

Vol 13 No 9 May 1984 Two Rupees



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITY





CONTENTS

Front Cover: Samar Mukherjee
addressing the rally

2nd Inside Cover: The
Procession

May Day, 1984	: 3
May Day Slogans	: 10
Workers' March	: 11
Victorious Jute Strike	: 13
Victorious Port & Dock Strike	: 14
Coal Strike	: 15
Steel Workers' Convention	: 17
Demands Day by Central Govt. Employees, Bank Employees' Struggle	: 18
Around the States	: 19
Opp. Parties' Convention, Peace Day, AICAPEF Conf.	: 25
On Centre-State Relation	: 26
Seminar on Transport	: 28
Plantation Workers' Memorandum, HSCL Joint Forum, Seamen's Protest	: 29
Medical Representatives' Strike, Demand for Implementation of Labour Laws in Brick Kiln	: 30
CITU Secretariat	: 31
Monopoly Houses	: 32
Verification Procedure	: 35
Railwaymen's Struggle	: 35
CPI Index	: 36
Railway Budget	: 37
ACFTU Delegation, D.A. Committee	: 38
State Govt. Employees' Bonus Demands	: 39
Women's Struggle	: 43
NTC Seminar	: 44
Delhi T.U. Bill	: 45
Employees' Participation	: 47
International Struggles	: 51

May Day 1984

B.T. Ranadive

96

THE celebrations to observe the death centenary of Karl Marx ended only a few weeks back. Throughout the world millions listened to the message of Karl Marx who more than anyone else is responsible for revolutionising the shape of the modern world. Millions listened to his teachings on proletarian internationalism and solidarity which ended with the call in the Communist Manifesto "Workers of the World Unite".

This call in the midst of the existing international situation, which is full of tension and confrontation no doubt struck a deep sensitive cord in the minds of the workers and the people. For what else could the people think of when they are being surrounded on all sides by annihilating nuclear weapons?

The year of Peace Struggles

The year 1983 therefore saw an increasing rallying of workers and common people for peace, against the nuclear war. In fact the process of growing concern and desire for common action was growing rapidly in the last three years because of the emerging danger of war.

Masses of workers which was hitherto indifferent to the danger, who were deliberately kept away from the peace movement by reformist leaders working in collusion with the Governments of Western countries began to break away from them, from their restrictions and threw themselves in the struggle to prevent war.

Leaders of trade union organisations spreading the threat of Soviet danger, social democratic leaders voicing the imperialist slogan of the security of the Western world, organisations professing principles of Christianity combined with anti-Sovietism—all are being forced to fall in line for defence of peace. The mass concern and mass pressure have been too much for these leaders and organisations to continue their earlier tolerance of war preparations.

Not that these leaders and organisations have given up their earlier hostilities to the Soviet Union, nor are they prepared to condemn U.S. imperialism or its war policies. They still talk of two super powers, would hold the USSR more responsible but yet they have to sing peace tune and oppose armament to be in line with the people.

These developments, the growing rally of the people to oppose war are in response to the aggressive actions of U.S. imperialists and their friends.

Soviet Union — the Target

The warning came with the intention to deploy missiles in Europe to overawe and intimidate the

USSR.

The deployment of missiles in Western Europe led to a dramatic change in the situation compelling many to change their positions and recognise the imminent danger of war.

These missiles of immense destructive power can reach deep into the Soviet territory within 6 to 7 minutes.

They have now been deployed in Great Britain, Federal Germany and Italy with some other countries waiting to site them. Only Holland and its people seem to resist and every pressure is being brought on them to fall in line. France has its own missiles for the same purpose.

Difference of the two System

This was the imperialist response to the peace proposal of the USSR—its offer to ban all nuclear weapons, its unilateral declaration not to be the first to use nuclear strike and its commitment not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries.

The difference between the two systems stood out in sharp contrast. The imperialist system the most blood-thirsty social system is based on unleashing a nuclear holocaust, driven by economic desperation and the advance of the forces of democracy and socialism.

The socialist system whose interests are identical with the interest of the mass of people require peace and friendship among countries for advance and works ceaselessly to spare the humanity horrors of the nuclear war. This was a fine example of international solidarity and consideration for human welfare which only a system which has abolished exploitation of man by man can show.

Defence Measures by USSR

With the danger of a threatening attack the USSR took quick steps to protect itself. The U.S. and its allies were told that the socialist state could not be blackmailed by these imperialist deployment of missiles, that it would not concede superiority in weapons to the imperialist camp.

The USSR told the imperialists it would defend itself and withdrew from the Geneva negotiations and made it clear that meaningful negotiation can be resumed only if the U.S. withdraws the newly deployed Pershing and Cruise missiles from the soil of Europe.

Warning to USA

The USSR further warned the Western powers that it was withdrawing all self-imposed bans on

placement of weapons and was going to take steps to see that its weapons matched the weapons introduced by the imperialists. It further told that it would take steps to deploy its weapons taking into consideration the territory of the USA itself. The USA leaders should know that the war would recoil on them and they are mistaken to consider the USA as haven of safety.

War Against the Socialist System

The entire progressive world, the world of labour and freedom hailed this decision of the USSR. It showed that the Socialist countries were in a position to defend themselves and the world. But the imperialists would not listen and continued the deployment of missiles. In March they placed these missiles in Italy in addition to England and Federal Germany.

The people of Europe and USA now see that unless they are able to check this war charriot of their ruling classes their very existence is threatened. That is why those who stood aloof only a few months back have to come out in the streets to back the peace efforts.

The progressive forces, the advanced working class movement in various countries and the democratic movements now see that what is being planned is a counter-revolutionary war against the socialist system.

US for Global Domination

They also see that the aggressive designs of U.S. imperialism have global domination as their aim. The U.S. imperialists with their rapid deployment force policy of establishing nuclear bases to threaten Third World countries-Diego Garcia etc. is designed to intimidate India and other countries. They do not conceal their aim of dominating the Third World countries. The dastardly and cowardly attack on Grenada, the invasion of Lebanon, the U.S. role in Salvador, the threat to Nicaragua, the conspiracy against socialist Cuba are all seen by the people as expression of the policy of global domination. Defying world opinion the U.S. imperialists continue their game of intimidation and aggression. On April 20 more than 30,000 U.S. troops will be conducting a sea and land and air exercise in the Caribbean for 17 days. The exercise will cover places in the Caribbeans, the gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic ocean and Guantano Cuba. The announcement of this exercise came at a time when Nicaragua accused the United States of preparing a military invasion of the country.

In our sub-continent also the U.S. is pouring military aid for Pakistan dictator and angling for naval bases in Trincomalee and Chittagong harbour. Every device is being used to surround India with dictatorial regimes and arm them with sophisticated weapons.

Socialist Countries Lead the Peace Struggles

The working class and people of the world have become more aware of this challenge and are growingly united in a fraternal bond to save the world to save the humanity.

The centralised lead and action for rebuffing war of course comes from working class of socialist countries, from the peace policies of Soviet Union and other socialist states. Yuri Andropov stated this truth when he said in August, 1983, "We in the Soviet Union, leaders and millions of rank and file, consider it to be our task of topmost priority to try to prevent the dangerous development of events, to strengthen peace which we very much need in order to carry out our plans of internal development to improve the life of the people".

This has inspired the peace-fighters elsewhere. The Soviet trade unions and the World Federation of Trade Unions have set the pace for the advance working class sections of the world.

Struggles all Pervasive

But vast masses were still under social democratic reformist influence. But they would no longer ignore the danger and one by one the barriers began to fall.

The British Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party of Great Britain have taken a forthright stand against nuclear war. The T.U.C. now considers the anti-war struggle as a central trade union activity. The 113th Congress of the T.U.C. (1981) approved by an overwhelming majority vote a resolution in support of unilateral disarmament. On October 5, 1983 the annual conference of the British Labour Party overwhelmingly declared for unilateral disarmament. The Morning Star of London dated October 6 reported "Unconditional unilateral disarmament was overwhelmingly reaffirmed as the Labour Party's policy in a strong rebuff to the hard right. Delegates stood firm in support of the Party's programme for peace, leaving Labour committed to scrapping Cruise, Trident and Polaris and closing all nuclear bases when it comes to office. The Conference cheered Ron Todd of Transport and General Workers Union when he said that it was time that Britain stopped being an aircraft carrier to the U.S."

War Advocates Isolated

The growing urge for peace had its effect on the decisions of the Social Democratic Party Congress of Federal Germany. A Special Congress of the Party which met in November last year began with a resolution opposing the stationing of the new U.S. medium-range system in the Federal Republic. The draft resolution was approved by 385 delegates, only 13 including several former Ministers voted for the missiles.

Helmut Schmidt, Vice-chairman of the party and former Chancellor opposed the resolution but to no avail. The issue was already decided by the rank and file delegates who had started taking an active part in the peace movement. The unions which formed the main base of the S.D.P., had already come out against missiles. The initiative from below in local conference and area gatherings had already committed the party to oppose missile deployment.

Considering the fact that the top leadership of the SDP was responsible for the policy of siting missiles in the country, this decision of the conference marks an important development isolating the war advocates in the party and placing the initiative in the hands of the peace defenders.

The West German Trade Union organisations followed the same course. Till 1980 the leadership of the German Trade Unions (AGTU) was blindly following the Government's armament policies. The leadership of the organisation asked the trade unions not to collect signature for an appeal for peace which was signed by 5 million people.

But within a year the situation changed. The workers and people had marched ahead. An Extraordinary AGTU conference adopted a proposal stating that "Peace is the paramount condition for trade union activities, the basis of social and cultural progress and social security in many parts of the world. Therefore the struggle for consolidating peace is the central task of the trade union."

Strike Actions Against War

Naturally this led to big mass actions in support of peace in which peoples from all walks of life participated, with the working class and its trade unions leading. These actions increased and the working class brought into operation the specifically proletarian weapon—the strike. This led to the spectacular 5-minute General Strike on October 5, 1983 with 8 million people participating in it. The General Strike was held under the slogan "It is 5-minutes to 12, stop the mad arms race". This was the first General Strike since the formation of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Last year strikes in defence of peace, to protest against war were organised in a number of countries in Europe. There was a 15 minute General Strike in Belgium; 5 minutes strike in Denmark and a huge protest action in Finland. Massive political demonstrations for peace were seen in France and other countries.

In Japan the General Council of Trade Unions which is the largest Federation in the country called upon its unions to observe October 1983 as the month of anti-war activities.

Unprecedented Struggles in USA

In the United States itself the mass of people and the working class are supporting the peace struggles in ever increasing numbers. The process started in June, 1981 when despite the stranglehold of the reactionary AFL-CIO leadership unions participated in a massive march in New York in which a million people took part to protest against the escalating arms race and for disarmament.

Observation of the Communist Party of USA

Recent developments have been well summed up by Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Communist party of USA in his report to the Party Congress last November.

"Never before in U.S., history have seen such a great number of Americans expressing oppositions to the Government's war policies. The four hundred thousands who marched in Washington on August 27 are the most determined and conscious of the tens of millions who oppose the Reagan war policy.

"A clear majority of our people favour a complete freeze in nuclear weapon's testing, production and deployment, as was also shown in the numerous referenda across our country.

"The millions who took part on Labour Day actions throughout the country came out against Reagan's policies including his policies of war.

"The mass demonstrations against the U.S. invasion and occupation of Grenada on November 12 express the outrage and mounting fear of nuclear war if the Reagan war moves continue.

"20 International trade unions have taken a solid stand against the Reaganite policy of aggression in Central America.

"The October 21-24 days of protest against deployment of Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe were sponsored by all the major peace organisations in 300 major cities.

"And in spite of unprecedented efforts, led by the Reagan and the mass media, to incite hysteria over the Korean spy plane provocation the majority of the American people remained firm in their opposition to the Reagan policies of war and peace".

CITU Hails the Struggles

The organised trade union movement throwing its weight in the cause of peace constitutes an important development in the struggle against war. The struggle for peace is the biggest proletarian movement for solidarity, a massive expression of proletarian internationalism.

The working class of India under CITU welcome

this growing unity and express their determination to act by spreading the peace struggle in India.

The Years of Capitalist Crisis

These years of peace struggles have also been years of economic crisis, years of economic sufferings for the working class of capitalist countries. Unemployment has reached 30 million and there is no possibility of drastically reducing it in the near future.

The main burden of crisis and its recovery is borne by the workers. In the USA in these years with mass unemployment (16 per cent in industry) and the threat of loss of jobs the workers were forced to accept wage-cuts and increased work-loads. The hourly output per worker rose by 5 per cent. More than 25 per cent of the agreements concluded in the last 2 years provided for wage-cuts upto 50 per cent in some cases.

In his C.D. Desmukh memorial lecture delivered recently in Bombay, Prof. Galdor said in relation to Great Britain "The rise in unemployment from 1.2. millions to 3.2. millions that is 2 millions or 8 per cent of labour force in 2 years, together with numerous closures of factories, actual or threatened has undoubtedly weakened the trade union power and has contributed to the slowing down of the rate of increase in wages in recent settlements. This however is a consequence of mass unemployment due to recession."

But the monopolists and the state continue their offensive. Trade union rights have been under attack in Great Britain and elsewhere during these years. Besides taking advantage of the crisis situation the big monopolists continue to strengthen themselves by concentrating more capital, more resources in their hands through mergers and various other devices notwithstanding the anti-trust laws in some countries.

Crisis in USA

The Xinhua News Agency reported on March 15 "the biggest merger in the corporate history of the United States happened one week ago when standard Oil of California signed an agreement taking over the Gulf Corporation for 80 dollars a share—a 13.3 billion dollar transaction.

Then on March 12 Mobil announced it had agreed to buy superior oil for 45 dollars a share and 5.7 billion dollars in all.

The two mergers, subject to Government approval under the anti-trust law, came only 2 months after Texacos acquisition of Getty Oil for a bid of 10.1 billion dollars. The Take-overs hanged a Damocle's sword over the heads of the employees concerned. One Gulf employee said to reporters. "They left two healthy companies merged and throw thousands of people out".

Struggle against Economic Crisis

In the midst of these difficulties and attacks the working class had to carry on its fight to safeguard its rights and standard of living. And it has to wage a heroic struggle demanding unity, resourcefulness, flexibility in choosing forms of struggles.

The latest instance of working class unity in defence of its economic well-being was witnessed on March 24 in Rome. About 5 lakhs 50 thousands demonstrated, backed by the Communist Party and the General Labour Confederation, poured into Rome from all parts of the country in more than 4,000 coaches and 35 special trains. The marchers denounced a governmental measure to freeze the system of linking wages to the cost of living index that is dearness allowance which would affect the welfare of some 20 million workers and employees.

But demonstrations and protests have not been the only weapons. The aggravation of the situation between capital and labour, the onslaughts of lock-outs, retrenchments and dismissals led the trade unions to choose subtle and flexible forms of struggles and keep the fight on.

Against Militarisation of Economy

In the first place the trade unions in raising their demands could not exclude the question of militarisation of economy and the expenditure on the defence budget. The diversion of used resources for bolstering war expenditures was depriving lakhs of their jobs. In these countries the loose talks of sharing the benefits of technological revolution indulged in by the reformist leaders has been found to be hollow and has only facilitated the job robbery.

The trade unions had to combat the harmful effect of these defence expenditures. In the course of the crisis it was revealed that the transnationals operated with common designs against the workers and in many cases unless the strength of the workers was mobilised in an international plane the struggle was becoming difficult.

Struggles for Economic Demands Linked with Peace Struggles

Thus while raising issues of immediate importance the trade unions in the advanced capitalist countries had to raise policy issues of vital importance to the whole nation. The economic struggle for immediate demands now got linked up in the question of war and peace.

Flexible forms of Struggles

To meet the offensive in the concrete condition of mass unemployment, lockouts and closures the working class and trade unions adopted flexible forms of struggles. Factory meetings and demonstrations were preceded by short-term stoppages for few minutes in entire economic sectors. Simultane-

ously the working class entered upon the militant actions of occupying factories and running them. A paper-making factory in France has been in the hands of the workers for three years. The Paramount Shoe Factor in Tokyo suburb has been occupied by the workers for three years and there is no interruption in production or sale of manufactured goods. And last September the Shipbuilding workers of West Germany seized the state-owned Hamburg shipyard, one of the biggest yards of the country.

Strikes Rip the Capitalist World

The question of what we call as dearness allowance has led to huge strike wave in Belgium. Demonstrators protested against the cancellation of the sliding scale of wages and salaries which compensate them against price rise and cancellation of bonuses and overtime. They also protested against cuts in education and health allocations under the Parliamentary mandate of emergency powers.

In Italy there have been strikes in January, February, April, May and June. In January 5 million workers participated in the strike. On August 27, 15 million factory and office workers participated in a general strike.

The French working class has to act under different circumstances. Here the Government is led by the Socialist party and it is backed by the Communist Party. The programme to combat the effects of the crisis and protect the interests of the working class and the people has been drawn by the two parties and the Government and the trade unions. It is being attacked by the monopolists. The General confederation of Labour the leading trade union organisation of the workers has put forward concrete measures which include outflow of capital abroad, broadening the participation of workers collectives in deciding on dismissals and raising taxes on large companies and properties.

In England the T.U.C. has taken the challenge of the Government to restrict trade union rights. It will be seen that the working class of advanced capitalist countries has been engaged in a two-fold battles, fight against war, fight against unemployment and crisis. It has achieved growing unity and fought militant battles against the ruling classes.

Tasks of the Indian Working Class

The CITU and the working class must wish them success in these two-fold struggles.

In this background May Day this year brings to our mind the task that we have to discharge. We are all aware that our trade unions and the trade union movement as a whole have yet to take up the vital question of war and peace. This weakness has to be growingly overcome if India's working class has to do its minimum duty to the world working class and people of the world.

While we have started on the road, while some of our constituents like West Bengal and Kerala CITU Committees are bringing the issue before the mass the mass of workers, other forces are also now entering the field to help us. The peace conference of political parties held recently in New Delhi gives us an opportunity to carry to the issue to the mass of the people. All our unions must quickly seize the opportunity to rouse both the working class and other sections of our people. The lack of international consciousness of our working class arising from bourgeois and reformist influences must be combated steadily enabling our working class to emerge as an active and powerful contingent of the world peace army.

Onslaught on Workers

The year that has gone saw us heavily engaged in battles defending the rights and the well-being of the workers. We can say that the trade unions and workers kept the fight on despite repression and victimisation. Our workers and trade union leaders were repressed by the Government many were sentenced to long-term of imprisonment, many others were brutally attacked by hired gangsters—their wives and children not escaping assassins' attempts.

Many successes were scored. Repression apart, tens of thousands were locked out, thrown to the wolves. The total number of mandays lost due to lockout according to the latest official figures was 9.99 million in 1980, 15.38 million in 1981 and 17.75 million in 1982. One can imagine the colossal suffering and misery imposed on our class. A major part of this misery was shouldered by West Bengal. Bengal's share of mandays lost due to lockouts was 4.43 million in 1980, 8.5 million in 1981 and 13.32 million in 1982.

The United Struggles

Against this monstrous offensive and the intensified unemployment the CITU and its unions carried on a ceaseless fight. The CITU continues to develop trade union unity and the National Campaign Committee has come to growingly represent the united voice of the movement.

Thanks to this growing unity which was maintained in negotiations with the Government, a number of beneficial and favourable agreements could be signed in Steel, Coal and other industries. In these negotiations the INTUC also stood side by side with the constituents of the National Campaign Committee.

It can be said that during the year that has passed we have scored new successes in relation to the unity of the trade union movement and we have succeeded in strengthening the atmosphere and our unity.

We find therefore all trade union centres including the INTUC unitedly working for the success of the

Jute strike in West Bengal and all with one voice demanding nationalisation of Jute industry.

We also find again all trade unions centres including the INTUC unitedly working for the success of the Port and Dock workers' strike and maintaining the unity against Government's stonewalling.

The strengthening the NCC and expansion of the urge for unity are important achievements scored by our fighting working class and the trade unions.

On this May Day we must resolve to make this unity still wider, all inclusive and give it a stable character through a confederation of all trade union centres and industrial federations. This is what the CITU has been advocating to ensure the mobilisation of the full strength of the trade union movement to combat official policies and advocate policies for running the economy in the interest of the people.

For Equal Status in Management

On this May Day the working class must realise that the time has come to demand an equal status in running the economy and industrial management. The huge unemployment, closures and lockouts combined with shortages and unutilised industrial capacity reveal the utter bankruptcy of private and bureaucratic management and official policies. The working class and our people have to undergo immeasurable suffering because of this monopoly of management in private hands. The workers demand in the interest of our country and our people that they should have equal status and rights in managing the affairs of the industry and economy.

Fight Against the authoritarian Government

The year since last May Day has seen India's workers locked in a continuous conflict with the authoritarian Government. In West Bengal and Kerala especially it was involved in a political fight with the ruling party at the Centre.

The workers of West Bengal, the CITU unions deserve full praise for their heroic defence of the Left Front Government, for rallying round it in increasing numbers to defeat the toppling game of Cong(I). The ruling Cong(I) party and its representatives degraded themselves when they resorted to indecent gestures and anarchic violence in the Assembly when they resort to all kinds of excuses to defame and slander the Left Front Government. They know it is a battle between the authoritarian forces and the advanced outposts of the democratic movement. Their effort to isolate the Left Front repeatedly failed because of the political vigilance of the workers and the people.

For State Autonomy

The intensification of the struggle between the Left Front and the Cong(I) party backed by the Centre is a feature of the last year. This has brought

sharply before the people the question of Centre-State relations as the major issue.

The concentration of resources and political power in the hands of the centre, the blatant discrimination practised against the Left Front Government of West Bengal and Tripura, the overdraft issue—all have become matters of concern amongst all democratic forces and calls for a radical change in the Centre-State relationship.

While the workers of West Bengal and Kerala have more closely identified themselves with this important issue, in the rest of the country our unions and workers have yet to make the mass conscious of the necessity for a radical change in the Constitution to secure State autonomy.

The Left Front Government

For seven years the workers of West Bengal have had the advantage of Left Front Government headed by Com. Jyoti Basu guarding their rights and throwing the Government's weight on their side. The right to strike has been fully protected. Freedom from police intervention in industrial disputes has been guaranteed. The big Jute strike involving two lakhs of workers continues among conditions of utmost freedom never seen in any Cong(I) ruled state. Several wage and other agreements have been reached thanks to the intervention of the Labour Minister.

But it cannot be said that this exceptionally favourable situation has been fully utilised by us to forge ahead with mass of membership, to isolate the Cong(I) completely from the working class, to make our unions overwhelmingly stronger than others. We cannot rest on our oars. It is a race against time. The forces opposed to the people are preparing to use every weakness of ours to turn the table against us.

United Struggles in Kerala

Our Unions in Kerala have registered remarkable progress in forging unity and have succeeded in unleashing one struggle after another against the policies of the ruling Cong(I) ministry. In a number of these struggles the CITU succeeded in uniting all organisations including the INTUC against the Cong(I) Ministry. It virtually brought the Ministry on the brink of a collapse. The latest achievement of our Kerala CITU is the total Electricity Workers' strike with all unions including the INTUC standing together.

Against Divisive Forces

In all states the CITU unions are fighting ceaseless battles for workers and taking all steps to strengthen the NCC and trade union unity. Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat are all engaged in forging wider resistance and expanding unity and

fighting the divisive attacks that are coming from all sides. The rise of casteism, communalism and linguism requires strenuous efforts on the part of our unions to keep the workers united.

In Haryana, Punjab and Assam a continuous fight is being waged against communal and secessionist forces. The working class shows itself as the champion of national unity against forces of disruption.

Against Repression and RSS Gangsterism

In Rajasthan, Kota and Kanpur our unions have to face continuous persecution and victimisation at the hands of the employers and Government. It was a great act of courage that in Kota the working class could organise recently a complete and effective protest after many months struggles last year.

Many unions and comrades fail to realise the inhuman repression which our unions are facing in Cong(I) ruled states. In Kerala itself so many are being murdered by RSS gangs and others with the connivance of the administration.

The year that has passed has brought several issues of great importance before the trade union movement. For one thing, a close rapport between the working class and the kisan movement is yet to be established. This of course is a fatal weakness.

Against Imperialist Conspiracies

But last few months have also seen ominous developments around the country. The country is being surrounded by reactionary dictatorship. Pakistan and Bangladesh boast of military dictatorship opposed to their own people and getting heavily committed to help from USA. The latter is pouring arms into Pakistan to create tension and pressure upon India. The aim is to create ground for open hostilities. The ruling class of Sri Lanka hunting the Tamil minorities, is also trading the same path and rousing anti-Indian feelings to cover its compromise with the US imperialists. The latter are out for seeking a base in Trincomalee and Chittagong harbours as well.

These imperialist conspiracies around our country are accompanied by the encouragement given to secessionist forces in the country. The role of imperialist agencies in Assam has been fully exposed. They are also fishing in troubled waters in Punjab inciting secessionist and communal forces. The Akali leadership which off and on protests about its national outlook is becoming a helpless tool in the hands of communal forces. It shows that anyone who exploits communal appeal for immediate advantage must end as a tool in the hands of the enemies of the nation.

The divisive forces now encouraged by imperialism flourish on a soil supplied by the bourgeois-landlord Indira Government. It again shows that a Government committed to defend the interest of the

bourgeois-landlord classes can neither defend the unity of the country nor its freedom.

Accept the Challenges

The Cong(I) Government by its economic and political policies is bringing about a rapid disintegration of our country. To save itself it is again conspiring to impose the Presidential form of Government on the people. The recent Rajya Sabha elections have added to its strength in Parliament and it may attempt to force through a constitutional amendment to introduce a Presidential form of Government.

These are the challenges that have appeared in an intensified form before us. And, our trade union movement has to guard itself to meet them.

April 6, 1984

Road Transport Worker's Conference to be held in Madras

An extended office-bearers' meeting of the All India Road Transport Workers' Federation was held on April 19 at New Delhi. On invitation, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU took the chair.

Nrisingha Chakraborty, Secretary, CITU, N. Prasad Rao, Vice-President of CITU and Secretary of its A.P. State Committee, Mangat Ram Pasla, General Secretary, Punjab State Committee of CITU and Arati Dasgupta, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of CITU attended the meeting as special invitees.

Sujit Das, General Secretary of the Federation placed the report in the meeting which took the following decisions:

“Considering the present political situation in Punjab it was decided that the second conference of the federation will be held in Madras tentatively in the 1st week of July. The exact date will be finalised in consultation with the concerned comrades of Tamilnadu. The conference will be held on the basis of the membership of 1983. Affiliation fees upto 1983 have to be cleared accordingly within June 20 and the same should be sent to the General Secretary in the name of “All India Road Transport Workers' Federation”. Road Transport Workers' Unions which are not affiliated to CITU are also requested to affiliate themselves to the federation. They should at least send observers with prior information to the General Secretary. The three day conference will be inaugurated by B.T. Ranadive President of CITU and an open rally will be held on the third day which will be addressed by BTR and other leaders. The concerned unions were requested to send supplementary reports of their activities and struggles by May 31 to the General Secretary.”

Slogans of CITU for the May Day—1984

- * Down with the War machinations of U.S. imperialism.
- * Withdraw the Euromissiles.
- * Support the Soviet Peace Proposals.
- * Halt U.S. aggression against Nicaragua, Lebanon and other Third World countries.
- * Intensify the struggle against war and for peace.
- * Strengthen struggle for democracy and socialism.
- * For Peace and Friendship with the People of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
- * Protest against atrocities on Tamil minorities.
- * Unite to resist the Congress(I) authoritarianism.
- * Strengthen trade union unity.
- * Defend communal harmony and settle the Punjab problem.
- * Down with the Divisive and Secessionist forces, defend unity of the country.
- * Ban lockouts, closures and retrenchments.
- * Demand right to work as fundamental right.
- * Nationalise the multinationals and Indian monopoly concerns.
- * Take over the sick and closed units.
- * Demand workers' participation in management with equal status.
- * Demand Secret Ballot for recognition of Trade Unions.
- * End discriminations against women workers, protect their rights.
- * Stop Atrocities against Harijans.
- * Halt to price-rise.
- * Take over the wholesale trade in foodgrains.
- * Strengthen Public Distribution system.
- * Remunerative prices to the peasants and minimum wage for the agricultural workers.
- * Demand more power and resources to the states, halt discriminations against Left Front Governments.

Workers' March to Parliament



APRIL 18, 1984 recorded another red letter day in the history of the developing united struggles by the workers. It heralded the second phase of the big joint struggles of the Central Trade Unions of the country representing the overwhelming majority of the working class under the banner of the National Campaign Committee. Defying the scorching April heat of the capital, the over one lakh strong procession marched the 10 km. route from the Red Fort to the Boat Club lawns, converting the entire arena into a sea of red flags. Workers of all sectors—both Government and private, and of course, joined by a large number of working women, converged to the capital from all the states and industries to challenge the Government's pro-monopolist, pro-feudal and pro-multinational policies which caused racketeering with the lives of the workers, peasants, the agricultural workers and the common people. After the March of November 23, 1981, this was the first mammoth all India opposition of the working class against the anti-labour and anti-people policies of the Congress(I) Government. The March further consolidated the unity of the different trade unions, bringing millions of the working class to the point of class struggle against the capitalist path of development pursued by the Government of India.

The March was led by the leaders of the Central Trade Unions, namely, Samar Mukherjee, K. Balanandan (CITU), Indrajit Gupta (AITUC), Pratul Chowdhury (UTUC), Amar Prasad Chakrabarty (TUCC), Brij Mohan Toofan (HMS), J.S. Dara (ITUC) and Manohar Mehta (BMS). It was also joined by M.A. Baig, Secretary of Telegu Desam and P. Vasudev of the Tamilnadu Trade Union Council. A presidium consisting of M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Chaturanan Mishra (AITUC), Sushil Bhattacharya (UTUC), Amar Prasad Chakrabarty (TUCC), Vireswar Tyagi (HMS), J.S. Dara (ITUC), Manohar Mehta (BMS) and H.S. Bakshi (UTUC-LS) conducted the proceeding of the rally.

Speech of Samar Mukherjee

Speaking on behalf of CITU, Samar Mukherjee explained the demands of the resolution which was placed for adoption. He highlighted the significant development of the trade union unity and the united struggles launched by the workers since the Bombay Convention of June 4, 1981. He referred to the glorious all India general strike of January 19, 1982 and the successful struggles of the public sector workers and the coal workers' strikes which threw overboard all the notorious guidelines of the Bureau of Public Enterprises. He gave particular examples of the strikes of the jute and port and dock workers, both of which made history in the united struggles of the workers. Pressed by the workers' urge for united struggles, INTUC also joined the strikes. Both the strikes surpassed all previous records and compelled the authoritarian Government to bow down. He called upon the workers to further deve-

lop the united struggles to compel the Government to change the anti-labour policies.

Referring to the crisis of the capitalist path of development, Samar Mukherjee said that to pass on the burden of the growing crisis on the workers the employers and the Government have launched the massive offensive of lockouts, closures and retrenchments, creating a holocaust of jobs. The industries are being ruined due to mismanagement and corruption. He called upon the workers to raise the demand for right to work as a fundamental right to be incorporated in the Constitution. He urged upon the workers to raise their voice against the loot of the national property by the private sharks and the corrupt managements of the public sectors and accept responsibility to manage the industries with equal status. He warned the Congress(I) Government that if it refuses to change its policies, then the developing force of the united struggles of the working class will pull it down from its position.

Ths speakers from the other Central Trade Unions were Indrajit Gupta (AITUC), P.D. Paliwal (TUCC), Brij Mohan Toofan (HMS), Dattopant Thengdi (BMS), Pratul Chowdhury (UTUC), J.S. Dara (ITUC) and Pritish Chanda (UTUC-LL).

Demands Reiterated : Against Lockouts, Closures

The resolution reiterated the demands raised in the Second National Convention of August 21, 1983 as well as of the Convention against Lockouts and Closures of January 20, 1984. The rally pin-pointed against the growing offensive of lockouts, closures and retrenchments which threw tens of thousands of workers out of job. It demanded a ban on lockouts and closures and nationalisation of the closed units. It denounced the Government for surrendering to the conditionalities of the IMF loan to stand as a watchdog to protect the interests of the monopolists and the multinationals. In pursuance of its policy of subservience to the monopolists the Government had embarked upon the path of confrontation with the workers in an authoritarian manner. While refusing to withdraw the draconian legislations like the NSA and EMSA, it was openly siding with the employers to unleash ruthless repression on the struggling workers. While the workers demanded nationalisation of the taken over units, the Government was denotifying them.

Against Price Rise

The rally also demanded a halt to the price rise which has been continuously spiralling at an alarming rate, making it difficult for the people to make the both ends meet. To make the things worse for the people the public distribution system had virtually collapsed. The rally demanded strengthening of the

public distribution system and take over of the wholesale trade in foodgrains.

For Peasants and Agricultural Workers

It condemned the Government for the ruthless exploitation meted out to the peasantry and for its refusal to give them remunerative prices for their produce despite the long pending demand for this. It further condemned the Government for its recalcitrant attitude towards the demands of the agricultural workers as well. It was a pity that at the instance of the landlords the Government had not yet made any central legislation for the protection of the agricultural labourers and had not yet granted even minimum wage to them. The rally expressed full support to the rising struggles of the peasantry and agricultural labourers with their demands.

For Peace in Punjab and Haryana

The rally expressed serious concern at the worsening situation in Punjab, and its indignation at the failure of the Government to check the extremists or resolve the problem. Its refusal to accept the democratic demands and submission to the religious demands have only helped fanning up the communal passions and encouraged the divisive forces to rip the unity of the country. It condemned the bourgeois-landlord Government for its failure to maintain the unity and integrity of the country. It appealed to the workers and people of Punjab and Haryana to maintain peace and unity of the people.

To Further United Struggles

The rally authorised the National Campaign Committee to prepare a programme of countrywide joint actions in pursuance of the demands. At the end the rally adopted the resolution with thundering slogans and expressed its determination to further strengthen the unity and step up the united struggles to hit continuously at the root of the Government's labour and fiscal policies for an alternative.

After the rally the representatives of the National Campaign Committee met the President of India and handed over to him a copy the resolution. Copies of the resolutions of the August 21 convention as well as of the January 20 convention were also handed over to the President. The problems faced by the working class, peasantry, the agricultural workers and the common people because of the policies of Government were explained to him. The delegation urged upon the President to take steps so that the Government invites the leaders of the National Campaign Committee to initiate a dialogue for resolution of the problems. The President promised that despite his limitations he would do whatever was possible for him in the matter. The leaders representing the N.C.C. were Semar Mukherjee, M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Chaturann Mishra, Y. D. Sharma (AITUC), Manohar Mehta, Ram Naresh Singh (BMS), Brij Mohan Toofan, Veereshwar Tyagi (HMS), Sushil Bhattacharya, Pratul Chowdhury (UTUC), Amar Prasad Chakrabarty, P. D. Paliwal (TUCC), Pritis Chanda (UTUC-LS) and J. S. Dara (ITUC).

Resolution of the Rally

THIS massive rally of workers and employees held on April 18 under the auspices of the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions congratulates the working class and the toiling people for their united struggles in defence of trade union rights and for realisation of their common demands.

2. This rally congratulates the workers of the public sector undertakings for the significant victories they achieved by their united struggles defeating the guidelines of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE). The rally also congratulates the Jute workers as well as Port & Dock workers who together number over more than half a million, for their prolonged and united strike actions in which the INTUC too participated.

3. The working class and the toiling people today are victims of the present economic crisis in the country which has arisen due to the pro-multinational, pro-monopoly and pro-landlord policies of the Government of India. The world wide economic recession is also aggravating the difficulties of the working class and the common people. The increasing prices of essential commodities has hit the working class very hard. The non-implementation of the land reforms have resulted in the pauperisation of the rural people. The public distribution system has totally collapsed and corruption is raising its ugly head higher and higher in the entire social fabric.

4. This Rally reiterates the demands unanimously adopted at the second national convention of Trade Unions held on August 21, 1983 in New Delhi, and also those adopted at the All India Convention Against closures, retrenchment, lockouts, lay-off, and denotification and expresses its strong resentment at the failure of the Government of India to take any effective steps to meet these demands.

5. This rally expresses concern at the continued attacks on the Trade Union rights of the working class. The hated National Security Act and the ESMA continue to hang as a damocle's sword over the head of the workers; the anti-labour Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill and the Hospital and Other Institutions (Settlement of Disputes) Bill are still pending and have not been withdrawn.

6. The ILO Conventions on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining continue to be violated. Articles 310 and 311(2c) of the Constitution of India are being used to victimise Government employees and clause 14(ii) of the Railway Services Rules against the Railway employees.

7. Several thousands of industrial units have been closed down in the recent past while majority of the man-days lost due to industrial disputes were due to lockouts. As a result of increasing use of computers and mechanisation retrenchment drive is in full swing. Lay-offs have become more frequent and industrial sickness have become the order in the day.

(Contd. on page 41)

Victory of the Jute Workers

THE 84-day strike of the jute workers came to a victorious end on April 7 when the settlement was signed by the management with significant achievements by the workers. The glorious united struggle forced the jute barons to introduce grades and scales of pay for the first time in the history of this vital industry which was kept under primitive conditions by them since 1835.

IJMA's Counter Demand

The struggle which started because of the refusal of the jute barons under the Indian Jute Mills Owners Association as also the Government owned National Jute Mill Corporation to implement the agreement of the 1979 settlement and negotiate the fresh charter of demands, gradually brought all the workers and all the unions under the vortex of the united struggles. While the Government of India did not intervene even during the strike, the Government of W. Bengal made continuous efforts to bring the jute barons for a peaceful settlement. But the IJMA remained adamant and refused to implement the decisions of the W. Bengal Labour Minister, as per the agreement, on the recommendations of the committee on Grades and Scales of pay and on workload. They refused to concede to the other demands also. Their rabid anti-labour attitude was laid bare when they made a counter demand to make all occupations piece rated and restructuring the piece rates in such a way that the basic piece rates constitute at least 80 percent of the total wages of the workers. They further demanded linking of wage increase to increase in productivity.

IJMA's Designs Frustrated

However, remaining dogged in their unity the workers frustrated the designs of the IJMA. The introduction of grades and scales of pay for all categories of workmen with immediate effect was the most significant victory for which the trade union movement was fighting for the last two decades. The workers have been pleased in seven categories and the annual increment will be from Rs. 4/- to Rs. 10/- for all of them. Provisions have been made to protect the interest of the piece rated workers to the maximum possible extent. The question of restructuring of the piece rate will be referred to a committee of Technical Experts within a month. The committee will submit its report within four months. Thereafter the state Government will take decision on the report and forward it to the parties, for implementation at the unit levels. The committee will examine the question of restructuring of piece rates by evolving realistic norms and rates for different categories of piece rated workmen. It will bear in mind the need for avoiding any situation as may create wide disparity of earning between workmen of the same department and between workmen of one department and another. The committee will take into account of the present condition of the machi-

neries in each mill and the fall back system. This will safeguard the piece rated workmen from over work, undue speed, to guarantee a minimum wage in case of shortage of production for reasons over which the workers have no control. For the purpose of restructuring of piece rates only the minimum basic in each of the grade will be taken into account, i.e., the present wage rise plus the D.A. along with one increment and the future increment will be taken into fixed component of all workmen including the piece rated workers.

Monetary Benefits

The economic benefits gave a wage rise of Rs. 65/- and increase of D.A. by Rs. 5.60/-. There will be one increment after fitment to all categories of workmen. The total gain along with the fringe benefits will be more than Rs. 100/- per worker. The neutralisation point of the Dearness Allowance has been raised from Rs. 1.30/- to Rs. 1.50/- per point pegged at 500 points of the Consumer Price Index. There will be no deductions if the Index goes down below 500 points.

On Work Load

On the question of workload it has been decided that the employers will maintain a permanent complement in each jute mill of 90 per cent of the working complement as on May 5, 1971 on the basis of 18 shift working. On the same basis, another 20 per cent of the workmen shall be maintained as special Budlis and shall have guaranteed employment of 220 days each year. The special Budlis will enjoy all facilities at par with the permanent workers. In those mills where the number of shifts have been increased, the employees will maintain status quo in respect of the permanent workers. The State Government will appoint a Tripartite Apex Body to examine some questions connected with the workload. The composition and terms of reference will be decided by the State Government after giving due consideration to the views of both the parties.

Other Benefits

Besides these, the agreement has also provided benefits with regard to housing, house rents, gratuity, E.S.I., canteen employees, sanitation, water supply, electricity, etc. The need to revise the present Standing Orders has been accepted. The agreement also provided that no contract labour will be employed in any perennial and regular nature of job. The "Bhagawalla" system will also be abolished. The agreement also has provided for improving the employments of women workers within the frame work of the Factories Act.

Regarding the present six closed mills the employers agreed to the question of reopening them
(Contd. on page 41)

Victory of Port and Dock Workers

CLOSELY following the success of the 2.5 lakh jute workers, the 3 lakh Port and Dock Workers also gave a stunning blow to the Government's adamant and anti-labour policy. Both these strikes which surpassed all previous records, got inscribed in red letters in the history of united struggles of the working class in India. The strike was launched unitedly at the call of the four federations, viz., Water Transport Workers' Federation of India (CITU), All India Port & Dock Workers Federation (HMS), Port, Dock & Waterfront Workers' Federation of India (AITUC) and the Indian National Port Dock & Waterfront Workers Federation (INTUC). The strike was launched with the most reasonable demand of the workers — parity in wage with other public sector workers, which was turned down by the Shipping Minister as "unrealistic".

Paltry Offer

Before commencement of the strike, the Government had offered only Rs. 71 at fitment, one increment and fixation at the next higher stage and 10 per cent house rent allowance at the pre-revised wages as the maximum. It is also refused to consider the question of decasualisation of the contract workers employed in cargo handling at New Mangalore, Tuticorin, Paradip and Haldia.

Government's attempt to break strike

The Government under-estimated the strength of workers' unity and determination. It made every effort to put a wedge in the leadership. Even though the federations had exempted the loading and unloading of the essential supplies from the strike, the Government deployed the Navy actually to break the strike in the name of loading and unloading of these essential supplies. In addition, the CRP, CISF and the local police stood "guarding" the port areas. Despite complete peace maintained by the striking workers, the armed police in connivance with the contractors caused mass killing and arson at Paradip.

Dogged Unity

But neither this dastardly act, nor the Government's attempt to "win over" the INTUC could break the ice. The strike got prolonged on the issues of HRA, CCA and decasualisation alone. Although the INTUC vacillated for sometime, yet the dogged unity among the rank and file compelled it to remain on the joint platform. Work in all the ten major ports remained paralysed. About 200 ships remained stuck up for days together. The strike got support from all quarters. The Trade Union International of Transport Workers warned the Government of boycotting the Indian ships abroad. The loss due to the strike accounted for

over Rs. 130 Crores. Shattering all attempts of the Government to drive a wedge between the workers of the different ports, the last ten days of the strike saw further strengthening of the fraternal bond between the workers on the question of HRA and decasualisation. While the workers at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras stood solidly behind the demands of decasualisation at New Mangalore, Tuticorin and Paradip, the workers at these ports fully supported the cause of the workers at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras with respect to HRA and CCA. It was an excellent demonstration of class solidarity which ultimately brought down the Government to make the settlement.

The Settlement

The Government which was adamant not to go beyond Rs. 32 Crores, ultimately had to concede about Rs. 44 Crores to the workers. As in the case of steel workers, the settlement provided for a fitment Rs. 91, two increments in the new revised scale of pay, fixation at the next higher stage and HRA at differential rates on the pre-revised scale of pay. While the principle of HRA at differential rates has been accepted, the implementation will be in a phased manner upto 1987. The HRA varied from 10 per cent to 30 per cent from port to port. The demand of CCA was however not conceded. But the other crucial demand of decasualisation of the cargo handling contract workers in New Mangalore, Tuticorin, Paradip and Haldia had to be conceded by the Government. Apart from this, piece-rate wages, incentive wages, etc. was raised by 14 per cent.

In a statement, the CITU congratulated the workers for their success which was achieved due to their unity and militancy.

The CITU's line of trade union unity was demonstrated excellently in both the struggles of the jute workers and the Port & Dock Workers. The lessons have to be emulated by the workers in other industries to successfully meet the authoritarian onslaughts of the Congress (I) Government.

Victory Rally

The workers celebrated the victory all over. A big rally was held at Kavi Tirtha Park at Calcutta jointly by CITU, AITUC and HMS. K.K. Roy Ganguly, General Secretary of the Water Transport Workers' Federation of India explained the provisions of the agreement. M.K. Pandhe, Secretary-CITU congratulated the workers for their victory and called upon them to further consolidate trade union unity to protect their interests.

Coal Workers to Strike Again

SEVEN lakh coal miners will be once again going on 48 hour strike on 4-5 June 1984 in protest against the non-implementation of the Third National Coal Wage Agreement and arbitrary actions of the Coal India managements without even calling meeting of the joint Bipartite Committee for coal industry. This decision was taken in the second All India Convention of Coal Miners held at Nazmul Manch, Asansol on 24-25 March. Seven hundred and fifteen delegates participating in the convention welcomed the decision. The coal miners will observe a fortnight from 7-21 May to make intensive preparations for the strike.

B.N. Tewary welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Reception Committee. A presidium consisting of Com. Sunil Basu Roy (CITU), P.K. Thakur (AITUC), C.N. Jha (HMS), Paritosh Pathak (BMS), Parasuran Panda (UTUC) conducted the deliberation of the convention.

M.K. Pandhe Secretary CITU and President All India Coal Workers Federation while addressing the convention welcomed the growing unity among the coal workers throughout the country after the Dhanbad Convention which paved the way for two countrywide strike actions and a successful national wage settlement. He criticised the non-implementation of the several clauses of the agreement and appealed to the coal miners to prepare for a countrywide action which alone would compel the CIL manage to implement all the clauses of the agreement. Kalyan Roy (AITUC) pointed out cases of the violation of several laws by the Coal India management. Jayanta Poddar (HMS) criticised the ECL management for violating commitments given to the trade unions. B.K. Rai (BMS), Madhu Banerjee (UTUC) and R.K. Singh (ITUC) also emphasised the need for united movement of the coal miners.

About 50 delegates participated in the discussion in the convention. They narrated the shocking conditions prevalent in the coal mines and highlighted the callousness of the managements in dealing with the grievances of the coal mine workers. They referred to the non-implementation of the safety rule and also to the high handedness of the CISF.

A big rally was held at Municipal Park, Asansol in which workers from adjoining collieries participated. The rally was addressed by Comrades M.K. Pandhe, Kalyan Roy, Jayanta Poddar, B.S. Azad, Madhu Banerjee and R.K. Singh.

Resolution Adopted by the Convention

The All India Coal Workers' Convention held at Asansol on 24-25 March, 84 sponsored by Indian Mine Workers Federation (AITUC), All India Coal Workers Federation (CITU), Hind Khadan Mazdoor Federation (HMS), Akhil Bharatiya Khadan Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), Hindustan Khan Mazdoor

Sangha (UTUC), Colliery Mazdoor Union (INTUC-Daragroup) warmly greets seven lakh coal mine workers for achieving a successful Third National Coal Wage Agreement through relentless struggles. It is not mere coincidence that the coal workers achieved a substantial wage rise in the present phase of wage negotiations in public sector undertakings.

The Coal Workers could achieve this consequent to two historic countrywide strike actions, first on 8th November, 1982 and the second-72 hours strike from 17th to 19th January, 1983. The remarkable role played by the coal workers movement in defeating obnoxious BPE guidelines has been acclaimed by the workers in all the public sector undertakings. The coal workers once again forced the Government of India to beat a retreat and accept in to-to the agreement signed with the central trade unions in the face of a Nationwide call for strike from 12th November, 1983.

However, before the ink of signatures on the agreement was dry, the Govt. of India and the management of CIL conspired not to implement it in full and deprived the coal miners the rightful gains they achieved during the agreement. The CIL issued unilateral instructions to Colliery Managements without prior discussions in the Joint-Bipartite Committee for Coal Industry (JBCCI). Deduction of 8 days wages for one days' strike or absence from duty, arbitrary transfer to far away places without assigning any reason whatsoever, marking workers absent for the whole day for minor late attendance, linking of payment of Rs. 12/- with daily attendance contrary to the provision of the agreement, termination of services of workers on the plea of absenteeism etc., have become a matter of common occurrence. Several thousands of workers have become victims of the caprices of the management causing strong resentment among them.

As per directive of the Government of India, attempts are being made to scuttle the pension scheme for the coal miners. Similarly the Clause No. 9.4.4 of the agreement to provide the job to the dependants of the retiring coal workers has been put in cold storage.

Though NCWA-III provided for constitution of Sub-committees such as standardisation, promotion policy, incentive scheme, uniform standing orders, social security schemes whose work was to be completed within six months of signing the agreement, these committees could not make much headway despite lapse of four months due to the obstructive tactics adopted by the representatives of the management.

Several clauses of the agreement such as construction of housing, provision of drinking water facilities are yet to commence implementation and attempts to obstruct their implementations are clearly

visible. The provision for educational facilities has not been introduced properly and even at company level joint boards have not yet been formed. There are instances of reduction in the existing facilities in utter violation of the agreement as seen in the decision of the WCL & BCCL managements to link the supply of free coal to attendance in Mines. Even payment of house rent allowance is sought to be linked with attendance.

Despite repeated demand by all workers' representatives on the JBCCI to immediately convene the meeting of the JBCCI to sort out the differences during the last four and half months, the management refused to do so. The change of the Convenor of this Committee was announced by the management without even holding a formal meeting. The decision to convene a meeting of the JBCCI to review the production and performance of Coal Mines has also been scuttled. The bipartite machinery at Company level is on the verge of being scrapped.

The directive of the CIL Chairman to inflate the figures of Coal production of every mine by $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent has led to several abuses at the all levels and it has added new dimensions to the already prevalent rampant corruption in Coal Mines. With mafia gangs continuing to operate in Collieries with the direct support of the management and with the closer links between the unscrupulous officers and contractors, the CIL is drained away of several hundred of crores of rupees every year making the running of the coal mines most inefficient.

The Contract Labour continues to be employed in the prohibited categories and jobs of permanent and pre-natal nature are done through the contract labour. The condition of the contract workers as well as casual workers is most pitiable in Indian Coal Mines with no labour laws being implemented for them. Their wages are abysmally low and working conditions shocking. The ban of recruitment of women workers and reduction in their number due to the so called voluntary retirement scheme is continuously reducing the number of women working in coal mines and if the situation is allowed to continue no woman will be employed in coal mines after sometime.

The reckless use of CISF and its gross interference in normal TU activities has led to serious infringement of TU rights of coal miners. The CISF hoodlums attack the workers' quarters, tear and burn union flags and indulge in illegal coal mining. All this is not possible without the connivance of the CIL management.

The callousness of the CIL management is seen in the most glaring manner on the question of safety and occupational deceases. Several workers have lost their lives in mines disasters and the decisions of inquiry committees and safety conferences continue to remain unimplemented.

The Convention notes the serious discontent prevalent in coal mines throughout the country and spontaneous actions taking place in several coal mines against these repressive policies despite vindictiveness and illegal penal actions by the management. In Singareni Collieries the united strike action by 85,000 workers has forced the management to withdraw and refund the deducted wages. Attempts to impose break in service in Jayant, Umred and other collieries were defeated by the united action of the workers.

The Convention therefore calls upon the Coal Mine Workers throughout the country to resist the offensive of the CIL management with all their might and observe the following programme of united action in a fitting manner:

1. Observation of a fortnight from 7 to 21 May, 1984 to popularise the decisions of the Convention by holding meetings, rallies, demonstrations, wearing of badges, dharnas etc., all over the country.
2. The serve strike notices jointly to the local mine management by demonstrating before the mines on 21st May 1984.
3. To organise 48 hours strike in all the Coal Mines on 4 and 5 June 1984 to press for the following demands:
 - (a) Immediate convening of the meeting of the JBCCI.
 - (b) Ensure full and proper implementation of all the Clauses of NCWA-III, including those relating to job to the dependants of the retiring employees, pension etc.
 - (c) Withdraw all CISF forces from coal mines.
 - (d) Withdraw all the vindictive and penal actions unilaterally taken by the CIL management including deduction of 8 days wages, dismissal and termination of services; repayment of all wages deducted so far.
 - (e) Ensure proper safety measures in Coal Mines.
 - (f) Stop violation of the clauses of the NCWA-III agreement.
 - (g) Early finalisation of the reports of all the sub-committees constituted by JBCCI.

The Convention appeals to all the Trade Unions working in Coal Mines irrespective of their affiliations to rise to the occasion and implement this programme whole-heartedly so that CIL management is forced to accept these demands in full.

Steel Workers Convention

A joint Convention of the Calcutta based workers and employees of Public Sector Steel Industry was held on 16th March 1984 in Calcutta in protest against the autocratic Policies of the Central Government, the wanton lock-outs, closures, lay-offs and retrenchments of workers in industrial establishments all over India and the job freeze policy of the Central Government. A Presidium consisting of Subrata Guha, P.K. Ghosh and Pranab Mukherjee conducted the proceedings of the Convention. More than 250 delegates from different offices of the Public Sector Steel Industry located in Calcutta attended the Convention.

Besides the above principal issues, the convention also adopted resolutions on issues like full and proper implementation of the national level Steel Wage Agreement signed on 25-5-83, the present crisis in the Steel Industry and the continuing strikes of the Jute and Port and Dock workers all over India, etc. While moving these resolutions, Tapan Sen, one of the Secretariat member of the Steel Workers' Federation of India, mentioned that the anti-people and pro-monolistic and pro-landlord policies of the Central Government have brought about the present economic disaster resulting in the epidemic of closures, lockouts, layoffs, retrenchments and multiplication of the unemployed work force. It has become the bounden duty of the organised sector of the working class of our country to launch a vigorous, steadfast and united struggle against this deadful affairs without which the existence and furtherance of Trade Union movement in our country may become an improbability. R.C. Dasgupta of SAIL Employees' Association, Calcutta, Jyotirmoy Ghosal of Bokaro Steel Plant Employees' Union, Durgapur, Jagannath Mazumder of J.P.C. Employees Union, Calcutta and Swapan Chakraborty of M.S.T.C. Employees' Union, Calcutta, spoke in support of the resolutions.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU and Vice-President of the Steel Workers' Federation of India emphasized the need for correct analysis and proper understanding of the background of the present economic and political crisis of the country without which the steel workers will not be able to organise their Trade Union movement in the right direction. He analysed the attitude and role of the management and the Central Government in the matter of full and proper implementation of the national level agreement signed at the NJCS in May, 1983 and the role of the Management and the INTUC leadership within the NJCS and opined that a conspiracy is afoot to reduce the rights and privileges earned through the process of collective bargaining into a nullity and sheer mockery and compel the workers to struggle afresh for implementation of a signed agreement by the management. He also highlighted the important role of the National Campaign Committee in the arena of Trade Union movement of the country and urged upon the Steel workers to forge greater unity and

fight for the cause of the working class.

Jiban Behari Roy, General Secretary, Steel Workers Federation of India while addressing the convention pointed out that the ruling class has been adopting new tactics in organising attacks against the working class. The perspectives of the Trade Union movement are also changing very fast. The realisation which is gaining ground in the Trade Union movement of our country more and more is that without a greater and all pervasive unity among the workers and the peasantry of our country and a more united and joint struggle the Trade Union movement will not succeed in beating back the attacks on the working class let loose by the ruling class. The experience of the steel workers gained through the recent movement on wage issue, wage negotiation and the wage settlement on national level clearly reveals the truth that without the emergence of the National Campaign Committee, the wage freeze policy of the Central Govt. and the dictates of the BPE in the process of the collective bargaining could not have been foiled, nor a reasonable agreement could have been arrived at in favour of the steel workers. This broad-based forum, a joint forum for united struggle—the NCC, has to be further consolidated for the progress and strengthening of Trade Union movement in our country.

Earlier in a statement issued to the press on March 10, Jiban Roy condemned the highhandedness of the SAIL authority and the non-implementation of the Steel agreement in full. He said that ever since the conclusion of National Wage agreement on Steel Industry, which was signed by the management only after a massive pressure of workers' movement, efforts were being made by the SAIL authority to shelve some important provisions of the agreement. It is only natural that the workers are not ready to accept this unilateral violation of agreement lying down.

The employees of Central Marketing Organisation under the banner of All India Co-ordination Committees of SAIL Employees were protesting against the non-implementation of many of the provisions of bi-partite agreement on wage. The agreement was signed between the co-ordination committee and the SAIL management ratifying the national agreement in marketing organisation.

Instead of rectifying its position the management is trying to retaliate with repressive measures. Six employees, four from Calcutta and two from Bombay, have recently been suspended from duties without any valid charges against them.

SWFI therefore demands that all repressive measures be withdrawn immediately and every attempt should be made to pave the way for a negotiated settlement.

Demands Day Central Government Employees

THE Central Government employees observed Demands Day on April 24 all over India. The call was given by the Confederation of Central Govt. Employees and Workers to protest against release of only three instalments of D.A. out of six which have fallen due in April.

Due to the bankrupt policy of the capitalist path of development, prices of all commodities have been spiralling at an alarming rate eroding the real wages of the workers. This resulted in rapid accumulation of the D.A. instalments of the Central Government Employees. Despite all the Pay Commissions the Government failed to settle the issues of pay and D.A. of its employees. In this situation, when the employees demanded parity of wages with the central public sector undertakings, the government stalled the negotiations and appointed the Fourth Pay Commission. The D.A. instalments which are to be paid automatically, were also stalled. Under such circumstances, the Central Govt. employees were compelled to go on the path of agitation. An All India Demands Day was observed on March 20, demanding payment of all the five instalments which had fallen due by that time. Massive demonstrations were held in the establishments of the Central Government all over India. A massive rally was held before the Parliament at Boat Club on the day. But the Govt. refused to release the D.A. instalments on the plea that the budgetary allotment of Rs. 300 crores had already exhausted. In the mean time when the sixth instalment fell due in April, the Government released only three instalments for payment. The release of the three instalments had still left a gap of over 49 points in the 12-monthly average of the consumer price index numbers resulting in erosion of about 24.5 per cent wages even at the lowest level.

The April 24 Demands Day was observed in protest against this arbitrary release of the instalments and demanding payment of all the six instalments. A massive day long dharna of one thousand activists was staged before the Finance Minister's residence at New Delhi. The participating organisations belonged to the Joint Consultative Machinery (JCM), viz, All India Railwaymen's Federation, National Federation of Indian Railwaymen, Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers, All Indian Defence Employees Federation, Indian Defence Workers' Federation, National Federation of P & T Employees and Federation of National P & T Organisations. In a statement issued to the press the representatives of these organisations said that they will meet on April 27 to decide the next course of action,

Bank Employees Struggle

IN view of the recalcitrant attitude of the Government of India and the Indian Banks Association towards the charter of demands submitted by the Bank Employee's Federation of India, the federation has chalked out a sustained programme of actions. The charter of demands was submitted in November, 1982. A number of representations were made to the Government, the Indian Banks Association, the Finance Minister, as well as to the Labour Minister. Agitational actions were launched which included the all India strike of September 6 in which over one lakh employees participated. But the Bankers and the Government have been making all conspiracies to keep BEFI out of the negotiations although they gave all assurances of negotiations. On the other hand the AIBEA and the NCBE, in pursuance of their collaborationist and reformist policy sabotaged the interests of the employees by arriving at a black agreement on September 8, allowing computers in the bank. In the mean time, as evidenced by the LIC management's proposal, the Government is designing to freeze the current Dearness Allowance in banks also.

Under such circumstances, the BEFI has called upon its affiliated unions to launch sustained actions demanding negotiations with BEFI. It has appealed to all bank employees to participate in the following programmes:

Demonstration before each bank office on March 30; mass deputation on 11th April; demonstration during lunch recess on April 17 and procession and rally in every town on April 24. The programme will culminate with mass demonstrations on April 30.

Annual Meeting of Reserve Bank Employees Association

The Reserve Bank Employees Association, W. Bengal, held its 51st Annual General Meeting at Calcutta on March 31. The Meeting adopted resolutions against the Central Government's economic and labour policies and condemned the management for taking dilatory tactics to avoid negotiations on their charter of demands which was submitted in July, 1983. It called upon the employees to prepare for agitations in pursuance of the charter of demands. The other resolutions adopted were against mechanisation and computerisation in the banking industry, on shortage of coins and currency notes of lower denominations, on the problems of the Class III Staff, on the bank's conspiracy for curtailment of staff etc. The meeting elected Ashis Sen and Samir Ghosh as President and General Secretary, respectively.

AROUND THE STATES

TAMILNADU

Joint Movements Carried Forward

Joint movements against lockouts, closures and retrenchments are being carried forward in the state. CITU, AITUC and LPF (DMK) organised joint gate meetings and public meetings at various industrial centres from April 10 to 12. The pressure of the movement forced the management of the Simpson Group of companies to make an interim settlement. But despite several representations, the Chief Minister who assured to intervene in a number of cases, have remained non-chalant on the issues. The representatives of the three trade unions have decided to step up the joint movements.

Solidarity Fund for Peasant's Movement

In pursuance of the call given by the last State Conference of CITU, the CITU unions all over the state have started collection of Solidarity Fund for the development of peasants' movement at the rate of one rupee from each member of CITU. In a meeting organised by the Madras District Committee of CITU on April 8, the first instalment of Rs. 11,000/- was handed over to R. Umanath, General Secretary of the State Committee by S. Chandrasekharan, Treasurer of the District Committee. A meeting of the office bearers of the State CITU called for completion of the collections by May 15. The meeting also called upon the CITU unions to intensify and strengthen the united movements against the lockouts and closures. Through another resolution, the meeting protested against attitude of the state Government for patronizing the unions of the ruling party in giving representations to various Tripartite Committees and excluding CITU, AITUC, LPF, etc.

The meeting also decided to observe May Day jointly with other fraternal unions.

Meeting of Public Sector Unions

A meeting of the CITU unions in the Central Public Sector Undertakings in the State was held on April 1. The representatives of the unions in BHEL, Neyveli Lignite, Hindustan Teleprinters, Hindustan Photo Films, Salem Steels and Transformer & Switch Gear attended the meeting. From the State CITU, V.P. Chintan, A.K. Padmanabhan, K. Vaithinathan, T.K. Rengarajan and G. Ramakrishana participated in the meeting. The meeting discussed the situation in these units after the wage settlements were signed. The management of Hindustan Photo Films had not yet implemented all the clauses of the settlement. In a resolution

the meeting demanded immediate implementation of the clauses. The meeting also decided to build up a campaign among the public sector workers on the issue of D.A. and the recent secret circular of the BPE. The meeting also expressed solidarity with the struggles of the jute, port & dock and defence workers. As decided in the meeting gate meetings were organised on April 5 on the issues.

Karur Bundh

A successful bundh was observed at Karur on April 12 in support of the struggle of the workers of the Karur Textile Mills, who are on strike since January 17 in pursuance of some pressing demands including occupational wages. The call for the bundh was jointly given by the trade unions and several political parties. The local leaders of CPI(M), CPI, DMK and Janata also started hunger strike from April 8 demanding of the State Government to intervene. Over 15,000 workers of the industrial units including Decan Sugars, L.G.B. Engineering, Cooperative Spinning Mill, etc. struck work expressing solidarity. Lawyers of the local court stayed away from work. A 5,000 strong procession including a large number of women workers marched through the town demanding settlement of the strike. In a statement issued from Madras, K. Ramani (CITU), K.T.K. Thangamani (AITUC) and C. Kappuswamy (LPF) congratulated the people of Karur for the solidarity action and demanded of the State Government to intervene in the struggle to settle the dispute.

Hosiery Workers Strike

About 12,000 hosiery workers of Tirupur observed one day's token strike demanding increase in wages and D.A. A high level Tripartite Committee was formed in 1981 to decide about the work norms and wages of the hosiery workers. Although the work norms were decided, but the wages could not be finalised due to the adamant attitude of the managements. They also refused to pay the D.A. The unions have decided to go on indefinite strike if the managements fail to revise the wages and pay D.A.

KERALA

Victory of Electricity Workers

The glorious 35-day united strike of the Kerala electricity workers came to a successful end when the UDF Government was compelled to sign the settlement on April 11. The strike was launched on March 8 unitedly by all the unions of the electricity workers, including the INTUC, demanding implementation of the 1978 agreement and settlement of the new charter of demand, submitted more than two years back. Throwing all norms of industrial disputes to the winds the UDF Government refused to discuss with the unions. It violated the principle of collective bargaining. It banned the strike and threatened the workers with dismissals. It served five

ultimatums and to divide the ranks, offered an interim relief of Rs. 50/-. But neither the threats nor the trick did click. The strike was near total. Only a small coterie of the Electricity Minister remained as faithful dogs of the Minister. The INTUC Executive Committee defied the Government pressure and joined the united platform. The frantic UDF Government unleashed all the repressive machineries the CRP, BSF, the State Police and arrested thousands including women and children under ESMA and MISA. The monstrosity of the UDF Government crossed all limits when it arrested even women on maternity leaves. On the other hand, the LDF went all out to mobilise the democratic forces in support of the strike. At the call of the State Campaign Committee, the industrial workers went on solidarity strike throughout the state on March 23. It was a virtual bundh. The strike practically isolated the Government from the people and ultimately it was forced to come down for settlement on April 11.

On 14 items the Government had to agree to implement the earlier agreement. The rest of the issues were referred to a one man Commission of a retired High Court judge. It was agreed that the strength of the staff would be calculated on the basis of the existing norm for 1982 and 1983 and would be implemented with retrospective effect. It was also agreed to restore the transfer guidelines which were cancelled by the Board contrary to the conditions of the earlier agreement. On behalf of the workers the negotiations were conducted by E. Balanandan, K.A. Rajan and K.C. Mathew.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Strike Movement

3,000 workers of DBR Mills, Hyderabad went on tool down strike and compelled the management to accede to their demand for the minimum bonus of 8.33 per cent. The management agreed the pay the bonus by March 15. The workers were represented by D.G. Narasimha Rao (CITU), Rajeshwar Rao (T.D.) and the Union Secretary, Balaiah.

Karimanager District Handloom-Powerloom Karmika Sangham (CITU) entered into an agreement increasing the wages of the workers with retrospective effect from January 15 after two months of continuous strike agitations.

300 workers of stone mines of Kethavaram village of Kurnool Taluk went on strike from March 2 demanding increase in wages. After four days of complete strike the management came down to make settlement increasing their wages. The workers organised a victory rally which was addressed by M.A. Gafoor, the District CITU Secretary.

Seed Cooperative employees of Kurnool are on strike from February 24 demanding implementation of minimum wages, service security,

medical facilities, 8 hours working day, weekly rest, etc. Memoranda have been submitted to the District Collector and the Labour officer to intervene to set le the dispute. Huge rallies and processions are being organised by CITU in support of the struggles.

The A.P. Government Work Charged Employees Union decided to go on strike from March 26 if their demands for payment of pension and gratuity to 2000 retired workers are not conceded forthwith.

Conferences, Dharans, Demonstrations

The Building Workers of Vizianagram conducted their Annual Conference which was inaugurated by S. Gangadhar Reddy, leader of the jute workers. The conference elected D.V. Satyanarayana, Hochi Babu and Sanyasi as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

The Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Federation Employees' Union conducted its Annual Conference on February 26 under the Presidentship of Y. Girivarma. Inaugurating the conference, Parsa Satyanagayana, President of the State CITU, condemned the anti-labour and economic policies of the Central Government which have heaped miseries on the workers. He urged upon the workers to build up united struggles to effectively resist the offensives of the Government. P. Diwakar (CITU) and Narasingha Rao of Vishakha Dairy Sangham also addressed the conference. The conference elected G. Givarna, K.N.R. Prasad and Ch. Prasad Rao as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

The management of Samalkat Sugar Factory laid off 136 regular workers, 51 clerical staff, 374 seasonal workers and 51 seasonal clerks from February 12. The lay-off was imposed due to infight amongst the partners of the factory. The staff and workers have started continuous dharna before the office.

The Rayalaseema Paper Mills staff and workers' Union conducted gate meetings demanding D.A. at the rate of Rs. 2/- per point of Consumer Price Index scrapping the present rate of Rs. 1.30 per point. A similar gate meeting was organised by the A.P. Carbides workers with the same demand.

2,000 N.G.Os of Guntur staged demonstration in front of the Collector's office on March 26, demanding payment of bonus at the rate of 15 days' wages, fixation of pay scales, etc. The demonstration was given at the call of the All India Federation of State Government Employees as a part of the all India programme.

The workers of Rice Mills and Rickshaws of Gavaravarsa of W.G. District struck work and demonstrated against the illegal action of police in arresting all the Mutha workers of the mill on a false charge of thefts. After the intervention of B. Raja Rao (CITU), they were released.

Anti-social elements hired by the contractors of the Rayalaseema Paper Mills launched physical attacks on the contract workers for joining the CITU union. The attacks were launched in open connivance with the police. A huge protest demonstration was organised in the town demanding action against the police and the anti-socials.

DELHI

Massive Strike Actions

At the call of the Ghaziabad District Committee of CITU, under the Delhi State Committee, over ten thousand workers of more than 60 factories went on a one-day strike on March 26. The strike was called with 5-point demands; minimum wage of Rs. 500 & variable D.A. at the rate of Rs. 1.70 per point of Consumer Price Index; immediate release of the six leaders of the Textile Mill Mazdoor Sangh (CITU) of Modinagar who have been detained under NSA; halt to closures, lockouts, lay-offs and retrenchments; halt to police repression and the District Administration's curbs on CITU's activities in Modi Kapra Mills; and variable D.A. in Engineering industry at the rate of Rs. 2/- per point.

The strike was called in the background of the growing offensive on the CITU union at Modi Textile Mills. The CITU led unions of the "D" Mill had organised a successful 4-day strike prior to this forcing the management to arrive at a negotiated settlement with the union reinstating the victimised workers. Currently led by CITU, the workers of the "C" Mill are on strike since March 6 in protest against the suspension of 28 workers. At the instance of the Modis, the police has been harassing and intimidating the CITU activists and involved a large number of them under false cases. During the last one year, the management resorted to closures of 24 units in Ghaziabad affecting 2,800 workers. Retrenchments, in 12 mills affected 650 workers. Apart from this there were lay-off in four mills. In the background of such offensive, the strike of March 26 recorded an overwhelming success.

Agitation in Birla Mill

Led by CITU, hundreds of workers courted arrest on March 27 demanding immediate lifting of the three month old lockout of the Birla Textile Mills of Delhi. They demanded nationalisation of the mill, the lockout of which has affected about 6,000 workers. A large number of women from the families of the workers also courted arrest. The women were mobilised by the Janavadi Mahila Samity.

The current agitation has been in the background of a closure notice issued by the management for the Weaving unit in February, 1983, when all the workers went on indefinite strike from March 3, 1983. The management, although was compelled to reach an agreement with the CITU union and the

textile Mazdoor Congress to end the strike did not implement it. Despite repeated representations to the Government, the Labour Department did not intervene. With the election of K.K. Birla in the Rajya Sabha with the Congress(I) support, the Government's attitude to the workers of the mill has further hardened. Fully aware of the implications of these developments, the workers are however determined to carry forward an united struggle against the management's high handedness.

Annual Conference

The Seventh Annual Conference of the General Mazdoor Lal Jhanda Union (CITU) was held at the Okhala industrial estate on April 5, conducted by a presidium consisting of Nathu Prasad, Than Chand and Makan Singh. The Conference was inaugurated by Joginder Sharma, Secretary of the Delhi State Committee. Puran Chand, the General Secretary of the Union, in his report highlighted the struggles conducted by the union and also critically analysed them. 17 delegates participated in the discussions out of 200 who attended the Conference. The Conference adopted resolutions demanding Rs. 500/- as minimum wage; take over of the Birla textile Mill, Hindustan General Industries and Esthetic Export Ltd.; for peace and harmony in Punjab and Haryana, against danger of war and struggles for peace, etc. The conference elected a 21-member committee with Nathu Prasad, Puran Chand and Ram Gopal as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

The Second Annual Conference of Marwari Ausdhalay Karmachari Union (CITU) was held on April 16 under the presidentship of Ram Kumar and Devki Nandan Sharma. Suraj Bhan Kashyap, the General Secretary, in his report dealt with the struggles launched by the union against the offensives of the management and the Government. The conference adopted resolutions against price rise, unemployment, the growing authoritarianism, for peace in Punjab, etc. The conference elected Ram Kumar and Smt. Satyarobert as the President and General Secretary respectively.

Meeting of Minimum Wage Advisory Board

A meeting of the Minimum Wage Advisory Board of the Delhi Administration was held on March 9. Opposing to the proposal of Rs. 354/- as the minimum wage for unskilled workers, Bachan Singh, the CITU representative demanded Rs.500/- as minimum wage plus D. A. with full neutralisation of the rise with cost of living index pegged at 300 points (base 1960=100). He demanded the rate of differential for the unskilled, semi-skilled workers as 1:1.5:2. CITU also demanded the wage revision to be made effective from January 1, 1984 and be implemented by all concerns. Bachan Singh quoted the example of the women in the Social Welfare Centres run by the Delhi Administration, who are given a pittance

of Rs. 100/- to Rs. 125 as wages per month. In a statement issued to the press on March 10, the Delhi State Committee of CITU warned the Government of heightened agitation if the demand for the above minimum wage is not conceded,

KARNATAKA

State Council Meeting

The Karnataka State Council of CITU met at Dandeli on February 19 and 20 under the Presidency of Surya Naryana Rao. In his General Secretary's report, C. Nanjundappa made an indepth analysis of international and national situation. He highlighted the danger of nuclear war created by the American imperialism and urged for development of the struggle for peace and defence of socialism. In the national situation, he elaborated the growing danger of authoritarianism by the Congress (I) Government of the Centre and focused on the increasing offensive of lockouts and closures launched by the employees and the government. He highlighted the developing united struggles and emphasised for more concentrated independent activities of CITU and further the united struggles. 14 comrades participated in the discussions. The meeting adopted a resolution supporting the jute workers' struggle and directing all unions to send telegrams to the government demanding nationalisation of the jute industry. Other resolutions were against price rise, unemployment, against war and struggle for peace, etc.

The Council dropped P. K. A. Latif and M. Iqbal Hussain who are no longer in the trade union front, expelled Rajendra Prasad of Dandeli and Muthu Kumar of KGF for anti-CITU activities and censured I. R. Asrana of Virajpet for signing an agreement at variance with the CITU line. The Council decided to hold the Fourth State Conference at Mangalore in the month of May.

On the evening of 19th there was a procession and a public meeting which was addressed by Surya Narayan Rao, N. K. Upadhyaya, C. Nanjundappa, V. J. K. Nair and others.

BIHAR

Annual Conference

The Sixth Annual Conference of Bihar State Electricity Field Kamgar Union was held at Sasaram from April 7 to 9. A presidium consisting of Ram Prasad Singh, Md. Hasib, Jaglal Chowdhury and Shivnaryan Mishra conducted the proceedings of the Conference. Inaugurating the conference, Yogeshwar Gope, President of the State CITU, said that CITU was born with the motto of united struggles against the ruling class and the Congress

(I) Government representing them. He called the delegates to carry forward the objective of CITU steadfastly. He also drew attention of the delegates to the heightened danger of war created by the imperialists headed by the USA and urged upon the delegates to wage consistent struggles for peace and defence of socialism.

The conference was attended by 250 delegates representing about 5,000 electricity workers of the state. 21 delegates participated in the General Secretary's report placed by Zulfiqar Khan. The conference condemned the dastardly murder of the Assistant Secretary Com. Surendra Prasad by the gangsters who set fire to the tent of the electricity workers who were on dharna in front of the Secretariat at Patna. Another leader, Com. Surya Dayal Paswan was also seriously injured.

The conference reiterated the pressing demands of the electricity workers and decided to hold a central demonstration before the Vidyut Bhawan at Patna on May 11. Through a resolution, the conference called upon all the electricity workers to step up united struggle for the achievement of their demands.

Md. Ismail, M.P., Vice-President of CITU addressed the conference on April 9. He emphasised the significance of united struggles. He cited the glorious example set by the jute workers who by dint of their dogged unity achieved significant victory in their struggle. He pointed to the sharp contrast between the left front government of W. Bengal which successfully intervened to secure victory to the jute workers, while the Central Government refused to intervene. In the afternoon, a mass meeting was held in the Town High School Maidan, preceded by a huge procession. The open rally was addressed by Md. Ismail and other leaders. Earlier, the conference re-elected Ram Prasad Singh and Zulfiqar Khan as President and General Secretary respectively.

Strike by Bharat Wagon Workers

Led by CITU, the workers of Bharat Wagon, a Central Public Sector Undertaking, went on one day's token strike on April 10. The strike was launched in pursuance of its 36 point charter of demands pending for a long time. Despite repeated representations to the Government, it did not intervene to prevail upon the management to call the union for negotiation. On the contrary, the management had arrived at agreement with its patronised union and tried to force it on all workers. The management had also violated the chain system of recruitment of apprentices and debarred two activists of the CITU union from the posts. Addressing the gate meeting, S.P. Singh, the General Secretary, called upon the workers to carry forward the struggle till the demands are conceded by the management.

Police Vandalism at Paradip

With a motive to break the strike of the port and dock workers, the armed police of Orissa resorted to a worst type of vandalism at Paradip on March 19, killing atleast 30 people and burning their hutments. The incident happened because of two warring groups of INTUC, wherefrom the anti-socials took the reigns. The dispute between the listed and unlisted contract workers doing the loading and unloading job at the port reached a boiling point when the anti-socials hired by the contractors were supposed to have killed one O.C. and a constable. The port and dock workers at that time were holding a mass meeting called by the Joint Action Committee about 2 k m. away from the spot. Taking advantage of the situation the government deployed the armed police to intimidate the workers. The armed police resorted to indiscriminate firing and arson, killing at least 30 persons including women and children. The height of monstrosity of the Congress(I) government was revealed when its Chief Minister instead of ordering judicial enquiry on the police vandalism, said that the incident was very natural since policemen were killed. The leadership of CPI(M) and CITU visited the spot along with others and demanded a judicial enquiry into the incident. The port and dock workers however rebuffed the government attempt to disrupt the strike and continued it with full determination.

Grim Struggle of Textile Mill Workers

The oldest spinning mill of Orissa, the Bhaskar Textile Mills, owned by the Birla family, declared illegal lockout on October 2, 1982 and subsequently closed down from January 10, 1983. The closure has affected 3,000 workers and about 2 lakh people of the area. Led by Jarsuguda Industrial Mazdoor Union (CITU), the workers are on girm struggle demanding take over of the mill. The State Government, going back on its earlier assurance, has refused to take over the mill. When a delegation of the union led by Lambodar Naik, Secretary of the State Committee met the Central Government officials at Delhi on April 21, they were deputed to meet the Orissa Chief Minister for the take over. Thus the Central Government wanted to shirk off its responsibilities for the take over. The workers have decided to carry forward the struggle till the mill is taken over by the Government Organised by the State CITU, a massive demonstration was held before the State Assmby on March 27, demanding take over of the mill.

High-handedness of CISF

The interference of the CISF in the day to day activities in the industrial installations reached a new height at Orissa when they resorted to indiscriminate lathi-charge at the Heavy Water Plant, Talcher on February 28. They lathi charged not only the

workers, but also the management personnel. It all started when the CISF suddenly introduced a revised procedure of check up. When the workers resented at such sudden and arbitrary change of procedure, the CISF started lathi charging. The workers have started agitations demanding withdrawal of the CISF. Even the management has lodged a protest to the government. Samar Mukherjee, M.P., General Secretary of CITU has brought the matter to the notice of the Prime Minister. Ajit Bag, M.P. has also raised it in the parliament.

Convention of Working Women

The first convention of working women was held in Orissa at Bhubaneswar on March 27. Inaugurating the convention, Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) called upon the delegates to wage struggles for the common interest of the working class along with the specific demands of the working women. She also referred to other common problems of the women like orthodox feudal ideas, dowry, etc., which should also be fought. Greeting the convention, Ajeya Rout, General Secretary, of the State CITU, referred to the militant struggles of the women workers of Bhaskar Textile Mills, braving the police and gangster attacks, their struggle in Kalta mines and other industrial centres, and extended full support of the state CITU to the problems of the women workers.

The convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of Kalyani Das, Sumati, Marsha Hembram, Mukta Das, Jamini Das, Shakuntala Mishra and Urmimala Badajena. Indumala Nandi placed the report. 15 delegates participated in the discussions. The convention adopted resolutions on lock-outs and closures, on police atrocities at Paradip, against war and for peace, on atrocities on women, Harijans and Adivasis, etc. The convention elected a 13 member committee with Indumala Nandi and Jogmaya Dey as Joint Convenors. It also elected a 15-member committee of the state Democratic Women's Association with Jamini Das and Shakuntala Mishra as joint convenors.

A public meeting was held in the evening under the presidentship of Jamini Das, which was addressed by Vimal Ranadive, Ajeya Rout, Indumala Nandi, Marsha Hembram, Kalyani Das and Pratima Patnaik.

TRIPURA**Massive Peace Rallies**

Organised by the State CPI(M), CITU, 6th February Committee and other mass organisations, the month of April saw a series of peace rallies in Tripura. On April 1, a huge procession was taken out at Teliamura. About 4,000 workers, women, tribals and others joined the procession denouncing the American designs for a nuclear war. The procession

culminated in a rally in front of the office of the Taliamura Co-ordination committee of workers. Similar rallies were held in all parts of the region. On April 3, a convention was held at Jiania attended by more than 300 persons. Another convention at Beltali was attended by 200 persons. A central rally has been organised at Agartala on April 24.

MAHARASHTRA

Massive Demonstration by State Govt. Employees

More than one lakh State Government and Semi — Government employees, as well as primary and secondary teachers, coming from all parts of the state marched through the streets of Bombay on March 26 and gave an ultimatum to the Government that if their long pending demands of bonus and interim relief are not accepted, they will resort to strike action from July. The demonstration was addressed among others by R.G. Karnik — General Secretary of the Confederation, Anuaradha Athavale of Govt. Nurses' Federation, Sambhaji Gadhev — MMUCTO etc.

Roads Named After Parulekar, Kurane

On March 30, i.e., one day before the present Bombay Municipal Corporation was to complete its term as a result of Supersession by the state government, a road in Juhu and a Square in Worli were named after S.V. Parulekar and P.K. Kurane respectively. S.V. Parulekar was a member of the first Central Committee of CPI(M) elected in 1964, and died of heart attack in 1965 while in jail. P.K. Kurane was the State Committee member of CPI(M) and General Secretary of the State CITU as well as Working Committee member of Central CITU. The renaming was done by Man Mohan Singh Bedi, the Mayor of Bombay. Another Square in Prabahadevi was named Leningrad Square. The functions were addressed by S.Y. Kolhatkar, Godavari Parulekar and Ahiliya Rangnekar, the C.C. members of CPI(M).

RAJASTHAN

Struggle in J.K. Stepped up

Led by CITU, the struggle against the J.K. group of companies at Kota has been stepped up by the workers against retrenchments, suspensions, charge-sheets and in pursuance of the 21-point charter of demands submitted to the management of J.K. Synthetics. Since March 13, the workers are on a continuous dharna in front of the J.K. gate. From April 1 the workers of J.K. Synthetics, J.K. Tyre Cord, — J.K. Staples, and J.K. Acrolics have started work to rule. Although the management assured to start negotiations, it went back against the assurance and started taking retaliatory actions. In place of the regular workers, it is employing contract workers to do regular jobs. About 150 workers have been suspended or chargesheeted. The workers were

compelled to observe one day's strike on March 21. In retaliation, following the Government practice, the management deducted eight days wages for the one day strike.

Successful Bonus struggle

Led by Rajasthan Anushakti Karmachari Union (CITU), the workers of Rajasthan Atomic Power Project, Kota, compelled the management to sign an agreement with the union granting 8.33 per cent bonus for the year 1983-84. A long drawn struggle was waged by the workers demanding bonus. But the management adopted a delaying tactics to refuse the bonus. Eventhough it started negotiations, it protracted it for long time. However, faced with united struggle by the workers, it ultimately signed the settlement on April 7.

HARYANA

Struggle Against Gedore

Led by Gedore Tools Worker's Union, the workers of the Gedore Tools are in bitter struggle against the repressive policy of the management. To break the CITU union, the management arbitrarily violated an agreement and dismissed the President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Propaganda Secretary and other office bearers of the union. It has also suspended all the 21 members of the Working Committee. Eight day's wages have been illegally deducted from 132 members of the union. The Haryana Government's police coming in to openly support the management, has arrested several Working Committee members and involved a large number of workers in false police cases. When Tek Chand Gupta, Secretary, State CITU lodged complain to the State Government, revealing the various corrupt practices of the Labour Department, he was physically assaulted by the hired hoodlums of the management and also arrested under cooked up charges. The militant workers of Sonapat however have intensified their united struggle against the Government-management combine. In a statement issued to the press on March 28, S. N. Solanki, the General Secretary of the State Committee demanded immediate release of all the leaders, reinstatement of the dismissed leaders and withdrawal of the police cases, failing which the joint movement of the workers would be stepped up.

Move to Close HTM Opposed

In a statement issued to the press on April 7, the Hissar District Committee of CITU has condemned the move of the management of Hissar Textile Mills to close it down. It vehemently opposed the management's bogus plea of inter-union rivalry. It charged the management for violating all previous agreements, retrenching a large number of workers and increasing the workload on the rest. All the unions met the Chief Minister and the Labour Commissioner at Chandigarh demanding immediate takeover of the mill to save the lives of about 6,000 workers.

Convention of Opposition Parties

APRIL 17, 1984 opened a new chapter in the united struggles against the authoritarian rule of the Congress(I) with the convention of the opposition parties on price rise, unemployment and other people's issues at Mavlankar Hall, New Delhi. The convention was attended by about one thousand representatives of the 17 opposition parties and various mass organisations of workers, peasants, agricultural labourers, women, students, youth and others. The convention paved the road for cooperation between the opposition political parties and the mass organisations to carry forward the united struggle against the Government's anti-people policies in pursuance of the 11-point demands formulated at the Calcutta meeting earlier.

The convention was chaired by H.N. Bahuguna of DSP with one representative of the opposition parties in the presidium. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, General Secretary of CPI(M) moved the main resolution of the convention. He emphasised on the significance that despite diverse political ideologies the opposition parties have combined together on the basis of a common agreement to identify the burning issues faced by the people, the working class, the peasantry and other toiling sections as a result of the misrule of the Congress(I). As example, he referred to the spiralling price rise, growing unemployment, increasing attack on the working class in the form of lockouts and closures, ruthless exploitation of the peasantry, collapse of the public distribution system, submission to the IMF dictates and wooing the multinationals, rise of the divisive, communal and secessionist forces, deteriorating law and order, the attempts to topple the non-Congress(I) state Governments and concentrating more and more power at the Centre. The representatives of each party spoke on the resolution which was adopted unanimously. The declaration appealed to the people to maintain unity of the country and step up the united struggles and oppose all moves towards authoritarianism and attack on the standard of living of the common people. The convention also adopted a resolution expressing solidarity with the Tamil people of Sri Lanka and urged upon the Governments of India and Sri Lanka to do everything possible to restore peace and resolution of the just demands of the Tamil minorities.

Peace Day Observed

PEACE Day was observed at various places of the country on April 13 in pursuance of the call of the eight opposition and left parties and various mass organisations from the convention held at New Delhi on March 8 and 9.

A huge rally was jointly organised in front of the U.S. Information Centre at Calcutta by CPI(M), CPI, FB, RSP, Forward Block(M), RCPI, Congress(S), etc. The rally was joined by large sections of

the members of various mass organisations like CITU, AITUC, UTUC, TUCC, SFI, AISF, DYFI, AIDWA, etc., apart from artists, litterateurs, etc. A month long signature campaign was started to convey to Reagan the opposition of the people against his nuclear adventure to devastate humanity.

At Delhi, a long cycle procession was taken out shouting slogans against the U.S. imperialists and defending the cause of peace and socialism. Demonstrations, conventions, and rallies were held at Tripura, Kerala, Bihar, U.P., Goa, etc.

Conference of AICAPEF

THE Second Conference of the All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation was held at Calcutta from March 22 to 24. The open session was held on 22nd which was presided over by Manoranjan Roy, Vice-President, CITU and General Secretary of the W. Bengal Committee, and addressed by Jyoti Basu, the State Chief Minister, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU and Ranen Sen of AITUC. Jyoti Basu called upon the workers to defend their trade union rights including the right to strike. Contrasting the anti-labour policy of Congress(I) Government of the Centre with that of the left front government, he extended full support of the left front government to the struggle of the pharmaceutical workers. B.T. Ranadive urged upon the workers to step up the united struggles against the policies of the Central Government which is further wooing the multinationals who are already dominating the pharmaceutical production in India. He also inaugurated the delegates' session on 23rd and called upon the workers to defeat the designs of the divisive forces helped by the imperialist agencies to desmember the country and join the mainstream of the united struggles launched by the National Campaign Committee. He said, the unity of the workers should be given a further stable shape in the form of a confederation to prepare an alternative blue print for the management of the economy in the interest of the working class. He further urged upon the workers to perform their international task by joining the developing struggle for peace and defend the achievements of socialism against the danger of a nuclear war created by the U.S. imperialists. Several fraternal delegates also addressed the conference.

In the two day deliberations, the conference adopted a 13-point common charter of demands and called upon the workers to launch struggles in pursuance of the demands. In another resolution the conference demanded nationalisation of the multinational and Indian monopoly drug companies. The conference elected a 85-member General Council, 31 member Working Committee and a 14 member Secretariat with the following office bearers: B.S. Chitre-President, Bidyut Ganguly and C.C. Mendes — two Jt. General Secretaries; J.S. Majumdar, Madan Phadnis, I.B. Pereira and Gopal Bhattacharjee — Vice-Presidents; Jahar Gupta, D.N. Mayekar, T. Chandrasekharan and George Verghese — Secretaries and Niranjana Mukherjee-Treasurer.

CITU Demands More Power to States

IN a memorandum on the questionnaire circulated by the Commission on Centre-State relations (Sarkaria Commission), the CITU has demanded changes in the constitution, for solution of some of the problems which have acquired urgency in the socio-political relationship.

The memorandum began with the background in which the constitution was framed. The British rulers had established a highly centralised administration, facing which the national freedom movement "had to forge the unity of the entire people cutting across caste, communal, linguistic differences and develop the unity of India based on democracy, equality and brotherhood". The British rulers started the game of "divide and rule".

"The idea of a federal centre with wide autonomy for the provinces came to be woven into the framework of the future constitution as spelt out in the Congress-League Pact of 1916, Motilal Nehru report of 1928 and so on, right down to the discussions of the 1940s. A major change however took place in 1947, when the country was divided into the Hindu majority—Indian Union and the Muslim Majority—Pakistan. The bourgeoisie which stood at the head of the freedom movement and which became the ruling class was interested in an extensive home market which requires a centralised rather than federal state. It therefore went back on all its earlier commitments to the federal set up, state autonomy, reorganisation of states on linguistic basis.

While the basic nature of the constitution framed in 1950 was declared to be federal in principle, its content was excessive centralisation. Furthermore, in its actual making it became still more centralised. The fact that the same political party was in the saddle at the centre and in all the states for nearly three decades facilitated this process. The states were made to surrender "voluntarily" the rights that they had in the original provisions of the constitution. Many of the amendments made to the constitution during the last 37 years deprived the states of whatever elements of autonomy they originally had!

The memorandum points out that "in the very framing of the constitution the federal principle and state autonomy were to a large extent violated. We do not agree that there is nothing wrong with the constitution as it was framed, that what is wrong is only its working. At the same time, we hold that in its actual working the constitution came to be distorted; even the limited extent of autonomy that found a place in the constitution has been eroded. We therefore suggest a thorough re-examination of the basic provisions of the constitution".

The memorandum states "The CITU stands for the unity of the country and fights all forces of dis-

integration; we definitely stand for an effective and efficient Centre capable of defending the country, organising and consolidating its economic life and adequately armed with powers to discharge its other jobs like foreign policy, communications, foreign trade etc" ... "The ruling party's idea of a strong Centre is dictatorial Centre carrying out its behests. The 19th September 1968 token strike of Central Government Employees provides an excellent example. The strike was declared illegal through an Ordinance and all the State Governments were directed to arrest, rather detain without trial, the Central Government employees, which the Government of Kerala led by Shri E.M.S. Namboodiripad (CPI-M) refused as it was not in consonance with the policy which the parties in the Government followed. The Government, however, assured to maintain law and order. But the Union Government virtually threatened the Kerala Government with grave consequences. The fact that the notorious 42nd amendment of the Emergency days reduced the States to the position of subordinate dependents of Government of India, showed that an attack on their powers was the inevitable requirement of authoritarian rule" ... "The constitution that was framed after independence reflected the needs of the capitalist path of development which required India as unified, single, homogeneous market. It reflected the needs of the big capitalists allied with landlords, who considered the demands of democracy, state autonomy or equality of languages, as obstacles to their economic domination and political power.

The pro-vested interest policies of the Centre, the economic crisis, the impoverishment of the masses resulted in increased attacks on democratic rights and the rights of the state.

This process was accompanied by abject economic dependence of the states on the Centre".

The memorandum further points out that the constitution amendments during internal emergency have made inroads in states' power. "Setting up of para military forces like Central Industrial Security Force and their intervention in law and order situation in States had also eroded the power of the States. In Talcher (Orissa), Panipat (Haryana) in Asansol-Raniganj area (West Bengal) the CISF is disturbing the law and order situation which the State Government would have to manage".

... "By misusing the Governors' powers minority ministries of the ruling party were installed and the verdict of the electorate was nullified. Similarly by withholding Presidential assent to bills passed by state legislatures, the Centre has succeeded in sabotaging progressive legislations passed in the interests of the people. The process of agrarian and educational reform started by the 1957-59 government of Kerala were blocked by the Centre. Recently

the agrarian legislation passed by the Left Front Government of West Bengal was sent but has not received Presidential assent, though months have passed since the legislature voted it. The measure to grant recognition to trade unions on the basis of secret ballot passed by an earlier Left Front Ministry was killed using the same device of withholding assent. The Andhra Bill to abolish the Upper Chamber in the State has also been now blocked."

... "The CITU does not believe that a correct solution of the question will ipso-facto solve the problems of the Indian people. Their solution relates to changing the basic structure of society. But arming the states with autonomous powers, relaxing the dictatorial grip of the Centre and the ruling party, will help the people to fight the grip of the vested interests on the states and Central Government.

Today the party which rules at the Centre is not in charge of the administration in several states. This gives added urgency to the question of a proper redistribution of powers between the Centre and the States, so that the mandate received from the people by the party which wins the election at the state level gets adequate importance, along with the mandate received by the ruling party at the Center".

CITU's Suggestions

The CITU, therefore, has made the following suggestions :-

1. Art 248 of the constitution be amended to empower exclusively the states to make any law with respect any subject not enumerated in the Union or Concurrent lists. Art 249 should be deleted. The centre and the states should not transgress into each other's sphere.

2. "Preserve and strengthen the union authority in subjects that could be carried out only by the Central authority and not by the any single state, such as Defence, Foreign Affairs including Foreign Trade, Currency and Communication and Economic Coordination. In areas such as Planning, fixing of prices, wages etc., the Centre may not only coordinate but also issue general direction. In the matter of Planning and economic coordination however, the Centre will have to conform to the general guidelines laid down by the National Development Council, in which the states will have representation along with the Centre. At the moment, neither the Council nor the Planning Commission is referred to in the constitution. This lacuna may be closed by introducing a separate Article which should also state clearly that National Development Council will function democratically and that the Planning Commission will be a body appointed by and accountable to the Council. Loans and grants for development purpose are now the prerogative of the Planning Commission. It is thus important that the states have some say in the manner of operation of the Commission.

Heavy industries, electric power, oil and coal or irrigation schemes which concern more than one state, to be kept in Union list, so that there can be

a common policy. In matters concerning industrial licensing, etc., major modifications in regard to allocation of powers between the Centre and the State are called for. The list in the Seventh Schedule should be reformulated so that the States may be given exclusive powers in respect of certain categories of industries.

The right of the Central Reserve Police or other police forces the Union Govt. may raise to operate in the states, should be withdrawn. The subject of law and order and the police should be fully in State's sphere and the Centre should not interfere with its own specially created forces."

3. The post of Governor should be abolished and "if this is not possible for any reason the post should be filled by somebody who enjoys the confidence of the state legislatures, no Governor to continue when there is a change in the elected legislature".

4. "All India services like the IAS, the IPS etc., whose officers are posted to the States, but remain under the supervision and disciplinary control of the Central Government, must be abolished. There should be only Union Services and State Services and recruitment to them should be made respectively by the Union Government and the state government concerned".

5. "The articles regarding the Finance Commission and distribution of revenues should be amended to provide for 75 per cent of the total revenues raised by the Centre from all sources for allocation to different states by the Finance Commission. This is necessary to end the mendicant status of the states"... "Article 280, Clause 3, sub-clause (a) which provides for "the distribution between the Union and the states of the nett proceeds of the taxes which are to be or may be divided between the Union and the States" should be omitted and the entire clause be redrafted so as to make it clear that it is the duty of the Commission to make recommendations to the President as to the allocation between the states of their respective shares of the proceeds. The states must also be accorded more powers for imposing taxes on their own, and to determine the limit of public borrowing in their respective cases. To achieve these objectives the Seventh Schedule, Union, States and Concurrent list should be suitably amended".

6. "The planning and coordination of economic development should be the responsibility of the Centre which however should be carried out in a democratic way through the National Development Council in which the states should have equal representation alongwith the Centre and whose executive organ the Planning Commission should be"... "The real solution of the emerging crisis is centralised planning with the active involvement of the states in the formulation and the implementation of policies, or state autonomy under centralised but democratic guidance",

7. The CITU has also made suggestions about status of various languages, system of proportional representation involving right to recall and special status for J&K in Indian Union.

Seminar on National Transport Policy

THE affiliates of International Transport Federation (ITF) organised a seminar on National Transport policy at New Delhi on April 23-25, 1984. The organisers invited various other organisations including those affiliated to WFTU.

Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary, attended the seminar on behalf of CITU, while representatives of AITUC, BMS, Railway Employees Confederation and some other-non-affiliated unions also attended. NFIR, rather INTUC was conspicuous by its absence though it is affiliated to ITF.

The Seminar was inaugurated by Prof. Madhu Dandavate, M.P. M.S. Hoda, Secretary, Asia/Pacific Region, ITF, informed the participants that the European affiliates of ITF have arrived at the following conclusions after extensive debate.

1. Transport should not be considered as a commercial venture but a public utility and social service for the good of the community at large. 2. The policy of free market economy has resulted in an imbalance in the provision of public transport and unprofitable local railways and public road transport was being gradually abolished. This policy should be reversed. 3. An enlightened transport policy should aim at optimal promotion of public transport with financial help from the Govt. for providing social service functions. 4. The philosophy of free market economy which dominates most of the advanced countries' transport policy has given rise to callous waste of scarce sources of energy, destruction of the environment and has created atmospheric pollutions.

He also said that Asian/Pacific Inland Transport Conference of ITF held in Tokyo in January last, has arrived at the following conclusions:

(a) Ensure that transport system is effectively coordinated, based on the needs of the whole society, rather than commercial interest; (b) it should oppose privatisation of main public transport; (c) it should aim to increase the real income of the workers; (d) it should ensure full employment and expansion of job opportunities; (e) it should give priority to environmental and safety factors; (f) it should demand sharing out of the social cost of public transport with private enterprise and make them carry the legitimate social burden; (g) it should try to promote energy saving means of transport and (h) above all give full opportunity to the workers and their trade unions in the development of the transport policy frame work of their country.

The papers presented in the seminar made a critical review of the report and recommendation of the National Transport Policy Committee which was appointed in 1978 and submitted its report by the end of 1979. The report recommended free enterprises in every sphere. It also advocated that all branches of Transport Industry must not only be self-sufficient, but also contribute to the general revenues and have funds for further developments.

The papers were divided in 7 parts, namely: Frame

work of Transport Development; Railway; Road Transport; Shipping Policy; Air Transport; Inland Water Transport and An over due of NTPC and suggestions. Broadly 3 group i.e. Land, Water and Air transports were formed to discuss the papers. Nrisingha Chakrabarty was in the Railway-cum-Road Transport group.

One common feature in all the groups was that they advocated more and more nationalisations and workers' participation. Only the lone BMS representative supported by some representatives of HMS held the view that nationalisation is not the only panacea. The conclusions in the Railway group were delayed because, there was intense debate on the question of stopping the amount which is now being paid to the states. All expect the CITU representative held that payment to the state in lieu of passenger tax and 50 per cent of the expenses on GRP should be stopped. Nrisingha Chakrabarty stated that, the question of Centre-State Relations which includes finance of the state and also the management of the Railways have now become a matter of the National debate through Sarkaria Commission. It would be incorrect to make such a conclusion here.

The last day of the seminar was devoted to the reporting of the conclusions of each group and a general discussion. The advocates of free enterprise raised the issue once again. On behalf of CITU it was stated that the Trade Union Movement must not forget its responsibility to the people. Every worker is a citizen first. Otherwise it would be easy for the Government to drive a wedge between the worker and the people. M.S. Hoda, ITF supported this view.

However, the seminar was useful in that the Trade Union Organisations representing various shades of opinion took part in a debate on National Transport Policy about which the Government of India has not done anything. A demand to set up a National Transport Authority with representations from both the labour and the users was raised.

Strike in C.L.W. Deferred

The Chief Personnel Officer on behalf of General Manager CLW through a notice dated 23rd April '84 exhibited publicly, has stated that the General Manager is prepared to recommend to the Railway Board to accord recognition to any union which secures majority support of the employees through secret ballot. The authorities also accepted some other demands of the workers. The workers consider this as a victory and the CLW Labour Union has therefore deferred the proposed 48 hours strike to enable the authorities to finalise the decision and conduct a secret ballot for recognition.

Memorandum by Plantation Workers' Federation

A delegation led by Parimal Mitra, Minister of Plantation and Forestry, W. Bengal and President of the All India Plantation Workers' Federation met the Union Deputy Minister for Labour on April 19 and reiterated the demands of the plantation workers in a memorandum. The delegation included Vimal Ranadive, the General Secretary and other office bearers of the federation, namely Subodh Sen, M.P., Amal Ghosh Dastidar, Dhaniram Khosla and R. Parmeshwaran.

The memorandum pointed to the non-implementation of the Plantation Labour Act with regard to the construction of houses, medical benefits, drinking water, apart from the unequal wages for the women workers. The fringe benefits available in the north with respect to tea, cereals, fire wood, etc. were also sought to be curtailed. While Dhaniram Khosla pointed to the deplorable conditions of housing and medical benefits at Assam, Amal Ghosh Dastidar drew the attention of the Minister to the attack on the trade union rights of the workers. He said that the managements' hired anti-socials were freely moving around the tea gardens threatening and assaulting the CITU activists in particular. The delegation also pointed to the case of about 30 plantations in W. Bengal, Tripura and Kerala which have been closed down due to mismanagement. Despite repeated demands by the workers the Central Government is refusing to take them over. The memorandum also pointed out that while the number of permanent workers are being reduced, and the temporary, casual and contract workers are being deputed to do the job of the regular workers, the vacancies created by retirement and deaths are not being filled up. The delegation said that under such circumstances of corrupt management, there is every possibility of the allotment of Rs. 42 crores allowed by the Government to the planters for rejuvenation of the gardens, be diverted to other channels. The memorandum demanded formation of a committee with the representatives of the workers to look into the investment of the fund for the proper purpose. The memorandum also demanded nationalisation of the big plantations and wholesale trade in tea. The Central Government is ignoring the demand only to protect the interest of the big planters who are looting crores of rupees through foreign trade.

HSCL Joint Forum at Breaking Point

The workers' group in the Joint Forum of HSCL in its meeting held at New Delhi on April 3, condemned the management for delaying the settlement of wage revision which is pending since the last three

years. This has caused serious resentment among the workers. The wages of the workers which are based on the Third Pay Commission's pay scales, were introduced ten years back. No revision of wages had been made since then for the HSCL workers, although at least two wage revisions have been made in other industries during the period. The management has even refused to grant interim relief to the workers. The workers' group therefore decided to take a common line of action for realisation of their demands.

During the meeting, the workers' group gave three alternatives to the management: To offer a minimum money which could be adjusted with basic wages; an offer of percentage basis of wage increase along with a formula to switch over to industrial pattern of D.A., and an offer of minimum guaranteed increase in wages and D.A. on the pattern of coal, steel, NTPC or such other industries. The workers' group reiterated that unless the management accepts either of the alternatives, no useful purpose would be served in continuing the forum. It was further stated that the management should agree to grant benefit in the range of Rs. 125/- at the lowest level and Rs. 213 at the highest level. The management was given the ultimatum to decide within one month, failing which the forum would be dissolved and the workers would launch movement on a common platform rallying all the central trade unions for realisation of their demands.

Seamen Hold Protest Demonstrations

Seamen organised under the Forward Seamen's Union of India (CITU) observed protest demonstrations at all ports and on board vessels on April 5. The protest was observed on this Maritime Day against the agreement arrived at by the Union Government with its patronised union, NUSI, in association with the National Maritime Board. The agreement was arrived at the back of the workers offering a meagre 5 percent rise in wages. In a leaflet distributed to the seamen, the FSUI (CITU) rejected the offer. It condemned the Government for its recalcitrant attitude towards the deteriorating employment position of the seamen. FUSI has been demanding permanent status for all categories of seamen. It demanded guaranteed work for at least ten months in a year, failing which it demanded retention allowance of Rs. 700/- per month. The S.M. Nanda Committee appointed by the Government had also recommended such allowance. But the Government, while having given relief to the shipping barons to the tune of about Rs. 50 Crores, is refusing to concede to the demands of the seamen. In pursuance of the demands, the FUSI appealed to all seamen to boycott flag hoisting on April 5, i.e. the Maritime Day, being observed by the National Maritime Boards; to turn down the festival ration and invitation and stage demonstrations.

Strike by Medical Representatives

NEARLY ten thousand Medical Representatives organised under the Federation of Medical Representatives' Associations of India went on one day's token strike on April 5. The call for the strike was given by the federation demanding of the Government and the employees settlement of its 27 point charter of demands submitted in 1978. It is to be noted that the services of the medical representatives are extremely insecure at the hands of the multinational drug cartels who are controlling about 80 per cent of the production in India. Their services are telegraphically terminated without following the principle of natural justice. The Indian monopoly concerns follow the same suit. The services of a large number of the office bearers of the federation, and its affiliated unions have been terminated without giving any reasons at all. Their trade union rights are trampled underfoot. The employers refuse to recognise the federation or recognise them as workmen and violate the labour laws with impunity. In this situation the federation demanded a tripartite meeting to discuss and settle the problems. But after one meeting the Government has shelved the issue. A series of agitational programmes were launched by the federation like demonstration before Parliament and before the Association of the multinationals at Bombay, viz, OPPI, strike by the medical representatives of the public sector IDPL on March 26, strike in Raptakos Brett from March 6 to 10, strike in Barroughs Wellcome, etc. Questions were raised in the Parliament. But the Government did not take any steps towards resolution of the problems. Under such circumstances they were compelled to go in for the strike. The CITU secretariat extended full support to the strike.

Annual Conferences

N.B.C.C. Workers' Union: The 5th Annual Conference of National Buildings Construction Corporation (Calcutta) Workers' Union was held at Calcutta on March 19. A presidium consisting of K.C. Ghosh, Suresh Debnath and Nikunja Das conducted the proceedings. The conference adopted resolutions on danger of war, price rise, on closures and lockouts, etc. Fraternal delegations from HSCCL, BBJ and the Coordination Committee of Indian Construction Workers Unions addressed the conference. The conference elected a fourteen member committee with Sachin Sen as President, K.C. Ghosh as Working President and Amal Krishna Kundu as the General Secretary.

N.B.C.C. Thikadar Workers Union: The N.B.C.C. Thikadar Workers' Union held its 2nd Annual Conference on April 1. The conference was conducted by a presidium consisting of Amal Kundu, Debanjan Chakraborty and Samiran Ganguly. It was addressed by Nirmal Roy, W.C. member of

W. Bengal CITU and B. Paswan of N.P.C.C. The conference elected a 15-member committee for 1984.

N.P.C.C. Contractors' Employees Union: The 2nd Annual Conference of the N.P.C.C. contractors' Employees Union (Eastern Region) was held on April 15, being presided over by B. Paswan. The conference was addressed by Samiran Ganguly of N.B.C.C. Thikadar Workers' Union. The conference elected B. Paswan as President and Dilip Kumar Bhattacharjee as the General Secretary. The conference also formed a 12-member Metro Rail Manch Committee with Dipak Mukherjee as Secretary and Brahmada Jha as the Treasurer.

CITU Demands Implementation of Labour Laws by Brick-Kiln Owners

B.T. Ranadive President and Samar Mukherjee M.P., General Secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Union have issued the following statement on April 25:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly criticises the decision of the Uttar Pradesh Govt. to exempt the brick-kiln owners from observing the labour laws which is reported in the press. It is also understood that similar attempts are being made by the Govt. at the Centre which has constituted a committee to examine the issue under the pressure of the brick-kiln owners. The labour laws had been enacted long back but the brick-kiln owners had been violating these laws with impunity. Due to persistent demands from the organised labour and the brick-kiln workers, the Govt was forced to take some steps after the Supreme Court judgement. An attempt was made to set them at naught by the brick-kiln owners who declared an illegal closure of their Kilns without opening them in the last season.

The CITU denounces the cowardly attack on Ram Attar Singh a teen-aged boy of a brick-kiln jamadar which shows how they deal with the labour and is also indicative of how they would behave in case they are granted such exemption.

The CITU demands that the exemption granted by the Govt. of U.P. should be withdrawn forthwith and the brick-kiln owners who have shot the boy should be brought to book.

The CITU supports the agitation launched by the brick-kiln workers and appeals to them to build up a powerful united movement against this attempt to once again relegate the brick-kiln workers to the state of bonded labour.

CITU Secretariat Meeting

THE CITU Secretariat met under the Presidentship of B.T. Ranadive on April 13 at the Central Office. The following other members attended the meeting: Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary; P. Ramamurti, Md. Ismail, Sushila Gopalan-Vice Presidents; Nrisingha Chakrabarty and P.K. Ganguly, Secretaries.

The meeting denounced the fresh spate of atrocities on the Tamil minorities at Sri Lanka. In a statement issued to the press the CITU expressed its firm opinion that the Government of Sri Lanka was solely responsible for the genocide. It had not taken appropriate steps after the last genocide and was acting at the behest of the U.S. imperialism.

The Secretariat also heard the report on J.K. Synthetics, Kota, where the management is refusing to negotiate with the only recognised union and by imposing severe workload has forced the workers to go on the path of agitation once again. The management has now retaliated by imposing a seven day's wage cut for one day's strike on March 21. The Secretariat also noted that the question of retrenchment which was referred to the tribunal by the Government of Rajasthan under Section 10 (K) of the Industrial Disputes Act, is delaying decisions. The Secretariat demanded that the Government of India should intervene in the matter so that the J.K. monopoly house is restrained from these unfair labour practices.

The Secretariat also reviewed the steps taken with regard to the Worker's March to Parliament on April 18 and also regarding the working women's convention of April 17 and directed further steps to be taken to make these programmes successful.

The meeting discussed the resolution adopted by the Ministry of labour on the new scheme for employee's participation in management in Central Public Sector Undertakings and decided that the view point of CITU should be placed categorically before the Government and given due publicity among the workers, as well as the people. (*The stand of CITU has been published on page 47-50 of this issue-Ed.*)

Nrisingha Chakrabarty reported that the meeting of the Joint Select Committee on the LIC Bill, 1983 which was scheduled to be held on April 11 has been postponed. The meeting of the Select Committee set up by the Delhi Metropolitan Council on the Trade Union Recognition Bill which was scheduled to be held on April 17, has also been postponed.

Regarding the question of verification on which the Government was proceeding unilaterally, the meeting noted that the constituents of the National

Campaign Committee had boycotted the meeting called by the Labour Minister on April 7, as one of the constituents, i.e., ITUC (Dara) was not called by the Minister. The meeting expressed satisfaction that the National Campaign Committee had unanimously adopted a note pointing out the deficiencies of the present procedure adopted by the Government and submitted it to the Minister. (*The note has been published on p. 33-34 of this issue*). However, in view of the fact that the Government has arbitrarily reduced the membership of the CITU and did not submit the list to CITU despite its assurance to do so, and in view of the fact that the Government is likely to announce the final results shortly, the CITU would lodge a protest to the Government against the arbitrary actions. Efforts would be made to make a joint protest with AITUC which is similarly affected. (*Joint letter published on page 42*)

Nrisingha Chakrabarty who attended the meeting called by the Labour Minister on April 9 on the question of workers' delegation to the ILO Conference to be held at Geneva from June 6 to 22, reported that there was no unanimity on the issue. Another meeting held on April 21 also failed to bear fruit.

The meeting decided that Nrisingha Chakrabarty would attend the Annual meeting of the Fertiliser Workers' Federation of India to be held at Bombay on May 12.

Earlier in its meeting held on March 30, the Secretariat supported the decision of two days warning strike of the Coal Workers to be launched on June 4 and 5, which was taken in the convention at Asansol on March 24-25 for implementation of the recent agreement. It called upon all CITU unions to prepare for the success of the strike. The Secretariat warned the Government that if it does not take steps to normalise the situation, then the growing unrest in such a vital sector is likely to create further difficulties to the nation.

The meeting of March 30 also heard the report of the Second Conference of the All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employee's Federation and welcomed the unity which has been forged by the workers in this industry which is dominated by the multinationals even after 37 years of independence. It also extended support to the all India strike of April 5 by the medical representatives at the call of the Federation of Medical Representatives' Associations of India in pursuance of its 27-point charter of demands.

Monopoly Houses Thrive at the Cost of People

ON Feb. 28 last the Govt. furnished the Lok Sabha with the assets of MRTP houses as 31-12-82. This however does not reveal the full story as to how the monopolists continue to thrive under Govt. patronage. A comparative chart given below will show how their assets have grown when impoverishment of the people, unemployment, closure, retrenchment etc. are growing apace, heaping misery on people. Most of these houses follow most unfair labour practices. Though it is not possible to give a complete account for all the houses, some instances are being narrated here.

The assets of Reliance Textiles a company which was founded sometime between 1972 and 1976, show a meteoric rise. Between 1976 and 1981 it had an increase of nearly 800 per cent and between 1981 and 1982 a further increase of nearly 85 per cent on 1981 assets. It is understood that this company employs very few labour, the ratio with other establishments in the industry being 1:7. The Govt. often argues in favour of modernisation for the benefit of the people. Here is one instance which shows that while employment opportunities have been squeezed and a terrible workload has been thrust on the workers, the benefit of cheaper production has not reached the people, but has helped the share holders with lucrative dividends while increasing the assets of the company.

The next is the house of Modis, which has increased its assets during the 1972-81 period by 502.75 per cent with another increase of 48.49 per cent over 1981 assets. All know how militant struggles are suppressed in Modinagar. The simmering discontentment among the workers took the turn of a revolt and workers had to pay with their lives and also the lives of their kith and kin. The heroic resistance of the workers is still continuing.

J.K. Singhania occupies the next place with a percentage rise of 328.27 in the same decade and a further rise of 19.25 over the 1981 assets. This house

has become notorious for its unfair labour practice of securing loans from public financial institutions, then divert its funds and then declare a closure of the undertaking, is known to this house as it has left a trail of closed industries behind them throwing thousands of workers jobless to the streets. It appears that in one case at least the Govt. has ordered an enquiry i.e. in the case of J.K. Rayon and the management has secured a stay order from the court. The Govt. have taken no steps to open the factory to enable the workers to earn their living. In the case of J.K. Synthetics, KOTA, the workers laid down their lives to secure increased bonus in 1972. Here they have retrenched nearly 2500 workers against which the workers are fighting heroically.

It is needless to say that these MRTP houses manage these giant companies with very little capital of their own. They keep the share-holding a very guarded secret. Apart from share capital from others, they secure loans from Public Financial Institutions who applying convertibility clause have now acquired equity shares in many of these houses. The Govt. has not given an account of such equity holding despite the demand from M.Ps. But some figures have come to light (See July 83 issue). These insitutions hold 39.84 per cent equity shares in Modi Rubber Ltd and 35.31 per cent in J.K. industries. The position in respect of D.C.M. and Escorts in also well known.

It is also needless to point out that the monopolies have been amassing this great wealth while the Congress(I) Govt. at the Centre have been implementing 20 point programmes both old and new. So a pertinent question is, whether the 20 point programme is a facade behind which the monopolists have been given the liberty with public funds to fatten themselves at the cost of the workers in the industries and the people at large. Will the Govt. care to explain?

Growth in the Assets of Monopoly Houses

Sl. No.	Name of the House	Assets (Rs. in Crores)			Amount increased between		Percentage Increase between	
		1972	1981	1982	1971-81	1981-82	1972-81	1981-82
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(1)	Tata	641.93	1840.16	2430.83	1198.23	590.67	186.66	32.09
(2)	Birla	589.42	1691.69	2004.74	1102.27	391.95	187.00	23.11
(3)	J.K. Singhania	121.45	520.14	620.31	398.69	100.17	328.27	19.25
(4)	Mafatlai	183.74	535.12	610.69	351.38	75.57	191.23	14.12
(5)	Reliance Textile	30.27*	270.61	512.34	240.34	241.73	793.98	84.32
(6)	A.C.C.	134.36	342.77	473.07	208.41	130.00	155.11	38.01
(7)	Thapar	136.16	429.80	464.55	293.64	34.75	215.65	8.08
(8)	I.C.I.	135.21	337.84	378.31	202.63	40.47	149.86	11.97
(9)	Sarabhai	84.44	331.25	374.21	146.81	43.06	173.86	12.99
(10)	Modi	58.05	241.90	359.20	291.85	117.30	502.75	48.49

* Relates to 1976.

The Present Procedure for Verification

This is a note submitted by the constituents of the National Campaign Committee to the Union Labour Minister on April 7 pointing out the deficiencies of the present procedure for verification of the membership of trade unions. The meeting called by the Labour Minister on the day was boycotted by the N.C.C., as the I.T.U.C. (Dara) was not called in the meeting.)

THE procedure for verification of membership finalised after adoption of the Code of Discipline is more than 25 years old. The Government of India has not made any objective review of the procedure so far with a view to find out changes required in the light of experience gained over a period of years.

2. Though the INTUC, AITUC, HMS and UTUC were a party to the Code of Discipline and the Procedure for Verification and on the three occasions verification of membership of central trade unions was conducted since then, at a later stage the AITUC, HMS and UTUC complained that the procedure for verification was unscientific, arbitrary, one sided and was heavily loaded in favour of certain organisation. Experience also showed that political considerations play an important role in determining the strength of different organisations. The refusal of the Government in this regard resulted in the stalemate and no verification could be conducted since 1968. The Government also stopped holding sessions of the Indian Labour Conference and the concept of usual consultation with the trade unions prior to bringing any labour legislation was given a go-bye.

3. The non-INTUC central trade unions demanded Secret Ballot as the only scientific method of determining the strength of each organisation. The National Labour Commission had to take note of this demand and in its recommendation it suggested verification and secret ballot as acceptable systems and its use in a specific case was to be determined by the Industrial Relations Commission. There was also a suggestion that verification should be conducted by an independent agency which was an indirect admission of the charge that political favouritism plays an important role in conducting verification of different central trade unions.

4. Frequent changes in the Union Labour Ministers have also added to the complexities of the problem. After all, 8 Labour Ministers headed this Ministry during the last 8 years. Despite repeated attempts made by the central trade unions no solution could be found to the controversy. Moreover the attitude of the Government giving right to veto to a certain organisation had led to non-agreement among the central trade unions and opinions of most of trade unions as well as overwhelming major-

ity of the T.U. membership was virtually ignored by the Government of India.

5. When Shri N.D. Tiwari was Union Minister of Labour he had a round of discussions with central T.U. organisations separately. During the course of discussions several trade unions demanded formulation of accepted norms for determining the strength of each organisation. The minister agreed that a meeting of the Central Trade Unions would be convened to consider the modification in the procedure. However, the Government went ahead with the central trade unions. The manner in which the present verification has been conducted only proves our contention.

6. When the Modified procedure was announced by the Government the constituents of the National Campaign Committee requested the Government to discuss with the Central T.U.s the procedure and arrive at a common understanding. This request was not accepted by the Government and the Government went ahead with the procedure.

7. The National Campaign Committee, therefore, suggested that atleast in case of disputed unions the strength of each union can be decided through secret ballot by the Government. Government did not have even the courtesy to acknowledge the communication.

8. The UTUC, BMS, UTUC(L.S.), TUCC and HMS submitted lists for verification of membership, at the same time asking for modification of procedure. They informed the Government that they did so on the presumption that atleast in disputed cases the decision would be taken by secret ballot.

9. The AITUC and CITU did not submit their list for verification because they raised objections to the procedure of verification itself and wanted evolving of a new procedure for verification in consultation with all the Central T.U.s. They advised their unions not to co-operate with the verification procedure. Though for want of communication some unions submitted their records, by and large the unions affiliated to these organisations did not participate in the verification.

10. UTUC and TUCC informed the Government that their unions would not participate in the verification procedure since they had objections to the procedure. They submitted lists with the hope that the Government would discuss with the trade unions the modalities before commencing verification. After merger of both the wings of HMS it also called upon the affiliated unions not to participate in the verification.

11. After completion of the first round of verification the results were leaked out to the press: The AITUC and CITU did not submit their lists for verification. Yet the Government claimed to have checked their membership unilaterally from the Registrars' records, but the Government's findings were not supplied to them nor the list collected from the Registrars. Though the Union Labour Minister agreed to supply them with a copy of their membership verification when a deputation of AITUC, CITU, UTUC and TUCC met him on 19th December 1983 but this also was not done to date.

The INTUC journal Indian Worker has alleged arbitrariness on the part of the Labour Ministry officials. Thus none of the central trade union organisation is satisfied with the verification procedure as it exists today. It is, therefore, necessary to review the present procedure so that a new procedure can be evolved acceptable to all the central trade union organisations for future verification.

13. Taking into account the experience of the past verification and the present one conducted by the Government of India the following major deficiencies have been observed:-

(a) The present verification procedure is most unscientific because it does not exactly assess the strength of each union. The present machinery is vulnerable to the bias of a verifying officer or it can be influenced to suit the requirement of certain organisations if the Government so desires. There are several examples of political pressures brought on the verifying officer to give the results in favour of certain organisations. This has brought down the credibility of the machinery itself.

(b) The records kept by the Registrar of Trade Unions who have submitted returns do not find mention in the list prepared by the Registrar of Trade Unions. In certain States like U.P., Bihar, the unions find it extremely difficult to get even registration numbers despite fulfilling all requirements. In this, political bias plays an important role. Therefore, while certain trade unions face difficulties some other enjoys advantages in the matter of getting registration facilities etc.

(c) The system of checking union record is also mechanical. Though it is necessary that all unions should keep their records in order yet mere maintenance of records in order is not always a proof measuring the strength of the unions in all the cases. A suitable mechanism should be evolved for the purpose. There is need therefore to review the record checking machinery and its findings.

(d) The system of 10 per cent random selection of members is also subject to various manipulation and abuses by the verifying officials. It is within the scope and discretion of the verifying officer to work it in advantage of one union or against other.

(e) Similarly, the spot verification is perhaps the most arbitrary method in the entire procedure. In course of this method, genuine membership of a union can easily be cut down. There is also scope for management to play their role in influencing the

final result. There is no way to know or checking whether what the worker has said has been correctly recorded.

14. We have stated here some of the glaring defects of the verification procedure. There may be other defects which have to be looked into. We, therefore, suggest that a team consisting of representatives of central T.U. organisations should be asked to work out details of a new procedure in cooperation with the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) for future verification. An agreed procedure will alone command respect and faith among the workers. A new procedure for future verification of membership can be worked out mutually acceptable to all if proper attempts are made. Verification of membership on the basis of agreed procedure can be organised for any year acceptable to all. Regarding representation in different committees and statutory bodies under the Labour Ministry the matter should be discussed with the representatives of trade unions in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable arrangement.

We earnestly hope the Government will consider the aforementioned aspects in an objective manner and strive to find out a common understanding between different central trade union organisations as soon as possible. On this matter we would be submitting another note shortly.

M.Ps. Demand Recognition of Sahrawi Democratic Republic

Samar Mukherjee, M.P., Leader of CPI(M) in Lok Sabha, Satya Sadhan Chakraborty M.P., Deputy Leader of CPI(M) in Lok Sabha, M.M. Lawrence, M.P. and Hannan Mollah, M.P. met the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi on April 19 and handed over to her a memorandum signed by seventy Members of Parliament belonging to different political parties, urging upon her to accord recognition to the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

The memorandum says "the people of Western Sahara are carrying the struggle for national liberation since 1973 under the leadership of Polasario Front. They occupied 90 per cent of territory and have established Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic on February 27, 1976. At present this Govt. is recognised by 56 countries belonging to all continents".

The Members urged upon the Prime Minister that as the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement, she owes special responsibilities to help the Polasario Front and Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

The Prime Minister assured the four Members that she would consider the matter favourably.

48-Hour Strike in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works

HAVING failed to secure settlement of a 12-point charter of demands which includes "Grant of recognition through secret ballot", the CLW Labour Union conducted a strike ballot in which 8617 workers participated of whom 7745 have voted for a strike. The demands include declaring the township as a 'B' Class city, quarters for all workers, etc. Before this the union organised a mass petition and conducted a mass squatting and demonstration on March 1. The stony silence maintained by the authorities have forced the union to serve a notice on 28.3.1984 for 48-hours strike on May 8-9, 1984.

On receipt of a copy of the strike notice the Asstt. Labour Commissioner (C), Asansol had called for conciliation. In a letter dated 30 March 1984, the General Manager C.L.W. refused to join any tripartite conciliation on the ground that this union is unrecognised. Nrisingha Chakrabarty has taken up the matter with Labour Secretary as the stand of the authorities is violative of the Industrial Disputes Act. Samar Mukherjee, M.P. has also taken up the matter with the Union Labour Minister and Railway Minister and pointed out that refusal to attend conciliation by one wing of the Govt. indicates collapse of all labour legislations. Demand for immediate settlement through negotiation has been raised. It is necessary to point out that the union has conducted two one-day token strikes in 1968 and 1979 on the demand of recognition. Samar Mukherjee has also pointed out that denial of recognition to all the unions in any undertaking is incompatible with the plea of workers participation in management which the Government of India is currently propagating among the organised labour.

Dharna by Commercial Clerks

Over a hundred commercial clerks staged a day long Dharna before the residence of the Railway Minister on April 17 to highlight their demands, S.K. Dhar, N.S. Bhangoo, Joint Convenors of NCCR addressed them. Samar Mukherjee, M.P., Leader of C.P.I. (M) Group in Parliament addressed and urged them to build up united struggle of railwaymen.

Hunger strike by Shed Mechanical Staff

Loco Mechanical Staff of Indian Railways staged hungerstrike in front of the Railway Minister's house on April 19. Twenty seven leaders joined the hunger strike while about 371 workers were with them. P. Ramamurti, Vice-President and Sushil Bhattacharya, M.P., General Secretary of Delhi State Committee of CITU addressed the workers. At their instance the workers' representatives were invited for a talk with the Secretary of the Prime Minister who accepted their memorandum. The

workers continued their hunger strike. At the intervention of Samar Mukherjee, who also addressed them, the President and General Secretary of the Association and other office-bearers discussed their charter of demands with Member (Staff) for over one and half hours, who while agreeing to consider some of the demands, refused to consider some very small demands. The Association has decided to meet the Railway Minister on these questions.

Meetings : Conventions

The General Council of AIRF met at Gorakhpur recently. It is understood that while recording dissatisfaction and protest against the Railway Board on many issues, the meeting decided to stage a dharna before the Finance Minister's residence on April 24. The meeting is understood to have decided that in view of this programme, the AIRF would not be able to mobilise in full strength on April 18 in the programme of N.C.C., though it decided to continue to be in the NCC. The council, however, not only turned down the request of the NCCR to join them for developing a struggle on common demands of railway workers but also had warned all affiliated unions not to keep any truck with the NCCR. Some leaders of railway movement remarked that by these decisions the leadership has the objective of keeping a big section of railwaymen away from the mainstream of the trade union movement of the country.

The Station Masters' Association held their 31st Annual Meeting in the Agha Khan Hall on April 16 & 17 which was attended by 272 delegates from all the Zones, which was inaugurated by H.R. Khanna, Ex-Judge Supreme Court, Madan Lal Khurana and others. There were contests for the posts of President, General Secretary and Finance Secretary, but the existing office-bearers — K.C. Roy Chowdhury, M.P. Varkey and S.K. Chatterjee were re-elected in their posts with substantial margin.

The Indian Railways Traction Workers Association held their 3rd Annual meeting at Delhi on April 17-19 which was attended by 347 delegates and 104 observers. S.K. Dhar, Convenor, NCCR inaugurated the conference and Samar Mukherjee addressed the delegates. B K. Srivastava, M.L. Banerjee and Ashok Dutta were unanimously elected as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively. One of the added attraction of the meeting was poster exhibition which was visited by a large number of railway workers. Delhi Jana Natya Manch presented two poster dramas, "Machine" and "Aurat" which were high appreciated by the delegates.

An extended meeting of the Central Working Committee of LRSA met at Delhi on April 16, which heard the reports about the arguments in the Supreme Court on 14 (ii) cases. Eminent lawyers like Shri K.K. Venugopal, Shri M.K. Ramamurthi and Com. Somnath Chatterjee represented the workers and Shri R.K. Garg appeared as "intervenor" supporting the cause of the workers while Shri P.R. Mridul appeared on behalf of railway authorities. Replies to the argument of Shri Mridul has now started. The meeting also heard the report placed by S.K. Dhar, Secretary General about his meeting with the Railway Minister and prepared the points for discussion with Member Staff which was to take place on April 19. The meeting called upon all loco running staff to observe May 8 properly. In another resolution it requested the NCCR to meet as early as possible to consider the question of developing movement on the question of due D.A. and second instalment of "interim relief". The meeting also discussed the modalities of affiliation to Railway Employees Confederation, on the basis of which a discussion was held on April 19.

A convention of railwaymen was held at Khurda Road on 22.2.84 under the auspices of ZCCR under the Presidentship of U.K. Pradhan which was addressed by Dushmantha Das, Jogi Jena and other leaders of Employees Coordination Committee, a powerful organisation of Orissa. M.N. Prasad and Rabi Banerjee, Zonal Secretaries of LRSA and Tele-Com. Staff Association respectively and other leaders of railway workers addressed the same.

The Loco Running and Ticket Checking Staff of Khurda Road Division staged demonstration before the Divisional Railway Manager's Office on March 22 and 26 respectively.

The Annual Meeting of the N.F. Rly. Zonal LRSA was held on March 26-28, at Siliguri which was addressed by S.K. Dhar, Secretary General and Basudev Acharya, M.P., G.C. Bardoloi and Sanjeet Sarkar have been re-elected respectively as President and General Secretary:

Meeting of NCCR

The Standing Committee and General Council of National Campaign Committee of Railwaymen will be held on June 3-4, in the constitution Club Hall at New Delhi, to review the implementation of earlier decisions and further programmes.

Break-in-Service Condoned

After winning the case against break-in-service imposed on Guntupally Wagon Workshop from Andhra Pradesh High Court, the workers were issued with fresh notices to show cause as to why break-in-service will not be imposed on them. The recognised unions tried to organise petitions tendering regrets in order to escape the break-in-service. But except about 100 workers, the major bulk remained firm contending that there was an illegal look-out and no strike. It is understood that ultimately a circular condoning the break-in-service has been issued by the Railway Board.

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	Nov. 1983	Dec. 1983	Jan. 1984											
				Karnataka										
				Ammathi	551	567	576							
				Bangalore	615	625	637							
				Chikamagalur	568	570	586							
				Kolar G.F.	527	539	545							
				Kerala										
				Alleppey	611	634	629							
				Alwaye	606	614	609							
				Mundakayam	569	577	589							
				Madhya Pradesh										
				Balaghat	570	574	566							
				Bhopal	603	598	579							
				Gwalior	555	551	557							
				Indore	581	588	581							
				Maharashtra										
				Bombay	566	569	576							
				State/Centre	1983	1983	1984							
				Nagpur	575	569	571							
				Sholapur	595	607	611							
				Orissa										
				Barbil	514	519	516							
				Sambalpur	575	572	576							
				Punjab										
				Amritsar	549	540	544							
				Rajasthan										
				Ajmer	540	543	551							
				Jaipur	570	570	581							
				Tamil Nadu										
				Madras	559	562	558							
				Coimbatore	598	606	606							
				Coonoor	622	630	641							
				Madurai	629	646	640							
				U.P.										
				Kanpur	547	536	545							
				Saharanpur	544	547	559							
				Varanasi	640	629	631							
				West Bengal										
				Asansol	546	540	537							
				Calcutta	532	525	525							
				Darjeeling	470	469	463							
				Howrah	508	501	595							
				Jalpaiguri	447	430	442							
				Raniganj	539	526	517							
				Delhi Territory	563	561	560							
				Other Centres										
				Berhampur ('49)	780	775	754							
				Cuttack ('49)	725	726	724							
				Jabalpur ('49)	732	751	734							
				Beawar ('51-52)	636	638	645							
				Tripura ('61)	469	474	489							
				Goa ('66)	390	389	401							
				H.P. ('65)	396	398	399							
				Bhilai ('66)	362	398	365							
				Chhindawara ('66)	301	302	303							
				Bhilwara ('66)	326	329	334							
				Kothagudem ('66)	352	349	346							
				Rourkela ('66)	378	370	374							
				All India ('49)	682	679	684							
				All India ('60)	561	559	563							

(Figures in bracket indicate base year)

Railway Budget Evades Responsibility for Poor Performance

PARTICIPATING in the discussion on Railway Budget in Lok Sabha on March 3 Basudev Acharya M.P. (CPI-M) exposed the fiasco of planing in railways. Planned investment which was 11.23 and 18.68 per cent in the First and Second Five Year Plans was reduced to 11.86 and 5.6 per cent in Third and Fourth Five Year Plans. Though the present plan was called a "Rehabilitation Plan", the outlay was reduced to 5.32 per cent and hence it is not able to produce the required number of coaches or wagons and the arrears in track renewal is increasing.

Safety Sacrificed

Debunking the slogan of Safety, Security and Punctuality given by the Railway Minister by citing accidents he said that "the recommendations made by the Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee in respect of recruitment, training, promotion policy and duty hours of running staff, improvement in signalling and inter-locking system, improvement in coaching and Rolling stock and motive power have not been so far implemented...The Railway Reform committee have submitted report which states; "The Committee considers safety standard cannot be improved unless a serious effort is made at all levels to implement recommendations".

Corporate Plan Gone Haywire

He also said that the corporate plan drawn in 1973-74 had fixed the passenger kms at 174 billions at the end of 15 year period. But by 1980-81, it has gone over 176 billion in 1981-82 and in the current year it has crossed this figures whereas the railways are not able to lift freight traffic even to the extent of last year even after giving several concessions. According to him "This admission of the Minister of Railways has debunked the oft repeated claim of the Central Government that there is no recession in the Indian economy."

Industrial Relations

Disputing the claim of peaceful industrial relations he said "I would not like to say something about the Railway employees. Much has been said about the Railway employees and that an ideal is prevailing in the Railways. But this is not a fact. Last, year, i.e. 1983-84 witnessed several demonstrations among the railway employees- Demonstration by the All India Station Masters' Association was held. They organised a hunger strike in front of the residence of the Railway Minister and the Minister of State for Railways. And when he gave an assurance that he would look into their demands, they withdrew their agitation. Then on 7th November the Signal and Tele-communication Staff Association organised

a Dharna and demonstration. On 8th November thousands of locomen of the All India Loco-running Staff Association came to Delhi and demonstrated and their delegation met the speaker. Though the Railway Minister gave an appointment, yet he could not discuss with them. The problems of the Loco-employees have been discussed in this House several times. In the year 1973 there was an agreement with them that ten hours' duty from sign-on to sign-off will be implemented. But that was not implemented. They were forced to go on strike in January 1981 as a result of which victimisation followed. About one thousand Locomen were discharged. Thousands had to face retirement and thousands of locomen were transferred"... "About the railway canteen employees—the statutory canteen employees and the non-statutory canteen employees—the Supreme Court in its Order dated 22.10.1980 directed the Railway Administration to treat all canteen employees as Railway employees. But this Order has been implemented only in respect of statutory canteen employees."

Rehabilitation Programme Hampered

Quoting from a circular D.O. No. 838106 dated 12.1.84 from Chairman Railway Board which says "No new post should be created in the next 9 months and the existing vacancies where recruitment action has not been taken should not be filled up ...5 per cent cut has to be immediately imposed on all approved plan outlays in the current year" he said that; "Blanket ban has been imposed on recruitment. Railways claim to be the biggest employer in our country. By this order the curtailment of 5 per cent the rehabilitation programme of the Railways will be hampered".

Trade Union Schools

Three day trade union schools were held at Chandigarh and Hazaribag on 2-4 April and 4-6 April respectively.

At Chandigarh, Bhag Singh Sajjan, took classes on Development of Society, Nrisingha Chakrabarty on History of trade union movement and Labour Labour Laws and B.T. Ranadive on tasks before the working class in the present situation. The class was attended by 61 leading trade union activists.

At Hazaribagh, Yogeswar Gope took classes on the present situation and Nrisingha Chakrabarty on History of Trade Union movement and tasks before the working class.

Warm Reception to Chinese T.U. Delegation

A trade union delegation headed by Comrade Ni Zhifu, Chairman All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) which visited India at the invitation of INTUC, was given warm reception in the CITU office on March 9, 1984. Other members of the delegation were Com. Wang Jiachong, Vice-Chairman, ACFTU and Deputy leader of the delegation, Com. Huang Shuyou, Member, Executive Committee, ACFTU, Com. Guo Maoan, Deputy Director, International Liaison Deptt., ACFTU, Com. Zhen Guoshun, ACFTU Section Deputy Chief and Com. Xu Xiaoqian, Interpreter.

Com. P. Ramamurti, Vice President, CITU presided over the function. Other members of the Secretariat who were present in the function were Com. Susheela Gopalan M.P. and Comrade Har Sahay Singh both Vice Presidents, Com. Samar Mukherjee M.P., General Secretary, Comrades M.K. Pandhe, Nrisingha Chakrabarty, P.K. Ganguly and M.M. Lawrence, MP, all secretaries of CITU. Besides a large number of trade union and Kisan Sabha leaders were present. Prominent among them were Com. Chacha Sadiram, President Delhi State Committee of CITU, Com. Mangat Ram Pasla, Com. Prem Kishan Sharma, Com. S.N. Solanki, all General Secretaries of Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana State Committees of CITU respectively and Comrades, Sankar Dayal Tiwari, P.K. Tandon and P.R. Parameswarn all members of Central Kisan Council.

On behalf of CITU, Comrades P. Ramamurti and Samar Mukherjee, welcomed the delegation. In their short speeches they recalled that friendship between the people of China and India has been cordial for centuries and expressed hope that the differences which arose on the question of border will be soon resolved satisfactorily through negotiation. It was also hoped that the working class of both countries will fight unitedly against imperialism in general and U.S. imperialism in particular and join the struggle for peace. Both expressed keen desire for strengthening the friendly relations which exist between CITU and ACFTU.

Com. Ni Zhifu, in his brief speech reciprocated the sentiments expressed and declared that they were happy to be here among friends. He thanked the CITU for the warm reception accorded to the delegation and reiterated their belief that friendly relations would be strengthened in future. He presented a memento to mark the occasion of the visit.

Com. Ramamurti thanked the delegation on behalf of CITU and those who were present for its visit to CITU office. J.S. Dara President

Rashtriya Mazdoor Congress who was also present, was introduced to the delegation after the function was over.

Representatives of CITU also attended the Reception organised by Chairman, ACFTU later in the evening at the Chinese Embassy along with the representatives of INTUC, AITUC, HMS, BMS and others.

TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE ON D.A.

Delay in Convening Meeting

FOUR members of the Tripartite Committee on D.A. for Public Sector undertakings, viz., M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Homi Daji (AITUC), S.R. Kulkarni (HMS) and R.K. Bhakt (BMS) have expressed their resentment at the inordinate delay in convening the Committee in the following letter to Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of Finance, Government of India on April 6. The members have pointed out the growing discontent among the public sector employees all over the country.

When we met you last time in your office on 27 January 1984 for an informal discussion on the question of rate of D.A. for the employees in public sector undertakings, you told us that you would be busy with the work of budget and would find it difficult to pay more attention to this problem. You, however, assured us that you would be able to meet us in the second week of March and discuss the issue further.

We have been awaiting a message from the Bureau of Public Enterprises but so far we have not heard anything from them.

We would like to draw your attention to the deep resentment prevailing among the 20 lakh workers in public sector undertakings who are demanding early completion of the work of the Tripartite Committee on D.A. Any further delay will only evoke agitations of the public sector employees. Already an all-India Protest Day was observed on 21st February, 1984 all over the country in all the public sector undertakings.

We would, therefore, request you to convene the meeting of the workers' representatives on the Tripartite Committee on D.A. at an early date so that the matters are resolved without any further delay.

Demand of Bonus and Interim Relief by the State Government Employees

The background and perspective

Sukomal Sen, *General Secretary, All India State Govt. Employees Federation*

FOR the last four decades, in India, the concept of bonus has undergone a complete transformation from an ex-gratia payment to a statutory right. The purely ex-gratia concept came to be seriously challenged in the forties, with the workers pressing more and more for grant of bonus. Then followed a number of recommendations and observations, particularly by the Committee on Profit Sharing (1948) and The Labour Appellate Tribunal. The former recommended introduction of profit sharing schemes in six selected industries and the latter observed inter alia that bonus could no longer be regarded as an ex-gratia payment and bonus, like profit sharing, would be in the nature of incentive to better efficiency and production.

Certain rulings by the Supreme Court prior to the Payment of Bonus Act 1965, treated bonus neither as an ex-gratia payment nor as deferred wage, but a compensation for labour's contribution to the profit earned by industry, and also intended to help labour to narrow down the gap between the living wage and the actual wage received.

But the recommendations of the Tripartite Commission (Bonus Commission) set up in December 1961 which eventually resulted in the enactment of the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 effected a radical change in the concept of bonus that was so long been pressed upon by various Commissions and Adjudications. The Act provided for a minimum bonus of four per cent whether there were profit or not in a accounting year and a formula for profit-linked bonus limited to a maximum of 20 per cent. This concept for the first time recognised bonus as deferred wage, the concept for which the working class of India had been waging battles for years together.

The Bonus Act of 1965 was amended in 1972 to raise minimum bonus from four per cent to 8.33 per cent for the accounting year 1971-72 and later also for the year 1972-73 and 1973-74. But the capitalists and the Government representing their interest could no longer reconcile with this concept of bonus as a deferred wage. In September 1975, the Payment of Bonus (Amendment) Ordinance was promulgated and was subsequently replaced by an Act of Parliament on February 11, 1976. Under this statute the concept of bonus as a deferred wage was given a good-bye and units incurring losses were not required to pay minimum bonus. Even the ex-gratia payment that was being paid to Banks, LIC, Ports & Docks and non-competitive public sector undertakings, were limited to a maximum of ten per cent.

But the workers and employees of our country for

years together have been voicing the demand for treating bonus as deferred wage and granting it to all. The amendment of the Bonus Act 1965 in 1972 raising the minimum bonus to 8.33 per cent and statutorily regarding it as not related to profit or loss were in fact the outcome of these struggles of the working class. And the question of treating bonus as deferred wage assumed paramount importance in our country particularly in view of the fact that the minimum wage of the workers and employees fall far below need-based minimum wage, not to speak of fair wage or living wage.

But unfortunately, despite this amendment in Act in 1972 and the united demand of the employees and workers under the Central Government, State Governments and the Railways voiced through numerous Conventions, rallies and other forms of programmes, the Central Government refused to agree to the principles of granting bonus to these categories of employees. This led to the historic strike of the Railway employees in 1974 and various programmes of actions by the central and state employees. The state employees during their all-India strike on April 9, 1974 at the call of the All India State Government Employees' Federation also strongly raised this demand of bonus to all.

Then during the dark rule of emergency in 1976 as stated above under the Ordinance followed by the Act of Parliament, Bonus ceased to have the concept of deferred wage. This was a naked attack on the rights and privileges of the workers by the authoritarian rule.

In September 1977, the new Government which came into power restored the minimum bonus of 8.33 per cent for the accounting year 1976, and that too under pressure of countrywide movement of the working class.

The latest judgment of the Supreme Court, striking down the Life Insurance Corporation (Modification of Settlement) Act, 1979 and allowing Class III and Class IV employees of the LIC 15 per cent bonus for the year 1975-76 and 1976-77 again introduced a fresh dimension in the concept of bonus.

But meanwhile the new Central Government instituted Bhoothalingam Study Group and that Group submitted its recommendations in May 1973. The Study Group's recommendations on bonus and the concept on the subject they spelled out, to say the least, constituted an attempt to dig the burial of this wage component. This was a terrible affront against the entire working class against which the

country witnessed biggest ever protest mobilisations of the workers and employees. These unprecedented protest actions forestalled the implementation of the Bhoothalingam's concept of bonus.

But although Bhoothalingam's recommendations were shelved and the new Central Government assured the workers and employees of bonus as deferred wage, the Government most regrettably failed to implement its own assurances. Except restoring 8.33 per cent bonus they did not proceed further to make it applicable to the Central, State and Railway employees. On the question of granting bonus to the Railwaymen the Government showed a serious indecision and different cabinet members started speaking different ways, thus in practice refusing bonus to railwaymen. Along with the Central Government employees and the railway employees, the state employees too have most justifiably voiced the demand of bonus, and the All India State Government Employee's Federation launched a number of programmes of action during this period for realisation of this demand.

The period after emergency-raj was over witnessed in fact a serious upheaval of working class and government employees' struggle for realisation of the legitimate demand including Bonus. The Railwaymen, in the circumstances, threatened another strike, other central government employees' unions too declared strong actions and the All India State Government Employees' Federation representing five million state Government employees called upon all employees to organise massive struggles for achieving the demand of bonus to all. The most important in this series of struggles launched by the AISGEF on the issue was the observance of All India Bonus Day on September 19, 1979.

Then when the Railwaymen's unions declared indefinite strike from December 10, 1979, the caretaker Government announced a scheme of bonus for the Railwaymen which was stated to be linked to productivity. In fact the care-take Government brought the Railwaymen, P&T and Defence employees (civil) under the purview of this productivity-linked bonus scheme.

But whatever may be the character of the Bonus, it was in fact a partial recognition of the demand of bonus for the government employees and thus a section of the central government employees was given the benefit of this scheme while the other sections of central government employees were left out.

The new Central Government that came to power in January 1980 also announced to honour the decision of the care-taker Government in regard to bonus linked to productivity and declared their intention to introduce a comprehensive Bonus Bill in the Parliament.

But the assured Bonus Bill did not come up. Meanwhile the central employees started agitation

for granting bonus to the rest of the central employees and the AISGEF also intensified its movement for bonus.

The question of bonus to the state government employees assumed further legitimacy and significance after granting of ex-gratia to the state employees by the state governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and subsequently granted also in Andhra Pradesh. These measures by few state governments further justified and strengthened the demand of the state employees for grant of bonus to them treating it as deferred wage.

On the crest of the agitation by the central employees for wage revision and bonus to them all, the Central Government during the budget session of 1983 announced setting up of 4th Central Pay Commission. This resulted in the demand of interim relief by the Central Government along with the demand for bonus. The Central Government after a lot of bickering and under threat of an intensified action by the central employees announced interim relief and subsequently bonus to all categories of central employees. This indicated a victory of the central employees' struggle.

While granting interim relief and bonus to the central employees, the Central Government, however, remained fully oblivious of any of their responsibilities towards the state government employees. The State Government employees were completely left at the mercy and financial capacity of the state governments.

In the circumstances, the All India State Government Employees' Federation met and submitted a memorandum to the Union Finance Minister for bonus to the State employees and demanding devolution of adequate funds to the state governments for the purpose. But nothing came out of that meeting and memorandum.

The matter of bonus etc. to the state employees was also raised by the AISGEF to the Eighth Finance Commission and in its memorandum to the Commission the Federation pleaded for more funds to the state governments so as to enable the state governments to fulfil these obligations to the state employees by the respective state governments.

The issue of bonus and also the issue of interim relief to the state employees were also raised in the Parliament by the office-bearers of the Federation who are also members of the Parliament. It was argued that Bonus is a policy and so there is no justification of depriving the employees from the legitimate demand of bonus and leave the matter with the state governments. It was said that the state employees' demand of bonus is falling on deaf ears and even if a few of the state governments are willing to grant it they are severely handicapped due to extreme financial difficulty. Therefore it was demanded that the Central Government should take the matter seriously and take decision to extend the benefit of bonus to the state government employees
(on page 42)

(from page 12)

The decision of the Government to denotify some of the taken over undertakings have added to the complexities of the situation.

8. Employment generation is lagging far behind the number of jobseekers. Even the number of registered unemployed has soared from 16.5 million in 1981 to 21.5 in 1983 end — an increase of more than 30 per cent. The Planning Commission has also scaled down the job creation potential of the sixth plan. Among the jobseekers, youth and women are figuring prominently.

9. This rally notes that the situation has become more explosive due to thousands of workers being thrown out of jobs due to lockouts, closures and "sickness" which have of late assumed menacing proportions. The Government instead of taking deterrent steps to check this malaise and punishing the employers resorting to fraudulent practices, are giving more and more concessions and subsidies to them to amass wealth. More than half of the mandays losses are due to lock-outs by the employers.

10. The rally demands of the Government to implement the proposals put forward by the all-India Convention held under the auspices of NCC on January 20, 1984. The rally underlines the alarming price situation and continued up-trend in the prices of all essential commodities, despite official claim of bumper food production. The annual average consumer price index, which although does not fully reflect the actual rise in prices, has gone up during the last three years by as much as 142 points. The workers are denied not only full neutralisation, but are also made victims of a fraudulent cost of living index which has not yet been rectified despite repeated demands.

11. The D.A. Committee for public sector workers is in a stalemate due to the rigid and unreasonable attitude of the Government. The rally demands of the Government to accept the principle of full neutralisation. The rally also demands immediate payment of five instalments of D.A. which have already become due to the Central Government Employees.

12. The rally expresses full support to the struggle of the agricultural workers who number more than fifty millions and who are denied even the statutory minimum wages and whose demand for a Central legislation has unjustifiably been rejected by the Government.

13. This rally expresses its grave concern at the growing tension between different religious communities in Punjab, Haryana and other parts of the country endangering the unity of working people. This rally appeals the working class to maintain unity at all costs which alone will ensure success in their struggles against the exploiters.

14. The deficit financing and the taxation policies of the Government of India has imposed several additional burdens on the common people. The conditionalities of the IMF loans have further mortgaged India's economy to the conditionalities of the multinational companies. The new liberalisation of import policy has led to adding to the marketing difficulties of Indian industries whose burden is promptly passed on the workers and the poor people. The deterioration of the living standards of the poor peasants and the agricultural workers is the direct result of these policies.

15. This rally urges upon the Government of India to initiate a dialogue with the trade unions with a view to solve all the problems expeditiously so that some relief will be available to the toiling people of our country. This rally appeals to all sections of workers to redouble their efforts to get the reversal of Government of India's policies so that it is forced to take measures in the interest of the workers. This rally authorises the National Campaign Committee to prepare a country-wide programme of joint movement on all these issues so that unity already achieved can be further strengthened and the working class is in a position to assert itself with more vigour in the forthcoming days.

(from page 13)

at an early date. At the intervention of Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister, the employers also agreed to pay Rs. 100/- as settlement money to all workers on roll before the strike.

Victory Celebrated

The jubilant jute workers celebrated the victory in a joint central rally held at Calcutta on April 8 under the auspices of the Central Trade Unions. Presided over by Niren Ghosh, M.P. Secretary of CITU and President of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union, the rally adopted a resolution ratifying the agreement. The resolution was moved by Md. Amin, General Secretary of BCMU and seconded by Bhowani Roy Chowdhury of AITUC. Kamal Sarkar, Secretary of CITU and Jt. General Secretary of All India Jute Workers' Federation and all other leaders of UTUC, TUCC, INTUC and HMS unanimously endorsed the resolution.

The rally congratulated the left front Government for its efforts to bring the settlement. It expressed thanks to all the mass organisations, and the international organisations for their exemplary solidarity shown to the jute workers during the strike. It paid homage to the memory of Com. Ravindra Lal Mishra of Samastipur who was brutally killed by the hoodlums of the management and also condemned the murderous attack on the three activists of AITUC.

The rally further raised its voice demanding nationalisation of the jute industry and took vow to continue the struggle till the demand is met with. In a statement issued to the press CITU congratulated the jute workers for their glorious united struggle and victory.

(from page 40)

by providing adequate funds to the state governments for the purpose. Similar demand was also raised on the question of interim relief to the state employees which was necessary to raise the level of pay of the state employees at least to that of the central employees. It is noteworthy to state here that both the centre and state employees have been demanding for parity of pay with the public sector employees. From this angle and particularly in view of the fact that now the wages of the state employees have been reduced to the lowest position among the organised sectors of employees, the demand of interim relief came out to be extremely justified. This is necessary to lift the wages of the state employees from the existing bottom most position.

But most unfortunately the Central Government in their written reply to the Members of the Parliament who are office-bearers of the AISGEF have shamelessly denied their responsibility towards the state employees in regard to bonus and interim relief. They have put it entirely on the shoulders of the state governments although at the same time refusing to allot any additional funds to the state governments for the purpose.

A critical situation has therefore been created for the state government employees particularly in regard to bonus and interim relief. It is most painful to note that it is only the state employees who are now deprived of bonus amongst the entire community of organised employees.

The AISGEF in these circumstances have chalked out a programme of action for realisation of bonus and interim relief. State-level 'Bonus Convention' in February 1984 was a part of the programme where all Trade Unions would be urged to stand by the legitimate demand of the state employees. The present phase of the struggle concluded with the massive observance of 'All India Demonstration Day' on March 6, 1984. The National Executive of the All India State Government Employees' Federation will meet again after the programme and more militant and bigger action for attainment of these demands.

CITU & AITUC Protest Against Verification Process

(Following is the joint letter sent by Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU and Indrajit Gupta, General Secretary, AITUC to the Labour Minister and April 23)

FROM the very beginning of the proposal for verification of membership of Central Trade Union Organisations, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) had pointed out the deficiencies of the scheme and demanded that these be settled through a discussion with all the Central Trade Unions. Though such a discussion was assured, the Government unilaterally announced a scheme and

went ahead with the verification. In protest the AITUC and the CITU did not participate in the verification of membership for the year 1980.

From the memorandum which was submitted to you on 7 April 1984 a copy of which is once again enclosed for your ready reference, you would find the points of dispute raised by eight Central Trade Union Organisations. We feel that it was possible for the Government of India to solve the problem through a discussion with all the organisations.

We would like to point out that the membership figures of our organisations have been collected arbitrarily and the list of such unions were not furnished to us. Hence there was no opportunity for us to find if the membership of all of our unions have been collected or not. We have also been given to understand that the figures of membership of our affiliated unions have been arbitrarily reduced

State Government Employees to Strike

Fifty Lakhs State Govt. Employees of the country will observe one day token strike on a day in the third week of July, as decided by the national executive committee of the Federation in its meeting on April 16th and 17th at New Delhi.

to zero, even though they are powerful unions having more than a lakh membership. Hence we do not accept the figures so arrived at arbitrarily.

As we learn that the C.L.C. (C) is going to announce the results of verification conducted recently without associating or informing us at any state, we hereby lodge our strong protest in the matter.

Library and Reading Room for Steel Workers

ON behalf of the Steel Workers' Federation of India a library and reading room was opened at Durgapur on 11 March, at a specially held function at headquarters of the Federation. Dilip Muzumdar Working President of the SWFI presided over the function.

While inaugurating the library and reading room M.K. Pandhe Secretary CITU emphasised the need for ideological education among the steel workers. He expressed his hope that more and more workers would take advantage of the facilities.

Ian Perry, tutor from the Trade Union Congress U.K. welcomed the idea of the library and wished it good success. Jackie Perry also expressed her good wishes for the library. Jibon Roy, General Secretary SWFI explained the efforts made by the federation to build the library despite meagre resources. The representatives of the AITUC and HMS who were present on the occasion appreciated the work done by the SWFI in this regard.

Third Convention of Working Women

ORGANISED by the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (CITU), the third convention of working women was held at New Delhi on April 17. 184 delegates from seven states attended the convention. One significant feature of the convention was that, throwing overboard all apprehensions, the largest contingent — 29 came from Punjab, the violence torn state, braving all threats against life. Another important feature was that the largest number of delegates—85 were industrial workers, mostly from the organised sectors. The third important factor was that 56 out of the 184 delegates were office bearers of their respective unions. Apart from this, a sizeable section of the delegates were young, new entrants attending such an all India meet for the first time. The composition of the convention clearly indicated a positive advance of the co-ordination committee with regard to the participation of the working women in the trade union struggles. The volunteers from the Delhi Co-ordination Committee and the Janavadi Mahila Samity did a splendid job to make the convention successful.

Inaugurating the convention, Sushila Gopalan, M.P., and General Secretary of the All India Democratic Women's Association, pointed to the acute problem facing the working women today due to the drastic reduction in women's employment. She said that the women are the first victims of modernisation and new technology affecting a large number of industries like in Coir, Beedi, Tobacco, Jute, Textiles and even stone breaking, where they are traditionally employed. She urged for intensification of the trade union struggles to meet this offensive on the working women.

A presidium consisting of Leela Das, Ram Pukari, Shanta Kumari, Laxmi, D. Sharda and Suman Gite conducted the proceedings of the convention. Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, of the Co-ordination Committee highlighted in her report the militant struggles waged by the working women during the preceding two years. Some of these struggles continued for months even. In all the struggles they demonstrated the growing urge for unity and the determination to carry forward them for the achievement of their demands. Nirupama Chatterjee, the Relief Minister of W. Bengal sharply brought out the contrast in the attitude of the left-front Government and the Indira Government towards the lot of women and called upon the delegates to join the mainstream of trade union struggles in increasing numbers to defend their rights.

Addressing the convention, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU called upon the trade unions to involve

more and more women workers in the struggles and champion their demands. He said that taking advantage of the pressing need of women for jobs, the employers, both private and the Government meted out rampant discriminations against them. Sexual harassment is a frequent experience of the working women exposing the system of the society, exploiting the weaker sections. Therefore women workers are always the first victims in employments — in respect of recruitments, in respect of workload, in respect of unequal wages and in respect of retrenchments. It is therefore essential for women workers to swell their participation in all trade union struggles which will instil courage in them to face the onslaught of the employers. The trade unions at the same time has to take up the particular demands of the women and take them along the trade union struggles as a part of the working class movement.

The convention adopted resolutions on struggle for peace against war, on promotion of women's participation in trade union movement, on price rise, on national integration, on atrocities against women, on children's day etc.

The convention enumerated the following tasks which were explained by Ahiliya Rangnekar:

1. To emphasise the class outlook of the co-ordination committee as a sub-committee of the CITU.
2. To oppose job reservation for women which is disruptive of the unity of the working class movement; to fight for equal pay, minimum wage and for training facilities of working women.
3. To fight for employment guarantee schemes, extension and implementation of maternity leave benefits and other protective legislations and special allotment for women's employment in the Seventh Five Year Plan.
4. To pay greater attention to the problems of agricultural women and to organise the unorganised sections.

The slogan of the convention was summed up by Ram Pukari who said, "We came here to organise, to struggle and to change". She quoted BTR's appeal: "How long Indira Gandhi will be allowed to rule this country while atrocities and oppression on women increase? Both Indira Gandhi and the British Prime Minister are women, but they serve the interest of the capitalist class. The position has to be changed. For this, the biggest force is the working class and the democratic movement of the country in which the women must take part. This is our common responsibility."

Seminar on Workers' Participation in NTC

THE National Textile Corporation organised a seminar on workers' participation in management in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 14 March to review the experience of the scheme in the light of the new scheme published by the Government. V.P. Singh, Union Minister of Commerce presided over the seminar which was inaugurated by Veerendra Patil, Union Minister of Labour. Over 100 participants including management officials, Central trade union leaders, Labour Ministry Officials and workers' representatives on the so called management committees participated in the seminar.

The Management Committees of NTC are only show pieces in the sense that practically there is no worker at all. Out of seven representatives on the committee, workers have only 2 representatives while the rest are nominated by the management. The representatives of the workers are also not elected by them but are nominated by the union recognised by the management.

During the last one year the NTC has started the scheme in 9 units and in most of the units the INTUC unions have nominated the workers' representatives. It is no wonder that the workers' representatives praised the performance of these committees. Though six such committees were formed less than 2 months ago some, of the workers' "nominees" found that the committees had already started giving results. Not a single representative in the committees belonged to CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS. This clearly highlighted the political patronage given by the NTC management to the INTUC unions.

Though Union Minister of Commerce in his speech admitted that without workers' participation in management the NTC as an organisation cannot survive, he said, "Labour to-day has no commitment whatsoever with what is being produced in the factory because of the dehumanising situation of production in our country".

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU while speaking in the seminar pointed out that the NTC scheme was not prepared in consultation with the T.U.s. He observed that all the schemes of workers' participation in management have failed because there was no genuine participation of workers. Unless the participation is on the basis of equality it has no meaning.

He drew the attention of the seminar to the experiment in West Bengal. When R.P. Billimoria as Chairman and Musa Raza as Managing Director of NTC visited Calcutta, a meeting of CITU representatives from NTC mills was called at Calcutta. The workers' representatives gave several suggestions to improve the performance of the NTC and make the

NTC in West Bengal a viable unit. However there was no follow up action with the result that the condition had been deteriorating very fast.

The yarn output of NTC declined from 178.8 million kgs in 1978-79 to 149.2 million kgs in 1982-83 while the production of cloth declined from 936.6 million sq meters to 760.5 million sq meters during the same period. The capacity utilisation of labour was as low as 56 per cent. The managerial policies were alone responsible for this bungling.

M.K. Pandhe suggested that without the election of workers' representatives or without an agreement by the participating unions the scheme cannot be successful. If the joint committees are stocked with yesmen of the management it would be a mockery of the scheme.

At present in NTC even the lower level managerial personnel do not participate in the management. They function as mere job doers as per directive of the top bosses. The role of bureaucracy in running the NTC is responsible for the present inefficient working of the undertaking.

The need for improvement of industrial relations in NTC was stressed by the workers' representatives in the seminar. The present industrial relations climate in NTC was very unsatisfactory and steps should be taken to improve matters.

The CITU demanded appointment of the committee to go into the scheme and suggest measures to introduce a genuine scheme of workers' participation in NTC.

N.K. Bhat (INTUC), Y.D. Sharma, B.D. Joshi (AITUC), R.K. Bhakt (BMS), Arvind Buch (NLO) participated in the discussion and demanded improvement in the scheme.

The Chairman, NTC in the end assured that the views expressed in the seminar would be considered by the management and follow up action would be taken in consultation with the trade unions.

Editorial Board

P. Ramamurti (*Chairman*)

Manoranjan Roy, Niren Ghosh,

Sudhin Kumar, M.M. Lawrence,

P.K. Ganguly

M.K. Pandhe (*Editor*)

Comments on the Delhi Recognition of Trade Unions Bill, 1983

(The Metropolitan Council of Delhi, a centrally administered territory, has brought a Bill as Delhi Recognition of Trade Unions Bill 1983 (Bill No. 3) which has been referred to the Select Committee. On being invited, the CITU has furnished a memorandum covering the basic points, which is being published below. —Editor)

THE question of statutory provision for recognition of collective bargaining agent in all undertakings and/or industries was taken up by the organised labour through the Indian Labour Conference in the past, because the employers had refused to recognise unions and/or negotiate with them. There are several instances in which the employers have refused to recognise even if there is only one union. There are instances when the employers have recognised new unions only because they are servile to the employers. The failure of the Govt of India to ratify I.L.O. Conventions No. 87 and 98 on Freedom of Association, Right of Organise and Collective Bargaining and non-enactment of appropriate legislations providing for the same had emboldened the employers to take this opportunity to refuse recognition to trade union and to deny the right of collective bargaining to the workers.

The Indian Labour Conference could not come to a decision on this question because the I.N.T.U.C. refused to accept secret ballot as the only scientific procedure, to determine the representative character of a trade union and the Govt of India's refusal to accept the majority opinion on this score which tantamount to granting veto power to INTUC has kept the situation still fluid without any concrete decision.

Viewed in this context the first two paragraphs of the "Statement of Objects and Reasons" are contrary to facts on record and tantamount to misleading the legislature. However this attempt to frame legislation for compulsory recognition of trade unions would have been welcome, had it not been for the fact that the bill once again seeks to restrict the activities of the union and does not confer on the union any right to collective bargaining once it is recognised.

For example section 11 under the "Recognised Trade Unions to Negotiate with Employers" provides as follows.

"The recognised trade union shall be entitled to negotiate with the employers in respect of all matters connected with the employment or non-employment or problems of the employment or conditions of labour of an area in all its particulars and employers shall not refuse to reply to letters sent by the said trade union or to hold discussions with the represen-

tatives of that union within a reasonable time on a representation being made by the Union".

This provision does not mean recognition which entails many other things apart from replying to letters and/or not refusing to negotiate. This round about provision does not mean anything and does not provide for collective bargaining, as the Bill seeks to claim. In fact the trade union movement, wherever it is organised has secured much more not only in the Public Sector undertakings but also in the private sector. Such of the employers who do not follow the practice of healthy industrial relations, would continue to ignore the Bill, as there is no provision for taking steps against the employers if they fail to observe the provisions of this law.

Even the recognition to any union will be granted by the Trade Union Authority constituted under this Act and not by the employers and hence it is a misnomer. Besides the Act provides for the Trade Union Authority being constituted by the Administrator on behalf of the Govt. and hence there is every likelihood of the choice being politically influenced or being bureaucratically constituted. There is no provision for appeal against the decision of the Authority if principles of natural justice are violated or a coloured decision is handed out.

It is good that the authorities agree that "Secret ballot" is the only correct method of determining the representative character of a union and have made a provision for secret ballot in the Act. But the provision vide section 6 is such that the entire purpose would be defeated. For example a union having 80 to 90 per cent workmen as genuine members would be deprived the right to secret ballot if a scab union of a handful persons with the connivance of the employers claims 96 per cent workmen as their members. Besides by providing that "all employees who have not opted out from trade union membership would be entitled to vote in the ballot", an opportunity is given to the employers to terrorise the workmen and force them to opt out from trade union membership.

While the Bill does not provide for compulsory recognition by the employers to the representative unions of the employees for promoting collective bargaining except for what is stated in section 11 and there is no punishment provided for those who do not recognise the union under this law or deal with them properly with a sense of equality, the Bill seeks first to restrict application of the Bill to only those establishments which have more than 50 workmen, and then impose various conditions under section 4 of the Act.

It has been noted that the employers in order to

evade social security and other labour laws, have been increasingly using contract labour in perennial jobs. There are instances where the entire labour force employed by the employers is through a contract system and hence such employers are given the statutory benefit of not recognising any trade union at all though as principal employers they might be engaging more than fifty persons. The provisions of minimum membership fee of One Rupee per month is in variance with the provisions of Trade Union Act. There should not be any condition like a minimum membership for becoming eligible to claim for recognition as one would make frivolous claim without genuine mass support.

The CITU opposes the provision in the Bill that the union claiming recognition must have a constitution with "a mandatory provision for the holding of a ballot for declaring a strike and for collecting a strike fund before a strike is undertaken" as this is unnecessary interference with trade union functioning. It changes the provisions of the Trade Union Act to the detriment of the workers. No trade union would give a call for strike unless there is mass support expressed through meetings with the concurrence of general members. There may be situations in which strike-ballot cannot be conducted but that should not stand in the way of declaring a strike. Besides the decision as to whether strike fund is to be collected or not is entirely a matter for the union to decide. Any compulsion under law would amount to interference in the democratic functioning of the union.

The Bill in the present shape, therefore, is not acceptable to the organised labour, though a law to facilitate compulsory recognition of the most representative unions of the employees and ensure the right to collective bargaining is necessary. The Bill should, therefore, be redrafted providing for:

(i) compulsory recognition by the employers to unions of employees. Where there is more than one registered trade union their representative character should be determined through secret ballot conducted by a Trade Union Authority which must include at least one representative each from all nationally recognised trade union centres, through a steering committee consisting of at least one representative each from all the unions who are taking part in secret ballot. All unions having overwhelming majority of 75 per cent or above should be declared as sole bargaining agent. Those having more than 51 per cent support should be granted recognition while others having more than 15 per cent votes should be given consulting status with some channel of negotiation for its members. In all establishments in which no union secure more than 51 per cent votes, a composite negotiating body should be formed with proportionate representation.

(ii) No condition other than the provisions of Trade Union Act should be imposed on the unions seeking recognition.

(iii) The Trade Union Authority must oversee that

the right to collective bargaining is ensured to the most representative union after recognition.

(iv) Any employer refusing to grant recognition to the most representative union or denying the right to collective bargaining, should be held guilty of unfair labour practice and punished with six months RI and a fine which may go upto Rs. 5000/. The union which is denied recognition would have the right to start the prosecution in case the Trade Union Authority fails to start the prosecution within a reasonable period.

(v) Recognition once granted would remain valid till it is challenged by any other union.

The CITU hopes that the present Bill would be redrafted for promoting healthy trade-unionism with the genuine intention of granting the Right to Collective Bargaining.

Comrade Santosh Mitra

CITU expresses deep sorrow at the passing away of Com. Santosh Mitra, M.P. a member of the W. Bengal State Committee of CPI(M) on March 28. Active in the education movement since 1953, Com. Mitra was an outstanding leader of the college and university teachers' movement in the state and the country. He was a pioneer in building up the All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisation and was its Vice President since its inception. CITU expresses heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family.

Comrade Golak Pati Roy

CITU expresses deep sorrow at the passing away of Com. Golak Pati Roy, a member of the W. Bengal State Committee of CPI(M) on April 10. Com. Golak Pati Roy was also an outstanding leader of the democratic education movement in W. Bengal and the General Secretary of the All Bengal Teachers' Association. He played a glorious role in democratisation of the education system in the state. CITU expresses heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family.

On the Government's Scheme for Employees' Participation in Management

THE Government of India in the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation (Department of Labour) has adopted a resolution on 30th December, 1983 embodying a Scheme for Employees' Participation Management.

The Government says in the preamble that the "Government have taken review of the above schemes (of 1975 and 1977). In the light of the review and experience so far, Government have decided to introduce instead a new comprehensive scheme of workers participation in Central Public Sector undertakings".

What review can be taken of schemes that were never given a trial? What experience was there to go by? Who reviewed them? Obviously the bureaucrats and managements of Public Sector Undertakings who scuttled them. As the organised labour was not consulted at any stage, it would be nothing but cheating of the workers and the Public to say that the present scheme has been drawn up in the light of the review and experience.

It is necessary to recall that the CITU, ever since the first scheme was published, had been demanding genuine scheme of worker's participation in management. The working committee meeting of the CITU held in Madras in November 10-12, 1975, pointed out the grave shortcomings in the first scheme contained in the resolution of the Government of India dated 10th October 1975. The CITU did not stop with pointing out the shortcomings but made positive suggestions. If those suggestions, had been accepted it would have enthused the working class and improved production of goods for the common man. The CITU had been repeatedly campaigning for the acceptance and implementation by Government of a scheme which would afford to the workers a say in the management of the economy of the country as responsible citizens because in an adverse condition it is they who become the first victim.

For example, Comrade B.T. Ranadive, President of the CITU in his presidential Address to the fifth conference of CITU at Kanpur on April 13-17, 1983, stated:

"Comrades, you will be surprised to learn that the productivity year of Indira Gandhi also announced the demise of worker's participation in management. Workers' participation was included in the first 20 point programme. The second 20 point programme has quietly dropped it to ensure success to the productivity year. You will remember that the first 20-point programme was intended to divert attention from the Emergency and the only point of interest to the workers was this proposal for workers' participation. Of course, the Government had absolutely no intention to introduce any scheme of parti-

cipation. The Government concerns and public and private sectors all were united in their opposition to it.

The CITU, fully realising the mismanagement of the Public and Private sectors alike, the monstrous corruption that is rampant, the use of sub-standard material and linkage of some officials with the anti-socials, *proposed to participate in management in terms of equality.* (Emphasis added). The workers were prepared to discharge their responsibility to society. But who wanted their cooperation? Not the vested interests when they were locking out one factory after another, nor the Government which was mercilessly suppressing one strike after another. And now the proposal is withdrawn, Unlimited hypocrisy, the name is Indira Government".

Every word what Comrade B.T. Ranadive had said, had been proved correct over the years. Only he did not add that neither of the schemes were given any trial in any undertakings, Public or Private.

It must be noted that the Constitution of India which came into force on 26th January, 1950, provided in Article 43A the following :

"43, *A Participation of workers in the management of industries*—The state shall take steps by suitable legislation or in any other way to secure the participation of workers in the management of undertakings, establishments or other organisations engaged in any industry".

It took a little more than a quarter of a century for the Government to take the first step for the formulation of a scheme for implementing this Directive Principle of the Constitution. The Indira Congress Government had also amended the Constitution to make the Directive Principles prevail over the Fundamental Rights. What the results of these productivity schemes were, have been noted by the President of the CITU.

And now the Federation of Indian Chambers adopted a unanimously on April 10, asking for a "*moratorium in lockouts and strikes for three years*"! what crocodile tears for loss of production through lock-outs and strikes and the resulting hardships of scarcity and high prices for the people and unemployment and reduced earnings to the workers? After all, the Reserve Bank, The Economic Survey of the Government of India, the Planning Commission and independent economic journals and economists have nailed the lie that loss of production has been caused by workers' strikes. They have all pointed out that only two per cent of the industries have become sick due to labour troubles, which are

generally imposed on the workers by refusing to accede to their legitimate demands, and the rest is due to the mismanagement of Industries by the management and the Government.

It is the employers who in their quest for super profits cut down production to create scarcity and make unaccounted tax free profits in the black-market. They divert funds of the factories to more profitable pastures, make the factories sick and close them down. The CITU had proposed a discussion on industrial sickness in April 1982, which was not accepted.

The workers have no control over the management. What or who prevents them from lifting the lockouts running for months and reopening the closed factories? Can you beat this hypocrisy?

The latest examples of the recalcitrance of the employers and the Government to concede the legitimate demands of the workers are the recent protracted strikes of the jute workers and Port and Dock workers. In both the cases the jute barons and the Government pleaded that any increase in the wage bill would lead to losses. In the end the workers secured substantial increase in emoluments. The scheme has therefore to be analysed in this background.

Since employees' participation in management is of great importance to the development of the country and the people's well-being, the Trade Union movement — particularly the revolutionary trade union movement it deeply concerned about it. It is necessary therefore to critically analyse the present scheme, and assess it and see whether it contains any improvements on the previous defunct Schemes, whether it serves the purpose it proclaims to do, and suggest improvements.

The present scheme embodies most of the defects of the earlier schemes. But for the present we shall confine ourselves to the present scheme.

Now let us take the latest proposal of the Government. Any man with common sense will agree that before formulating any scheme of workers participation, the Government should have serious consultations with the workers and particularly with the trade union movement, for the scheme affects and is dependent upon securing the worker's co-operation. This the Government did not do. We do not know if it has had any consultation with the INTUC, patronised by it. In a meeting held in January, '83 with the Finance Minister, the organised labour had proposed a meeting for discussion on the losses of Public Sector undertakings. But such a meeting has not been convened so far.

The last sentence of the first point of the Scheme says:—

“The Scheme will be applied to all Central Public Sector undertakings except those undertakings

which are given specific exemption from the operation of the scheme by the Ministry/Administration concerned in the consultation with the Department of Labour, taking into consideration the nature of the undertaking, the products it is manufacturing, etc”.

Thus the workers have no say even in the application of the scheme. And when it talks of the Labour Department it means that the bureaucracy will decide it.

The sub-para of this point says, “Any undertaking of the Government, which is departmentally run, however, will be excluded from this new scheme”. Why? The Govt. does not explain. Are the departmental undertakings working without workers? And now to this new scheme proper:

“The Scheme shall be operated at the shop and plant levels”. But as regards the Board Level, (where policy decisions are taken) the Administration/Department concerned (in charge of the undertaking) will draw in consultation with the Deptt. of Labour a list of undertakings which it considers suitable for introduction at the Board level also. The list will be reviewed from time to time with a view to bring in as many undertakings as possible within its scope”.

Thus according to the framers of the Scheme, the workers have no say in deciding which undertakings must be brought under the scope of the Scheme.

The Government when it amended the Reserve Bank Act and the Banking Act in 1970, provided for a representative, chosen by the Government and management and not by the employees, to sit on the Board only in its meetings. But some of the representatives exposed the mismanagement, corruption and favouritism shown to the monopolists. Evidently, the Government has taken the lessons of that bitter experience. By amending the rules they have now removed the Worker-Directors, while the INTUC workers and Congressmen continue in the Board of Directors as social workers. This speaks eloquent about the Govt's attitude. *Point No. 2:* “The representation of the workers at the shop level and floor level will cover different categories of workers such as skilled and unskilled, technical and non-technical. Managerial Personnel would be excluded, *but those in the supervisory categories such as Supervisors, Chargemen, etc would be covered. (Emphasis added).*”

But the workers and management will get equal representation at the shop level and floor level forums. They will have a representation of five to ten members depending on the size of the undertaking. The management will also consult the trade union leaders and evolve through consensus the mode of representation of workers at all levels in which the scheme would be implemented. In persuading the union leaders to reach a consensus,

the management may point out that in the absence of consensus the scheme would not be capable of implementation. The management and the Trade Union leaders would ensure that there is adequate representation for women in the participative forums where women workers constitute 10 per cent or more of the total work force. The management would ensure that adequate provision is made to safeguard workers' independence from management pressure so as to ensure protection against any harassment or victimisation."

The only good feature about this point is that the scheme accepts equal representation for the workers and management at the floor and shop level (but not at the Board level). Also the directive to ensure representation to women where they constitute 10 percent or more of the total work force is welcome. The CITU is particular that women workers must be represented even where they are less than ten per cent of the work force.

All talks of equality of representation even in number, becomes farcical when the management includes supervisory categories like Supervisors, Chargemen, etc. It is well known that with rare exceptions these categories of employees fall in line with the management and curry its favour for promotion. They would inevitably bring pressure on the workers, failing which they will make false reports of indiscipline. Under these circumstances the workers cannot be protected against harassment and victimisation, even if the Government genuinely desires it. The experience of the CITU, whose affiliates had reported corrupt practices of the management and entering into collaboration with foreign multinationals even when comparable indigenous technology was available, is bitter. The concerned CITU union's office bearers have been victimised. Many reports of the Committee on Public Undertakings have pointed out such corruption and malpractices and called for action. Even when CBI had recommended prosecution of some of these men in the top management of Central Public Sector undertakings, they have gone scot free.

It is also noteworthy that the Government does not even indicate how it proposes to protect the workers.

The main point is that equal number in representation at the shop or plant level does not elevate the workers to the position of an equal partner. Even granting some representation at the Board level does not generate a sense of equality in status unless the scheme confers on the worker's representatives equal rights in respect of all spheres of management like purchase, sale, accounts, technology, including the right to hire and fire.

Equally obnoxious is the fact that the Government would consult only the "Trade Union leaders". Many of these leaders represent no body but themselves and are pliable instruments in the hands of the managements and the Government.

It should be emphasised that this point is so worded that it is capable of many interpretations. Consultations with trade union leaders is mentioned. But which trade union leaders? In absence of proper clarification this term may be reduced to the INTUC trade union leaders only. The prolonged strike of the Bombay textile workers whom the INTUC union claimed to represent has proved that such claim is bogus. The workers went on strike despite the directive not to do so and the INTUC leaders dared not face the workers by holding a single meeting. Since 1978 when the method of secret ballot was introduced in some Central undertakings like the BHEL, Hindustan Photo Films, etc and by the Andhra Pradesh Government for the purpose of determining the representative character of the Trade Unions, it had found that the INTUC unions which had been given the exclusive representative status could get the support of only a hopeless minority.

The CITU demands that the method of secret ballot to choose workers' representatives in all bodies where matters of the interests to the workers will be discussed, should be accepted.

The committees set up by the Steel Authority of India Ltd and the Ministry of Industry etc. which included the representatives in the scheme of Worker's/Employee's participation in management should be elected through secret ballot. It is not understood as to why the Govt. is refusing to accept this mode of representation of workers.

As for consensus, the CITU always wants consensus, because, more than the Govt. it stands for the unity of the workers and their Trade Unions. But consensus, it should be emphasised, is not unanimity. The CITU does not want to give the power of veto to any union. It wants the widest representation of workers.

The word 'consensus' in the context in which it is used may be interpreted by the management that where and when it disagrees with the worker's its views will prevail. This will create a dangerous situation. It will convert these forums into stratagems for imposing increased workloads without any agreement with the workers. This will lead to heart burning and non-co-operation. In the final analysis it is the willing co-operation of the workers that is the most productive input in a factory.

All these must be clarified and the wording should admit of no two interpretations.

The functions that may be entrusted to these forums at the shop floor and plant level are not important. What is the use of listing the welfare measures to be entrusted to these forums, when the Government after 37 years of independence does not provide even housing and drinking water to the workers, while the big businessmen, blackmarketeers and smugglers have been allowed to corner all the best sites and build huge and luxurious mansions and palaces?

The Committees set up under the provident Fund Act, ESI schemes have all become defunct for all the practical purposes. The Government does not even prosecute employers who do not deposit the employees' contributions, let alone their own contributions. Under these conditions all talk of entrusting various welfare activities to such joint committees will be a chimera.

To conclude, any meaningful and effective joint management scheme must mean that the workers, through their own elected representatives, be able to participate on equal footing in all management functions. This can be assured only by electing equal number of workers' representatives at all levels including the board level. All accounts, purchases, sales, pricing policies, proposals for collaborations, etc. should be jointly determined. Complaints must be enquired into by an independent body and not by any one set up by the management. The workers case should always be faithfully recorded and given due consideration.

The workers would be allowed to be present and cross-examine the management personnel when they are examined on charges of corruption, mismanagement and misbehaviour. Workers on their part will be prepared to subject themselves to such cross examination.

This scheme is also for international consumption and for cultivating democratic opinion by telling the people that the Government wants to increase production, but the workers stand in the way. However, the fact should not be ignored that at long last the Government has realised that without a degree of co-operation from the workers even the limited objective of keeping the existing production cannot be realised, especially in view of sophisticated machineries introduced in production.

For thirty seven years the capitalists, particularly the big capitalists and the Government have bungled. They have proved that the country faces grave danger in economic and other fields and chaos, if they alone are allowed to be in charge of production. They are interested only in their profits.

The working class on the other hand, wants to curb their power even in the existing economic order. That is why it wants co-determination in running industries and the economy.

The working class has no interests apart from those of the people, and the country. It knows that its own interests are inseparably bound up with the interests of the people. That is why the CITU has made these eminently reasonable and democratic proposals. It seeks the support of all democratic sections of society. Once again it assures the people that it is prepared to discharge its responsibility to the people and the country.

A meeting convened by the Union Labour Ministry on 7th April to further consider the scheme

of workers' participation in management could not conclude the discussions.

The non-INTUC union representatives emphasised the need for democratic method of electing the workers' nominees on the participative bodies. The INTUC representatives opposed this concept and insisted that the workers' representatives should be nominated by the recognised union in the unit.

When it was pointed out that in a Committee of Central Trade Unions on Working of the Public Sector undertakings constituted in the year 1977 by the Ministry of Industry, the INTUC representative V.V. Dravid, Vice President of INTUC, agreed with other trade unions that the workers' representatives should be elected by the workers themselves, the INTUC noted that it was not the standpoint of the INTUC as an organisation.

The trade union representatives pointed out the BHEL system of workers' participation is based on secret ballot which was accepted by the INTUC at that time, but now the same concept is given up by this organisation.

Ultimately no conclusion could be reached on this question and it was agreed to continue the discussions in another meeting which is likely to be the final meeting on the subject.

B.G. Deshmukh, Secretary Ministry of Labour, who presided over the meeting said the Government may make some modification in the scheme in the light of the discussions held in the meeting. M.K. Pandhe attended meeting on behalf of the CITU.

Gopal Bose for Moscow

On invitation from AUCCTU, CITU nominated Gopal Bose, Working Committee member, to attend the 'May Day' Celebration at Moscow. Gopal Bose left for Moscow on April 26. He will also speak on anti-War Movement and Trade Unions in an international conference to be held at Moscow on May 3 and 4.

CITU Publication

Real Face of Congress(I) Brand of Socialism:
Full text of the speech of Com. Samar Mukherjee, M.P., Leader of CPI(M) Group in Lok Sabha and General Secretary of CITU, on February 27, 1984, on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address: Price: Rs. 0.50

Send your orders at 6, Talkatora Road, New Delhi-110001.

International Struggles

Italy

On March 24, over one million workers participated in the biggest demonstration held in Italy during the post war period. The workers came from all over Italy and marched through the streets of Rome and rallied at the huge St. Jean de Latran Square. The demonstration was jointly organised by CGIL, CISL and UIL opposing the austerity measures of the Government to cause a decline in the living standards of the people.

France

On April 4, a massive general strike brought the entire Lorraine industrial region to a standstill. The call for the strike was jointly given by CGT, FO, CFTC and CGC protesting against the closure of mines and furnaces. Demonstrating excellent solidarity with the steel workers and miners, all shops put up their shutters, transport was interrupted and telephone links with the rest of France were cut off. Following numerous clashes with the Security Police, the protests spread to Metz, Nancy and Epinal. All routes to Lorraine were closed including rail routes. Thousands of workers joined by the people demonstrated their protests against police excesses and

protest against the management's decision to lay off 182 workers. The police armed with tear gas cannisters and truncheons brutally attacked the workers to disperse.

El Salvador

Despite the brutal repression by the Salvadorean regime, 33,000 workers went on strike demanding wage increase, release of trade union leaders and end to repression. 20,000 building workers, 3,000 agricultural workers, hundreds of teachers and public sector workers took part in the strike.

FRG

On March 12, 2,500 workers struck work for two hours in a dozen area of Ruhr. The call was given by the I.G. Metall (membership — 2.5 millions) demanding 35 hour week instead of the present 40 hour week. A series of warning strikes have been planned in pursuance of the demand, negotiations on which have been deadlocked by the employers.

Japan

Japanese big business is making all attempts to block all steps towards safeguarding the rights of

Youth Unemployment in New York

The New York Times reports that youth unemployment in New York has reached a record level of 4,10,000 young people. Unemployment is particularly acute among the young black people in the city amounting to 90 per cent

Homeless in FRG

80,000 to 1,00,000 people are homeless in FRG, according to a report published by the Federal Ministry, for youth and health. The document points out that the majority of the cases of homelessness are due to high rents and unemployment. But the Ministry maintains that the cuts resorted to by the Government in social spending would not further increase the number.

opposed the Government's so called modernisation plans which they said, would result in joblessness.

Hondurus

The special police brigade — the "Cobras", renowned for their cruelty, arrested over 600 striking men and women workers from the National Electricity Works in the Capital Tegucigalpa on March 22. The workers had struck work and occupied the factory demanding release of their union President who was abducted on March 18. The three trade union centres of the country organised a massive protest demonstration on March 23 protesting against the arrests. People's movement is now beginning in Hondurus which has been transformed into an U.S. outpost to launch aggression against Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Israel

Hundreds of workers in the Mafnout nationalised dockyard in Haifa blocked roads on March 15 to

women workers. In an appeal to the Nakasone Government, the Entrepreneurs' Federation, an organisation of the monopolists, asked the Government not to adopt the Equality for Women in Production Act. They shamelessly stated that if women were not discriminated then it would "undermine the national economy". The Bill has been introduced in the Parliament due to the pressure of the opposition parties and the trade unions. In Japan, women earn a little over half the salary of men, while carrying out the same job. Unemployment in women is 25 to 30 per cent higher than the national average.

Colombia

2,000 metal workers of the largest engineering plant, Pas del Rio are on strike for more than three weeks demanding increased wages better working conditions and social security cover. The Strike Committee has decided to organise a 200 Km protest march to Bogota to hand over the demands to the President of Colombia.

Protugal

The managements of more than 540 factories have held up payment of wages to about 1,50,000 workers on the ground of "financial difficulties". The total wage bill amounts to 21.6 Billion Escudos. The CGTP-IN have announced direct action plans demanding the arrear wages.

Sri Lanka

6,00,000 tea, rubber and cocoanut plantation workers sruck work from April 2 demanding grants and allowance as paid in other sectors. The Ceylon Workers' Congress said that the workers from other trade unions and even the clerical staff had joined the strike. Incurring a loss of about Rs. 60 millions a day, Jayawardene Government was compelled to settle the demands.

Brazil

60,000 public school teachers and attendants in Minas Girais State went on strike from March 30 demanding 1 per cent wage increase. The strike spread to 80 cities and brought 450 middle and primary schools to a standstill.

Finland

About 4,500 Finnish School teachers in four municipalities including in Heisinki went on strike from April 2 demanding higher pay. The call for strike was given by the National Union of Teachers. If the demands are not met, the strike is likely to spread throughout the country. At the call of the Akava Professional Organisation, to which the union is affiliated, nursery teachers, doctors and health centre employees also went on strike from April 5 demanding higher salaries.

Great Britain

For the first time in 14 years the technicians of the British Broadcasting Corporation—1 went on one day's strike on April 5, closing down all television programmes. The strike was in protest against the Government's plan to change working practices, which will lead to joblessness. 595 Scenery workers are already on strike for over seven weeks against the plan. They were sacked for refusing to return to work. The BBC management wants to save about 1,700,000 pounds a year by eliminating what it regards as "inefficient working practices" by the Scenery workers.

The miner's strike in Britain in protest against pit closures and retrenchments entered the fourth week on April 3 and is gaining support from other trade unions. The closure of 20 pits has affected 20,000 jobs. The National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen instructed its members to ban coal movement throughout the country in support of the miner's strike. The National Union of Seamen also instructed the members to block coal imports and the movements of coal around the country's coast. The strike continued despite large scale police

repression unseen since World War-2. The General Council of Trade Union Congress condemned the Government's repressive policy and extended full support to the strike. The transport workers also observed a complete strike in March.

Belgium

A nationwide protest strike was observed by the Belgium workers on April 3 opposing the Government's austerity measures. The call of strike was given by the Belgium Federation of Labour. Rail transport was paralysed, road traffic disrupted and postal services were nullified. 6,000 people demonstrated at Brussels and 8,000 at Liege. The Christian trade unions also joined the strike. To overcome the great economic difficulties the Government had announced a 2 per cent to 6 per cent cut in wages for the next three years. Unemployed workers occupied the buildings of the State Council, the Belgium Enterprise Federation and the Belgium Association of Banks.

Brazil

20,000 auto and other workers in and aground Sao Paulo joined the rank of strikers on April 3 demanding higher pay and better working conditions. The strike which spread to other major industrial area cut down the General Motor's production by 1,600 automobiles a day. The sit down strike in Ford, Valksvagon, Mercedes-Benz and other auto manufactures also cut down their productions by 30 per cent.

United States

A confidential document of General Motors has revealed that 80,000 redundancies are likely to be made by 1986. The document says that the mass reduction will be primarily directed against the United Auto Workers Union, thus dispensing with the trade unionists. The management has further planned to impose draconian work and wage measures to those who are left behind. Since the last two years, the U.S. employers, particularly the auto manufacturers have imposed 10 to 30 per cent wage cuts. Such blackmails have been resorted to when the General Motor's net profit stood at 3.7 billion dollars last year. The United Auto Worker's Union is making preparations to launch action programmes in protest.

Note for Correction

On page 24 of the March issue under the sub-heading "Who is encircled", the figures quoted about the number of US military bases and soldiers were not correct. Clarification has been sought from the "World Trade Union Movement" from which it was quoted. Correct figures will be published after receipt of the clarification.