Congress Government and this great revolutionary had to remain underground for long number of years. Ultimately on the instructions from the Polit Bureau of the Party, he surrendered himself before the court and was on bale for a long number of years. He had to go from Delhi to Calcutta every fortnight to attend the case which was being postponed from time to time for a long period. At last the court dismissed the case for want of evidence. He had to remain underground for a total period of sixteen years facing untold sufferings. He also had to undergo eight years of jail including the entire period of Emergency.

But no amount of suffering and sacrifices could hinder his revolutionary work and zeal. Till the last moment when a sudden heart attack proved fatal for him, Comrade Major Jaipal Singh devoted his entire life to the cause of the working class and struggling people of this country. He was a living example of a great communist revolutionary. He played a major and vital role in building up the CPI(M) and working class and Kisan movement in Delhi, Haryana, Western U. P., Himachal Pradesh, Panjab and Jammu

and Kashmir. He died in harness after massive heart attack while participating in the meeting of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) on the eve of its Eleventh Party Congress at Vijayawada.

The CITU dips its flag in homage to his memory. The CITU offers its heartfelt condolences to Mrs Usha Jaipal Singh and other members of the bereaved family and to the Delhi State Committees of the CITU and CPI(M) for whom his loss is irreparable. □

Comrade Jyotirmoy Bosu

C. I.T.U. expresses its deep sorrow at the sudden demise of Comrade Jyotirmoy Basu, the veteran parliamentarian and Chief Whip of CPI (M) group in Lok Sabha on January 12.

Throughout the fifteen years in parliament he consistently championed the cause of the working class. His determined fight against authoritarianism and continuous exposure of the real face of the Indira regime invited the wrath of the Government during the emergency and he was jailed and harassed.

C.I.T.U. extends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. □

Successful All India Steel Workers Convention

THE All India Steel Workers Convention held in Durgapur on 8-10 January '82 was a firm step in building up a countrywide unity of two and a half lakh steel workers. 520 delegates and 81 observers attended the convention from integrated steel plants, coal washeries, captive mines, central marketing organisation and the contractor workers. Twenty one women workers participated as delegates while 3 were observers. Hundreds of volunteers worked day and night for the success of the Convention.

The remarkable feature of the Convention was the participation of delegations from U.S.S.R. and China. Fourteen trade union organisations from abroad sent fraternal messages greeting the convention.

The convention commenced with the flag hoisting by Krishna Pada Ghosh, Labour Minister, Government of West Bengal. Wreaths were placed on the martyrs column by several leaders and the foreign delegates.

The special pandal constructed for the Convention was named after Ashis and Jabbar, two workers of Durgapur Steel Plant, who laid their life in the glorious struggle of steel workers in 1966. The convention elected a presidium consisting of Chandra Shekher Mukherjee (Burnpur), Ajit Makherjee (Durgapur), K.K. Tripathi (Jamshedpur), Shingore (Bhilai) and Mihir Joardar (C.M.O.) to conduct its deliberations. The delegates stood in silence for two minutes to pay homage to the departed leaders and martyrs.

Robin Sen, Chairman of the Reception Committee while welcoming the delegates reviewed

the fighting traditions of Durgapur workers and noted the sacrifices made by the workers in the last two decades to build T.U. movement in the steel township.

In his inaugural speech Krishnapada Ghosh pointed to the growing attacks on the working class and the common people as a result of the policies pursued by the Indira Gandhi Government and mentioned that steel workers were also victims of these policies. He underlined the implications of the recent loan of the IMF and stated that a big wage freeze offensive was in the offing. He called upon the steel workers to be prepared to face this offensive.

He referred to the labour policy of the Govt. of West Bengal and pointed out how it basically differs from the policies pursued by Smt. Gandhi's Government which talks of confrontation with the working class. He welcomed the growing unity of the workers to defeat the anti-working class policies of the Cong(I) Govt.

After the inauguration M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, introduced the delegates from Soviet Union and China. He said that it was the first time that the workers had the privilege of seeing the Soviet and Chinese delegates on the same platform. Slogans were raised: "Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai; 'Hindi-Russi Bhai Bhai; 'Russi-Chini Bhai Bhai".

M.K. Pandhe then moved a resolution calling upon the steel workers to observe one day general strike on January 19 as per the call given by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions. Monoranjan

Roy, Vice president, CITU supported the resolution. One worker each from each steel plant spoke in support of the resolution which was passed unanimously.

Jibon Roy placed before the convention the General Report on behalf of the Preparatory Committee. The report reviewed the growth of steel workers' movement in different centres and the role played by the Co-ordination Committee of Steel Workers' Unions in building the organisation and coordinating the activities in different centres. It also reviewed the condition of the steel industry and highlighted the need for further struggle to improve the working and living conditions of steel workers.

The General Report dealt with the three agreements in steel industry and noted how the Durgapur union and the CITU had played an important role in them. It gave a call for determined struggle to achieve

still more demands in the next wage agreement.

The Report attacked the mismanagement and growing corruption in the industry and pointed out how it retarded the growth of industry. It debunked the theory that steel workers belonged to high wage island and noted how there had been deterioration in conditions of steel workers during the recent past. The report also noted the need for formation of all India organisation of steel workers to further intensify the struggle of the steel workers against the capitalist onslaught.

The convention adopted a resolution on the formation of Steel Workers Federation of India as a "powerful weapon in the hands of steel workers in their forthcoming struggle". It appealed to the steel workers to rally under the banner of this federation so that united movement could be launched to protect the interest of the steel workers.

The speeches of the fraternal delegates from USSR and China were punctuated with repeated applause from the delegates in the Convention. They brought messages of fraternal solidarity with the Indian working class which inspired the delegates. The delegations from Central Committee, Metallurgical Industry Workers Union of USSR was led by its Secretary Nina Nedosekina while Boris Chashikin of the International Department of the Union was a member of the delegation. The Chinese delegation was led by Han Xiya, alternate member of the Secretariat of All China Federation of Trade Unions, while Gong Lin, Vice-Chairman Chinese Trade Union of Metallurgical Industry and Huang Huifen of the International Department of the ACFTU were members of the delegation.

Han Xiya emphasised in his speech the historical bond between China and India. He said, today the workers and the people

of both countries have been confronted with the common tasks of developing national economy, building up our own countries safeguarding national independence and maintaining world peace."

Xiya concluded, "We feel very happy to have the opportunity to see for ourselves the work, life and other aspects of the Indian workers particularly those of the Indian Iron and Steel workers. We shall tell the Chinese working class what we saw here and the experience that we learnt during our visit and convey to them the profound feeling of friendship of the Indian Trade Unions to help further develop the friendly relations between China and India and to continue to strengthen the friendship between the working class of our two countries." The Chinese delegation presented a beautiful painting to the Convention.

Nina Nedosekina in her speech gave special stress on



Left: Nina Nedosekina, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Metallurgical Workers' Union of the USSR, greeting the convention. The other Soviet delegate was Boris Chashikin of the International Department of the same Union: Middle: The Chinese delegation presenting a banner. The delegation consisted of Han Xiya, Alternate Member of the Secretariat of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, Gong Lin, Vice-Chairman, Chinese Trade Union of Metallurgical Industry, and Huang Hinfen, Member of the International Department of the ACFTU.

growing ties between USSR and India in all spheres of life. She said, "The Central Committee and the entire membership of our union are pleased and proud with good relations we all enjoy with the Indian Steel workers. The meeting and consultations at the top level of unions are seen on regular basis". She pointed out the need for united struggle the world over to safeguard world peace.

Nine continued, "May you accept our best wishes of greater success in the struggle for steel workers' interests. May the friendly relations between steel workers of our both countries grow with every passing year."

She concluded "Convey to those you represent here our strong belief in this Conference decisions to become another step in the way to forge the unity and co-operation among the steel workers and their unions both on national and international level in the name of peace and social progress in the world." The Soviet delegation gave the Convention a memento prepared by steel workers depicting solidarity between the steel workers of Soviet Union and India.

On behalf of the Convention presents of Bengali Handicrafts were given to the fraternal organisations and delegates. The atmosphere in the Convention was full of emotion on the occasion. There was ovation when the Soviet delegation presented a souvenir to the Chinese delegation.

Bamapada Mukherjee read the messages received from various fraternal organisations such as TUI of Metal industries (WFTU), ILO Geneva and trade unions from Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Iraq, Kuwait, Bangladesh, Cyprus and Australia.

During the debates on the

report the delegates spoke at length on the growing movement in steel industry and their experience in building united movements. Several contract workers spoke about their harrowing conditions and appealed to all the steel workers for solidarity struggles. They gave suggestions to improve the report and noted shortcomings in it. The women delegates also participated in the discussion on the report. Monoranjan Roy, M.K. Pandhe, Md. Amin and Lakshmi Sen addressed the convention.

The convention authorised the newly elected working committee of the federation to finalise the general report in the light of discussion in the convention. Regarding the draft constitution the convention further authorised the working committee to finalise it. The convention decided that the flag on the Federation should be red in colour with hammer and sickle and the letters SWFI vertically in white.

The convention adopted resolutions on nationalisation of TISCO without compensation, on withdrawal on victimisation of Jamshedpur and other workers, on solidarity with striking workers in Barsua mines under Rourkela Steel Plant, on recognition of National Joint Committee for Steel Industry through secret ballot, on ESMA, on IMF loan, against delinking of Haldia Complex from Calcutta Port Trust and on conspiracies against Left Front Govt. of West Bengal. By another resolution the Convention raised its voice against imperialist mechanisation and growing danger and called upon the working class to fight this danger and preserve peace in the Indian region and in the world.

Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of Bengal and Vice President CITU welcomed the delegates from the

two great socialist countries upholding the banner of proletarian internationalism. He welcomed the help from USSR and stressed the need for development of friendly relations with China. He strongly criticised Smt Gandhi's authoritarian policies and called upon the steel workers to fight it squarely. He assured full support to the steel workers in their struggle.

S.K.N. Chaudhury read out the Report of the Credential Committee. M.K. Pandhe proposed the names of the 45 member Working Committee of the steel Workers Federation of India which were seconded by T.N. Singh. The Convention elected the following office bearers :

President: Samar Mukherjee; Working President: Dilip Mazumdar; Vice President: M.K. Pandhe, Ajit Mukherjee, K.K. Tripathi, P.K. Mukherjee, Chandra Shekhar Mukherjee, General Secretary: Jibon Roy; Jt. General Secretary: Ardhendu Dakshi; Secretaries: Nandji Pandhe, Jadav Prasad, Tapan Sen, D. Bhattacharya, (one to be filled in later from Rourkela); Treasurer: Mrinal Banerjee.

Samar Mukherjee in his concluding speech called upon the steel workers to strengthen the Federation so that united struggle can be built up all over the industry.

The Convention ended with great enthusiasm among the delegates who gave slogans on international solidarity of the working class.

There was a colourful exhibition of evolution of human society during the Convention. Daily cultural programmes were attended by several thousands of workers. A booklet giving detailed information on the steel industry was also published on the occasion.

[On Page Twelve]

[From Page Eleven]

Energy Minister and the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, the All India Coal Workers' Federation has demanded unconditional stoppage of gangsterism in the M.P. Collieries by the management hirings and involvement of the State machineries therein. The Federation further demanded unconditional release of all those arrested and withdrawal of the false cases. It also demanded adequate compensations to the victims of the police atrocities. □

Steel Convention.....

[From Page Ten]

Hundreds of processions converged in Lal Maidan to form a massive rally which was presided over by Dilip Mazumdar. The delegates from USSR and China welcomed the decisions of the Convention and expressed solidarity with the Indian steel workers. The rally was addressed by Jyoti Basu, Samar Mukherjee, M.K. Pandhe and Jibon Roy, among others. □

In Next Issue

While in Press, the write up 'ILO Committee on work on Plantation' was withheld due to unavoidable circumstances. It will be published in our next issue. —Ed.

Consumer Price Index Numbers

State/Centre	Base 1960			State/Centre	1981		
	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.		Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa			
Gudur	472	469	463	Barbil	413	412	429
Guntur	503	505	501	Sambalpur	487	489	486
Hyderabad	473	479	480	Punjab			
Assam				Amritsar	474	479	485
Digboi	447	44	452	Rajasthan			
Doom Dooma	365	362	357	Ajmer	492	478	478
Labac	352	352	354	Jaipur	499	495	491
Mariani	362	362	366	Tamil Nadu			
Rangapara	382	384	381	Coimbatore	480	476	485
Bihar				Coonoor	472	473	477
Jamshedpur	429	435	435	Madras	455	454	463
Jharia	425	433	442	Madurai	476	478	497
Kodarma	476	47	497	U.P.			
Monghyr	498	503	513	Kanpur	442	454	449
Noamundi	437	432	426	Saharanpur	458	472	471
Gujarat				Varanasi	496	498	505
Ahmedabad	444	446	447	West Bengal			
Bhavnagar	460	458	462	Asansol	452	464	464
Haryana				Calcutta	423	429	426
Yamunanagar	480	488	493	Darjeeling	376	376	379
J. & K.				Howrah	403	411	407
Srinagar	482	492	497	Jalpaiguri	366	369	362
Karnataka				Raniganj	430	442	441
Ammathi	480	474	468	Delhi	480	481	480
Bangalore	508	518	523	Other Centres			
Chikamagalur	491	485	486	Berhampur ('49)	626	634	644
Kolar G.F.	461	468	483	Cuttack ('49)	555	569	568
Kerala				Jabalpur ('49)	579	589	585
Alleppey	477	479	477	Beawar ('51-52)	599	587	581
Alwaye	462	463	463	Tripura (1961)	395	404	415
Mundakayam	469	460	458	Ho. (15)	331	334	335
Madhya Pradesh				Goa (1966)	322	324	326
Balaghat	477	479	478	Bhilai (1966)	310	313	315
Bhopal	479	481	483	Bhilwara ('66)	315	306	306
Gwalior	483	483	481	Chhindwara ('66)	256	257	254
Indore	484	484	438	Kothagudem ('66)	319	317	317
Maharashtra				Rourkela ('66)	322	324	331
Bombay	459	466	470	All India ('49)	554	559	562
Nagpur	459	488	484	-do- ('60)	456	460	462
Sholapur	490	501	508				

Figures in bracket indicate base year.

January 19 : The Red Letter Day

[From Page Two]

ment in the country. Reports from West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and Delhi itself show the mighty response of the workers to this call.

The CITU denounces the barbarous attacks let loose by Smt. Gandhi, who tried to foil this mighty action by arresting over 50 thousand workers and by encouraging open attacks on the striking workers by the hoodlums who masquerade as Congress (I) workers under the protection of the police and other para military forces.

91th January will go down in the history as a Red letter day, when the working class has spoken for the entire people of the country. The CITU appeals to the Working Class to preserve and strengthen this unity in future for a decisive struggle for changing the pro-big landlord, anti-people, anti-working class policies of the authoritarian regime of Smt. Gandhi.

The CITU pays homage to the memory of the valiant workers who laid down their lives in the hands of Congress hoodlums or police firing during the course of the preparation for making the struggle a success and sends condolences to the members of the berieved families. □

Move to Split LIC

[From Page Three]

savings media. This can be done by appropriate framing of insurance schemes to meet the needs of different sections of the community, by penetrating into the rural areas, by providing attractive returns and bonus to the policyholders and by reducing the premium rates.

Under present situation of growing authoritarianism and rising struggles, the spoken objectives of the Government to split the LIC fall flat on the ground and the real motive behind it comes out exposed that is to split the unity of the workers. The struggle of the LIC workers for the defence of democratic rights and the right to collective bargaining have proved to be refractory to the Government. Therefore turning blind to the interest of the lakhs of policyholders, it is bound to put its wrath on the trade unions of the LIC workers.

The All India Insurance Employees' Association and other organisations are opposed tooth and nail to the split. Action programmes are being chalked out. The fall-out of this attack on the LIC workers is bound to go far beyond the LIC. The retrograde judgment of the Supreme Court upholding the validity of the LIC (Amendment) Act has given a filip to the Government in the wake of the split-proposal. The working class and all sections of working people must wage united struggle to express solidarity with the workers of the LIC.

Supreme Court Judgment on LIC Hits at Collective Bargaining

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU has issued the following

statement to the Press on January 2 :

THE judgement of the Supreme Court upholding the validity of the LIC (Amendment) Act and the Finance Ministry Notification of February 2, 1981 unilaterally changing existing conditions of service of LIC employees relating to Bonus and DA raises a number of serious and urgent questions for all trade unions. Indeed, the fall-out of the judgement goes far beyond the LIC.

The judgement, in simple language, means that the Government can acquire power to amend in any direction any provision of a bipartite settlement, to lay down conditions of service by executive fiat and to keep the employees out of whatever little protection is offered by Industrial Disputes Act. Such an arrangement means the total eclipse of collective bargaining.

The judgement would come in handy for the Government which, in the context of a daily depending economic crisis, is

busy foisting a policy of wage freeze and wage cut. This makes the conclusion that the judiciary is trying to smoothen its relations with the executive at the cost of the toiling people irresistible.

The latest judgement, in effect, nullifies the earlier judgement of 1980 of the same court about continuation of benefits provided under a bipartite settlement under ID Act.

The CITU urges upon the Government to allow the provisions of the settlement of 1974 to continue unhindered and to settle the pending Charter of Demands of employees through collective bargaining.

The CITU appeals to all trade unions to take note of the latest trend in judicial decisions, to mobilise the workers against such inroads into the hard-earned rights and benefits of workers and to raise the voice of protest. Only a united voice of the trade unions can stem the process. □

Management Hirelings Unleash Reign of Terror in M.P. Collieries

AT the instance of the management of Churcha and Bishrampur Collieries the anti-social elements abetted by the police have unleashed a reign of terror to suppress the struggle of the workers against retrenchment.

Following a massive demonstration by the workers and their families at Churcha colliery on December 2, the management hoodlums and the police swooped on the workers at night and made random beatings. Even a pregnant woman was not spared and she miscarried. The determined workers fought back and struck work. The management opened a second front of the

police-hoodlum combine at Bishrampur. The day two office-bearers of the CITU union were attacked by the thugs. A tripartite meeting held in the office of A.I.C. on December 6 failed to resolve the dispute because of the adamant stance of the management helped by the Government itself. On the same night the President and treasurer of Koyla Shramik Sangh (CITU) were arrested. On protests raised by the workers an armed gang of police and the management thugs attacked the workers again. Lathis, fire arms, and teargas were freely hurled at the workers. 74 workers including

[On Page Twelve]

CTU's Force ECL To Sign Agreement

A joint strike notice by CITU, AITUC, UTUC, HMS, BMS, and INTUC (Dara) compelled management of Eastern Coalfields Ltd. to sign an agreement with the unions.

Due to non-implementation of several past commitments by the management a joint struggle was launched by the unions. Ultimately, a joint notice of strike on January 4, brought down the management to start negotiations from December 30. On behalf of CITU, M. K. Pandhe and Bamapada Mukherjee participated in the discussions. The CITU representatives criticised the management of Eastern Coalfields Ltd. for their adamant and anti-labour stance which was responsible for the strike decision. They also pointed out the failure of the management to function the J.B.C.C.I. bringing discontent to the workers.

After prolonged discussions which continued for four days, the chairman of the C.I.L. who attended the meeting ultimately agreed to sign the agreement on January 2. Consequently, the strike notice was withdrawn.

According to the agreement all the victimised employees were reinstated from January 1. Other benefits which were unilaterally withdrawn would be restored. The management also agreed to pay the arrears of L.T.C., gratuity and life cover scheme. The management undertook to stop harassments to the employees on the question of transfers. They agreed to sort out the problems with the unions on the transfer cases of Satgram, Sripur etc. It was also agreed upon that there would be no deduction from the compensations paid to the employees

arising out of injuries till the final decision by J.B.C.C.I. It was decided that the other demands will be discussed with the unions by the end of March. □

Central Advisory Board Meeting On Limestone And Dolomite Labour Welfare Fund

THE Labour Department, Government of India convened the meeting of the Central Advisory Board on Limestone and Dolomite Labour Welfare Board fund on January 2, after a lapse of eight years. The CITU representative, Ajeya Rout and other workers' representatives criticised the Government for making the Board defunct for all practical purposes. They also criticised the Government for not supplying any agenda of the meeting. The Government representative, however, assured to call the meeting twice a year with proper agenda.

For the welfare of the Limestone and Dolomite labour, CITU made the following suggestions:—

Increase the grant in aid from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000 for community centres; schemes for type II quarters as in Iron ore manganese; buses for school children; midday meals as in iron ore and manganese; Rs. 50/- for domiciliary T.B. patients, full expenses for supply of artificial limbs; grant for library books etc. The Government representative agreed to consider the suggestions.

The Management representatives wanted to get back the capital they invested for the construction of houses by imposing proportional rents to the workers. This, was however, rejected by the workers' representatives and the Government even. □

Against Automation

A. I. Move By Newspaper Employees

THE newspapers and news agency employees have geared up their organisations to launch movements all over India against automation in the newspaper industry.

The employers and Government itself have taken a move to introduce photo-type setting technology in the industry which will render thousands of employees (published in the January issue). The Government has already granted a number of licenses for this purpose.

The National Confederation of Newspaper and News Agency Employees' Organisation has drawn out a time bound action programme to be launched from February throughout the country. The programme includes distribution of leaflets on the dangers of automation; badge-wearing, gate meetings and demonstrations on February 10, State-wise anti-automation conventions to be completed by February 25; a national convention in Delhi on March 17 and a Morcha to Parliament on March 18.

It is pertinent to note that the newspaper and news agency employees observed complete strike all over India on January 19. □

ERRATTA

On page eight of the January issue the heading of the J.K. Workers' Struggle has been wrongly printed as the ALL INDIA "STRIKE" BY J.K. WORKERS'. It should be "STIR". The mistake is regretted —Editor.

BCMU Conference Calls for Strike Action

THE Fortythird Annual Conference of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU) held at Calcutta on December 25 called upon the 2.5 lakhs jute workers of W. Bengal to prepare for strike actions to realise their demands. A one-day warning strike in February will precede a continuous strike, the dates for which will be finalised in consultations with other unions. Over one thousand delegates from all the 62 jute mills in the State attended the conference. Niren Ghosh, President of BCMU presided over the conference. A message of greetings was received from B.T. Ranadive, President of CITU.

Kamal Sarkar General Secretary, BCMU, pointed out in his report how the mill owners led by IJMA had been persistently violating the tripartite agreement of 1979 and refused to accept the State Labour Minister's decision on the recommendations of the Grades and Scales Committee. Even after having lost in the High Court and Supreme Court the employers have not implemented the recommendations. The IJMA has adopted a policy of confrontation with the workers. On the threat of lock-out workload is being increased in every mill and random transfers are being resorted to from one department to another. House rent is being deducted from the workers in violation of the agreement and canteen subsidies are being reduced. The agreement on 90 percent permanency and 20 percent special badlee is not being implemented in many mills. Crores of provident fund and ESI money deducted from the workers are

not being deposited. Against a demand for 20 percent bonus, the IJMA has offered a paltry of 8.33 percent, that too in instalments. The report further pointed out that the mill owners have driven lakhs of jute growers to destitution by refusing to purchase raw jute on the plea of lack of funds, even after receiving subsidy and loans to the tune of Rs. 111 crores from the Government of India and the Reserve Bank. Eight jute mills are lying closed or under lock-out.

The report made a scathing criticism of the Government of India for backing the mill owners who are reaping profits worth hundreds of crores of rupees and investing the same in other industries in different States. The report said that the only way to save the industry from the loot of the jute barons is to nationalise the entire jute industry including trade in raw jute and jute products.

The conference unanimously adopted resolution calling upon the workers to go in for one day's warning strike in February and prepare for a continuous strike thereafter.

The conference also formulated a new ten point charter of demands as the 1979 agreement had expired on December 31. The charter will be finalised in consultations with other unions and submitted to the employers. It also chalked out an action programme in pursuance of the demands.

Earlier, inaugurating the conference, Promode Das Gupta, Secretary, CPI(M), West Bengal State Committee, explained how imperialism led by the United States, enmeshed in the worst crisis since 1930s, is trying to

unleash another war to extricate itself from the marsh. The U.S. have ordered for full scale manufacture of Neutron Bombs and its particular target is Soviet Union and the Socialist Countries. Analysing the internal situation, he said that the capitalist path of development has landed the country in a similar crisis and to extricate itself from it the Congress (I) Government was surrendering the economic independence of the country to IMF which will further deepen the crisis, the burden of which will be thrown on to the workers and the common people. To suppress the growing opposition Indira Gandhi is resorting to successive authoritarian measures. The NSA and ESMA are symbols of the authoritarian character of the Government. He called upon the jute workers to go ahead with the working class of the country to make the January 19 strike a success.

Among others who addressed were Krishnapada Ghosh, State Labour Minister, Monoranjan Ray, General Secretary of West Bengal State Committee of CITU, Mohd. Amin, State Transport Minister, etc.

The conference unanimously re-elected Niren Ghosh and Kamal Sarkar as the President and General Secretary respectively. The 175-member new Central Executive Committee included P. Gangamma as a Vice-President. □

N.C.C. Meeting I.L.O. Director General

THE National Campaign Committee will meet Francis Blanchard, the Director General of I. L. O. on January 27 at Delhi to discuss the violations of Association by the Government of India. C.I.T.U. will be represented by P. Ramamurti, the General Secretary. □

All India Convention of HSCL Unions

THE first All India Convention of HSCL Unions held at Durgapur on 7 January reviewed the activities of the HSCL Unions and decided to strengthen the united movement of HSCL workers for a better wage agreement and for job security. Over 50 delegates from the HSCL sites and offices participated in the Convention.

Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of CITU hoisted the flag and delegates placed flowers on the martyrs column.

The convention elected a Presidium consisting of K.P. Ghosh, Benoy Lahiri and P.K. Mukherjee to conduct the deliberations.

Robin Sen Chairman, Reception Committee welcomed the delegates. Monoranjan Roy while inaugurating the Convention called upon the HSCL workers to remain in the forefront of the united struggles. S.L. Bose, Convener then presented a report on the activities of the Co-ordination Committee. It explained the position of the workers in the construction industry and how they are being exploited by the managements in public and private sectors. It emphasised the need for further united struggles to force the HSCL management to accept the workers' demands.

Several speakers who spoke on the report narrated their experiences of local struggles conducted by them. They also criticised the treacherous role of the INTUC leadership in strengthening the hands of the management.

The Convention adopted resolutions against ESMA and Retrenchment policy of HSCL management. By another resolution it demanded recognition

of union through secret ballots of workers. The Convention condemned the conditions of IMF Loan and their acceptance by the Government of India. It further supported the demands of the workers in the entire construction industry.

Shanti Ghatak Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of CITU while greeting the Conven-

tion appealed to the HSCL workers to take initiative in building a powerful movement of construction workers in the country.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU while summing up the deliberations called upon the HSCL Unions to strengthen the organisation so that still more determined struggles can be fought against the HSCL management's policies. □

On Rural Unorganised Labour

THE Central Standing Committee on Rural Unorganised Labour in which CITU was represented by Nrisingha Chakrabarty met at new Delhi on January 12.

Since the last meeting held on July 8, 1981, the Govt. had set up another committee for Bonded, Migrant and Casual labour which were being dealt with by this committee.

The agenda for the meeting was to consider the condition of workers in Beedi, Handloom and Leather industry. It was pointed out by the CITU representative that while a large section of workers do reside in rural areas and are unorganised, nevertheless these are industries. The fact is that, these workers being scattered, difficulties are being faced to unionise them. As a result they are being exploited by the industrialists and especially by the middle men. It was suggested that such exploitation could be reduced, if the Govt. sets up purchase agencies to ensure fair prices to the scattered workers. Some others suggested formation of co-operatives which in some states have been able to ameliorate the conditions of these workers.

The CITU representative pointed out that there is already

a Committee for Welfare of the Beedi workers and these committees should not work at cross purposes. He also pointed out that the Govt. has failed to bring out a comprehensive legislation for agricultural workers though the Govt. has ratified the I.L.O. Convention no. 11 concerning Right of Association (Agriculture). He pointed out further that the Govt has not yet ratified I. L. O. Conventions no. 95, 129 and 131. Of these the convention concerning labour inspection is most important. Once workers' Inspectors are appointed through Secret ballot, a machinery for enforcement of minimum wages and other laws would be possible. This view was also supported by other members.

Though the Minister of State for Labour, who was presiding over the meeting assured that steps were being taken to ensure revision of minimum wages of agricultural labour, the CITU representative pointed out that it was far from satisfactory.

The Deputy Minister of Labour raised the issue of the conditions of sea-going fishermen and the CITU representative pointed out that the LDF Govt in Kerala has introduced certain measures including group insurance scheme for them. Such steps may be taken in all states. This view was also appreciated. □

A Thought For The Republic Day

Even after three decades of Independence the gap between the rich and the poor has further widened. People below the poverty line have also increased. This is due to a continued reluctance for radical land reforms and a vicious grip of the monopoly capital on our economy. Our debt to capitalist countries is threatening our economic Independence.

The integrity of the Nation is in jeopardy, in an atmosphere of social-economic decadence in our country people led by various sects and races, the forces of separatism, communalism and provincialism are on the prowl, backed by imperialist interests.

Parliamentary democracy in India is in peril. In a bid to establish authoritarian rule the democratic rights of the working people, trade unions and the rights of franchise are being interfered with. A tendency to temper with the legal system and Constitution is also visible. Attempts are underway to stifle all opposition opinions.

On the Republic Day let us resolve : Against all these unruly forces let us be vigilant and articulate, to safeguard our economic freedom, National Integration and Democracy.

Government of West Bengal

No. 314/(3)/ICA