



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Comrade Yuri Andropov

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses its profound shock and grief at the passing away of Comrade Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the President of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet of the USSR, on February 10, 1984 at the age of 69.

An outstanding communist leader who had the experience of fighting the fascist forces during the Second World War behind the Nazi-held lines and in other responsible posts assigned to him, Comrade Andropov headed the CPSU and the Soviet Government from November 1982. Since then within such a short time, he proved himself to be a relentless and indefatigable fighter for peace while never for a moment forgetting the responsibility of consolidating the defence of USSR and other socialist states. Through his repeated proposals of renunciation of first nuclear and conventional strike and matching and even unilateral withdrawal of nuclear missiles in Europe, in the face of the adventurous designs and mad arms race by the US imperialists, he had earned the appreciation of all peace loving forces of the world. In his death, the world communist movement and the people and working class of USSR have suffered a great loss.

The Secretariat of CITU, dips its red banner in memory of this great revolutionary communist leader and conveys its heat-felt condolences to the AUCCTU and the working people of Soviet Union.



Attention of Affiliated Unions

SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL RETURNS

(Excerpt from Circular No. 1/84 of January 10)

Submission of Annual Returns at the end of every Calendar year is one of the essential conditions for continuity of the registration of the Unions. Since the Belur General Council meeting in August 1981, the importance of the submission of Annual Returns in time showing the actual number of members and the unions' affiliation of CITU has been repeatedly brought to the notice of the unions. Regular submission of Annual Returns helps projection of the strength of CITU and enables the State Committees to secure their proper place while dealing with the State Governments concerned. Submission of Annual Returns every year constitute a part of the democratic functioning of the unions. It gives the unions and the members opportunity to compare their functioning with the previous years in respect of membership, income and expenditure.

Sections 14, 15 and 16 of the Constitution of CITU make it obligatory on the unions to (i) Send a copy of the duly audited statement of accounts and a copy of the Annual Return after every Calendar year and (ii) Clear affiliation fees on or before 30th June every year @ 0.20 p. for every member subject

Com. D.D. Vashist

CITU deeply mourns the sad demise of Com. D.D. Vashist, the General Secretary of Hind Mazdoor Sabha and General Secretary of the Northern Railwaymen's Union, at Delhi on February 14.

The National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions also expressed its deep sense of sorrow at the sudden passing away of Com. Vashist, in its meeting held at Delhi on February 15. In a statement issued to the press the National Campaign Committee recalled the services rendered by Com. Vashist to the trade union movement since 1944. He played a leading role in the historic railway strike of 1974 and was arrested during the strike. As one of the founder members of the National Campaign Committee, Com. Vashist contributed greatly in strengthening the united movement of the working class in India.

AUCCTU Secretary Visits CITU

Vladimir Bogatikov, Secretary, All Unions Central Council of Trade Unions, USSR visited the Central Office of CITU at Delhi on February 1. He was accompanied by Valentin N. Soloviev, First Secretary and Gleb A. Ivashentsov, Counsellor of the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi. On behalf of CITU, Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary and M.K. Pandhe, Nrisingha Chakrabarty, P.K. Ganguly, Secretaries participated in the discussions.

15th Congress of Central Workers' Union, Cuba

On invitation from the CENTRAL TRABAJADORES (Central Workers' Union), Cuba, Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary CITU left for Havana on February 16 to attend its 15th Congress to be held from February 20-24.

Bangladesh Jatio Shramik League Congress Postponed

The Sixth Congress of the Jatio Shramik League, Bangladesh scheduled to be held at Dhaka on February 17 and 18, has been postponed. Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU was to attend the Congress.

to a minimum of Rs. 20 and the yearly subscription of Rs. 12 for The Working Class per year.

All affiliated unions are therefore instructed to submit Annual Returns to the Registrar of Trade Unions in time showing (i) the membership as on 31.12.83 along with the Returns of the previous years also, if not submitted and (ii) that the union is affiliated to CITU. One copy of the Returns to be submitted to the State Committee and one copy to the Central Office. All unions should pay the affiliation fees along with the subscription for The Working Class in a single remittance.

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Countrywide Response to Demands Day

RESPONDING massively to the call of the 17 opposition parties, workers and the people held demonstrations, rallies and processions in all parts of the country on February 13 against the anti-labour, anti-people and the fiscal policies of the Congress (I) Government. The call was given by the opposition parties in their Calcutta Conference on 13-15 January and concretised at Delhi on January 27 as the first phase of the united movement in pursuance of 11-point demands. Supporting the demands, CITU called upon the State Committees to mobilise workers in maximum to participate in the movement.

At Delhi, a procession of over 5000 people from ten opposition parties and mass organisations of workers, students, women, youth, teachers, etc started from the Boat Club and culminated at Gole Methi Chowk near the Prime Minister's residence, where the rally was held. The meeting started after adopting a condolence resolution on the death of Yuri Andropov. Addressing the rally, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, General Secretary of CPI (M) said that for the first time in several years the 17 opposition parties and the mass organisations had combined to fight against the anti-people, anti-worker, anti-peasantry and the pro-monopolist, pro-feudal and pro-multi-national policies of the Congress (I) Government, which have resulted in ever rising prices, growing unemployment and deteriorating law and order situation. He urged upon the people to further consolidate the unity and carry forward the struggle for an alternative change. C. Rajeshwar Rao, General Secretary of CPI pointed out that prices of essential commodities had spiralled by 52 per cent during the last four years' rule by Indira Gandhi. Chandra Sekhar, the President of the Janata Party urged upon the opposition parties to forge a common front against the present regime which has brought hunger, poverty and unemployment to the teeming millions. Others who spoke were Ambika Soni (Congress-S), Tarakeshwari Sinha (DSP), Brij Mohan (Congress-J), J. Gupta (Janvadi Party), Sushil Bhattacharya (RSP), Vinode Jain (Forward Block) and Rasheed Kabuli (National Conference). After the rally a joint memorandum was submitted at the Prime Minister's office by the representatives of the opposition parties.

At Calcutta, a huge rally was held at Esplanade East, organised by the Left Front and CITU, AITUC, UTUC, TUCC, 12th July Committee, Bank Employee's Federation, Marcantile Employees' Federation and various other mass organisations. Innumerable processions from various parts of Calcutta and the suburbs started flowing in from the morning converging at Esplanade East. The rally was presided over by Manoranjan Roy, General Secretary of W. Bengal CITU. Addressing the rally Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of W. Bengal and Vice-President of CITU made a scathing attack on the policies of the

Government of India, pursuing the capitalist path of development since independence. He said that only in the urban areas the figure of the registered unemployeds has crossed two crores. The unemployment in the rural areas is unimaginable. The rising prices are converting more and more people into destitutes. This is the result after six five-year "capitalist plans". The plans are directed against the people to boost up the monopolists and the feudals with growing dependence on the foreign capitalist aid. The Government has taken loans from the IMF under conditions which are against interest of the nation and the people. The repayment of the loans and the interests are made by exploitation of the Indian people. To protect the interests of the monopolists and the multi-nationals the Government has embarked upon an unprecedented attack on the democratic and trade union rights of the people and the workers. In an authoritarian manner the Centre is acquiring all the powers denuding the states of their rightful shares of the revenue and concentrating the attacks on all the non-Congress (I) Governments. Others who addressed the rally were Indrajit Gupta (AITUC), Nikhil Das (UTUC), P. Das gupta (TUCC), Nirmal Gupta (HMS), Sailen Adhikary (HMP), Ram Chatterjee (Forward Block-Marxist), Arun Mitra (DSP), Arabinda Ghosh (12th July Committee), Naresh Das (Bank Employees' Federation), etc. Rallies were also held in all parts of the state.

Organised by the left and democratic front, the Demands Day was observed throughout the state of Kerala in 55 places and the Taluk Centres. Despite heavy rains in various places, huge masses gathered at the places to express their indignation against the Congress(I) rule at the Centre and the Congress(I) led ruling front in the State.

The day was observed at all places in Tripura. The Congress(I) hoodlums threw a bomb at a procession in Bishalgarh in Tripura, seriously injuring twelve persons. Nripen Chakrabarty, the Chief Minister addressed a massive rally at Agartala.

At Jammu the rally was organised by CPI(M), CPI, Janata Party and the National Conference and addressed by H.S.K. Surjeet, M.M. Farooqui, Kripal Singh and Chunilal Khajuria respectively.

At Jullundur, CPI(M), CPI, Janata, Congress(S) and DSP organised a rally. A demonstration was organised at Amritsar by CPI(M), CPI and Janata and a memorandum was forwarded to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Commissioner.

In Tamilnadu, the 14 party opposition front organised demonstrations throughout the state addressed by leaders of CPI(M), CPI, Janata, DMK, Tamilnadu Kamraj Congress, etc.

A huge rally was held at Gauhati demanding check in price rise and abrogation of the illegal migrants Act.

Rallies were held in all the district and Sub-Divisional offices in Bihar. A joint memorandum was submitted to the District Magistrate at Patna after a rally which was addressed by leaders of the various opposition parties.

Rallies were organised in Gujarat, U.P., M.P., Rajasthan, Haryana and other places also.

Next Two Stages of Programme

A meeting of the opposition parties was held at Delhi on February 15 which reviewed the country-wide observance of the Demands Day. The meeting concretised the plans of the next two stages of the programmes, namely holding of the State Conventions by the end of February and the all India Convention at New Delhi on March 30. The meeting appealed to all democratic parties and mass organisations to participate in the programmes and raise their voice in support of the demands.

The meeting was attended by representatives of CPI (M), CPI, National Conference, DSP, Congress (S) Rashtriya Congress, RSP and Forward Block. The other parties who could not send their representatives to attend the meeting, conveyed their cooperation in carrying out the programmes.

The Eleven Demands

(1) The Union Government should guarantee adequate supply of essential commodities to the consumers at reasonable prices by drastically curbing the profits of wholesalers and organising a comprehensive network of the public distribution system. This calls for changing the priorities of production in favour of mass consumption goods needed by the poor and middle classes, and for subsidised supply of such commodities as major food-grains, pulses, edible oils, salt, sugar, domestic coal, paper, life-saving drugs, match boxes, etc. Excise levies on all such goods need to be drastically reduced and their movements given top priority.

(2) Remunerative prices be ensured for agricultural produce by adequate purchases through State agencies;

(3) A total re-structuring of economic policies with a view to increasing the production of mass consumption goods and expanding employment opportunities for all sections, including small artisans and craftsmen;

(4) The food-for-work programme be revived and expanded;

(5) The right to work be included as one of the fundamental rights in the Constitution;

(6) The existing land reform legislations be speedily implemented after plugging the loopholes, and immediate assent be accorded to land reform bills passed by State Legislatures;

(7) Ensure cheap credit and supply of farm input to the peasantry;

(8) Enforce minimum wages to farm workers and initiate other measures to improve the living and working conditions of the rural people;

(9) The anti-labour policies of the Union Government be reversed and obnoxious measures such as the NSA and ESMA be scrapped and the demands formulated by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions be accepted and effective steps be taken to prevent industrial closures and lockouts;

(10) The national policy of economic self-reliance be restored, and fiscal monetary and investment policies which encourage the big monopoly houses and multi-national corporations at the expense of the interests of the poor and the working classes be abandoned; and

(11) Energetic measures be introduced to put an end to the continuing economic injustice and physical attacks on the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, religious minorities, women and other weaker sections of the society.

Deficit Budget-Cause of Price Rise

Centre's Deficit Budget (Rupees in Crores)

1981-82 (Actual Deficit)	1392
1982-83 (Deficit Budget)	1375
1982-83 (Revised)	1935
1983-84 (Deficit Budget)	1555

As per Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, September, 1983, the actual deficit was Rs. 2250 crores upto September, 1983. As per press reports, the deficit till November, 1983 was Rs. 2600 crores — may amount to Rs. 4000 crores at the end of the financial year 1983-84.

In 1982-83 the additional taxes were proposed to be Rs. 533 crores. In 1983-84, it has been Rs. 716 crores. Before the 1983-84 budget, Rs. 2100 crores have been raised by increasing the administered prices of several essential commodities. Budget deficit is sought to be covered by printing extra notes, thereby increasing inflation.

Jute Strike Enters Second Month

THE united indefinite strike of nearly three lakh workers of the jute industry which commenced on January 16, entered its second month on February 16. In the glorious history of the struggles of the jute workers, the present struggle is unparalleled. By raising the significant demand for nationalisation of the entire jute industry including purchase of raw jute and foreign trade in jute and jute products, the jute workers have warned the Government of India that they will not allow the few monopolists to do racketeering with this core industry, so vital for the economy of the country and the eastern India in particular. By uniting all the fourteen unions in the industry including the INTUC, they have set an unique example to the entire working class in India that unity of all sections of the workers on class basis is the only way to confront the monopolists and fight the Government's pro-monopolist policies. The strike has further demonstrated the unyielding determination of the jute workers to compel the jute barons to honour the previous agreements on grades and scales and on workload. This is another example set before the working class, as, of late, it has become a "tactics" of the employers and the Government to make agreements and then violate them and unleash repressions. The struggle has furthermore acquired a political significance as the workers have doggedly championed the cause of the forty lakh jute growers — the poor peasantry being ruthlessly exploited by the barons and being forced to dispose of raw jute at throw away prices somehow to make the both ends meet.

Congress(I) Governments Exposed

While the Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Tripura have supported the grim struggle of the jute workers, the Government of India have been subserving the interests of the jute barons and standing as a watch dog to boost up their profits. The all party resolution of the West Bengal Assembly has urged for nationalisation. An all party delegation from West Bengal met the Prime Minister with this people's demand. Sukomal Sen and other Members of the Parliament have raised the demand on the floor of the Parliament. In the Consultative Committee meeting of the Commerce Ministry on January 28, Arbindo Ghosh, Ananda Pathak and Amar Roy Pradhan raised the demand. Similarly, in the Consultative Committee meeting of the Labour Ministry on February 6, Md. Ismail and Ajit Bag pinpointed at the demand. But the Government of India has refused. With all its crocodile tears for the workers and the peasantry, the Government of India, having allowed the jute barons to loot the public money and diversify in other channels, is still sitting pretty and not even intervened in the strike as yet although there is already a production loss of 1.44 lakh tonnes, worth Rs. 100 crores. In Bihar the Congress(I) Government released its machineries to let loose a reign of terror on the striking jute workers at Katihar and Samastipur with the help of the management gangsters who have shot dead four workers at Samastipur. In U.P., the Congress(I)

Government have declared the strike illegal by an ordinance.

Total Success

Despite the repressions and machinations by the Government and the jute barons, the struggle continues with success and determination in all the jute growing centres of the country. While in West Bengal the strike is total, in Samastipur in Bihar, braving all the brutalities, the workers are continuing the strike. In Katihar the workers of R.B.H.M. jute mill went on strike from February 13. The workers of Katihar Jute Mills, which is under closure, all the workers have rallied behind the struggle in support of the strike. In Raigarh in M.P., the workers have joined the strike. Defying the ban order, the workers in Kanpur went on strike on January 16 to express solidarity. In Assam, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh also the workers went on one day's strike and continuing other solidarity actions.

Mass Support

The strike has drawn mass support from all parts of the country and from abroad too. In two telegrams, the World Federation of Trade Unions and the Trade Union International of Textile, Clothing, Leather and Fur Workers extended full support to the strike. Innumerable telegrams and resolutions are pouring in at the Prime Minister's Office from various trade unions, copies being received by the Central Office of CITU. Reports of meetings, demonstrations, processions and rallies are being received. Massive rallies, long marches, cycle processions and demonstrations are being organised jointly by all the fourteen trade unions in all parts of West Bengal. A huge rally was held before the office of the I.J.M.A., the gang leader of the jute barons, at Calcutta on February 16, which was joined by scores of other trade unions. The rally determined to continue the struggle till the demands are met with.

Negotiations

The attitude of the Government of India gave the filip to the IJMA and the other managements to strike the pre-conditions before negotiations to introduce a productivity linked wage, further reduction of 10 per cent of workers on the plea of "modernisation" and to run 80 per cent of production under piece rate system. The jute workers' federation and all the unions summarily rejected these absurd pre-conditions and demanded negotiations with an open mind. Ultimately, the pressure of the struggle and the ceaseless efforts by the West Bengal Government compelled the IJMA to withdraw the pre-conditions and sit in negotiations in two stages on February 10 and 16. However, since they have totally lost all credibility before the workers, the unions have demanded written proposals from the managements. In a statement issued to the press on February 20, the All India Jute Workers' Federation and all other unions have congratulated the workers and called upon them to continue the struggle till an amicable settlement is arrived at.

Struggle for Enhanced D.A.

THE National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions in its meeting on 28th January, 1984 called upon the workers in public sector undertakings to observe 21 February as D.A. RISE DEMANDS DAY for the Public Sector Employees to record their protest against the attitude of the representatives of the Government and the public sector undertakings during the Tripartite Committee meetings on D.A. for the Public Sector Employees. On that day the workers in public sector will hold rallies and demonstrations, wear badges, issue leaflets and posters to express their resentment at the dilatory tactics adopted during the meetings of the D.A. Committee. The National Campaign Committee warned the Government that the long pending question should be settled in the next meeting of the Tripartite Committee failing which the trade union movement will have no other alternative but to resort to further direct action.

The meeting which was presided over by S.R. Kulkarni, President of H.M.S., was attended by Indrajit Gupta, Y.D. Sharma, T.N. Siddhanta, Homi Daji (AITUC), M.K. Pandhe, Nrisingha Chakraborty, P.K. Ganguly (CITU), Ram Naresh Singh, O.P. Aghi, R.K. Bhakt (BMS), D.D. Vasist (HMS), Sushil Bhattacharya, Pratul Chaudhury, Anil Das Chaudhury (UTUC), J.S. Dara (ITUC), Pritish Chanda, Gyan Singh (UTUC-LS), Chitta Basu, Amar Prasad Chakrabarty, D.D. Shastri (TUCC).

Two meetings of the D.A. Committee were held on January 12 and 28. But due to the adamant attitude of the Government not to go beyond Rs. 1.50 per point, there was no solution, despite the fact that the trade unions had come down from their original demand of Rs. 2.50 per point to Rs. 2 per point as a gesture of cooperation even though it did not neutralise cent per cent rise in prices. Several meetings with the Finance Minister also failed to bring results. All the trade unions including the INTUC are united in this respect and opined that although the Government have called another meeting in March, it was high time that all the trade unions should unitedly demonstrate their resentment in the matter. To convey this opinion to the entire working class, Gopeshwar, Raja Kulkarni (INTUC), M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Homi Daji (AITUC), S.R. Kulkarni, D.D. Vasist (HMS), and R.K. Bhakt (BMS)—the workers representatives on the Tripartite Committee on D.A. for public sector undertakings have issued the following statement to the press on January 28:

The Tripartite Committee on Dearness Allowance for public sector employees consisting of the representatives of the Central Public Sector Enterprises, Govt. of India and the National Trade Union Organisations, namely, INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS and BMS with the Labour Minister as Chairman was

set up by the Govt. of India to decide the extent of enhancement in the present Industrial D.A. formula of Rs. 1.30 per point, held meetings several times but could not come to a conclusion due to recalcitrant attitude of the representatives of the management. The offer of Rs. 1.50 has been rejected by the workers' representatives as the percentage of neutralisation is not full and adequate. The workers' representatives met the Labour Minister and also the Finance Minister several times for a satisfactory conclusion of this issue but so far there had been no progress and we are all stuck at Rs. 1.50 against our reasonable demand of Rs. 2 per point.

In spite of our assurance of co-operation for the better performance of the public sector undertakings, there is no appreciation on the part of the employing Ministries. It seems that the stalemate continues and there is no prospect of any settlement.

In this context, the trade unions will be left with no alternative but to explain to the employees working in the central public sector undertakings the whole issue and also to consider ways and means for its satisfactory settlement. We insist that the attitude of the employing Ministries is rigid, in spite of their commitment embodied in several industrial wage settlements that the D.A. will be revised upwards as per decision at the national level. In the absence of any agreed revised formula, it is apprehended that proper atmosphere created by several national wage settlements in public sector will be vitiated.

We have made it clear in the meeting of the Committee held today that unless the issue is satisfactorily settled without any further delay there is bound to be a serious repercussion for which the managements will alone be responsible.

We strongly urge upon the Minister of Finance and the Govt. of India to take note of the mounting discontent among the employees of public sector undertakings over this issue and reconsider the present stand and take suitable steps for an early satisfactory settlement.

AICAPEF Conference

The Second Conference of the All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employee's Federation will be held at Calcutta from March 22-24. B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal and Vice President of CITU, Krishnapada Ghosh, Labour Minister, West Bengal and Working Committee Member of CITU, and Manoranjan Roy, General Secretary, West Bengal State Committee and Vice President of CITU are expected to address the open session on March 22 at 5.30 P.M.

Demands Day by Agricultural Workers

AT the joint call of the All India Agricultural Workers' Union, Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union, Indian National Rural & Allied Workers' Union and the Hind Khet Mazdoor Panchayat, lakhs of agricultural workers observed a Demands Day all over the country on January 20. The day was observed by staging massive dharnas in thousands in the Collectorates, Sub-divisional offices and Community Development Blocks in the country. This was the second phase of movement by the agricultural workers after their one day strike on July 15 last year. The five point demands raised by the agricultural workers for the last several years are (a) enactment of a comprehensive law guaranteeing trade union rights, security of employment, fixation of minimum wages, regulation of working conditions, settlement of disputes, compensation for injury and loss of life, provident fund, etc; (b) Unemployment allowance; (c) Pension for workers above 60 years of age, (d) equal wages for men and women for equal work, maternity allowance, creche; and (e) separate labour department for the agricultural workers.

Government Goes Back on Assurance

The Government of India had assured in 1980 that a comprehensive legislation would be introduced for the agricultural workers. The Labour Minister had even declared in the Parliament to this effect. The Labour Department was even asked to prepare a draft of the bill. But then under pressure from the landlords the Government made a retreat on the plea that the state Governments were not unanimous over the matter. This resulted in escalation of the exploitation of the agricultural labourers compelling them to go on the path of agitation.

Success of the Programme

The sweep of the struggle surpassed all previous actions by the agricultural workers. In West Bengal the day was observed in all the districts with massive dharnas processions and demonstrations.

In all the three district head quarters in Tripura, in all the Sub-divisions and in a number of Community Development Blocks, thousands including a large number women participated in the dharnas and processions. Innumerable processions from the surrounding villages converged at Agartala and sat in dharna before the secretariat which was addressed by Dasarath Deb, the President of the All India Agricultural Workers' Union and Deputy Chief Minister of the left front Government, and Samar Chowdhury, Secretary of the State Agricultural Workers' Union. A massive preparatory campaign was launched throughout the state for more than a month for the success of the programme, which included joint conventions and meetings by the State Kishan Sabha, Agricultural Workers' Union and the Upajati Gana Mukti Parishad.

Dharnas and demonstrations were staged before all the thirteen Collectorates in Kerala. At Trivandrum, over 2,000 workers participated in the dharna. At Quilon 2,500 workers marched from the station to the Collectorate to stage the dharna. Similar processions and dharnas took place at Allepey, Trichur, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Iddikki, Calicut, Palghat, Malappuram, Cannanure, Wyanadu and the newly formed district of Pathanamthitta. Women agricultural workers' participation was a significant feature in Kerala.

In Tamilnadu, dharnas were staged in twelve districts of the state. Because of floods the programme could not be staged in other places. In all the places thousands of workers including a large number of women participated in the programme.

About fifty thousands participated in the dharnas at Andhra Pradesh. Around ten thousands participated in Khammam and Eluru districts each. The participations at Nalgonda were about 5,000; at Guntur-4000; Vijayawada-4000 and Karimnagar-2,000. Large number of women participated in all the places. In all the places widespread preparatory campaigns were launched for the success of the programme.

In all the District Collectorates in Punjab dharnas were organised, participated by thousands of workers including women. Dharnas were conducted in several Subdivisional head quarters also.

In Bihar dharnas and demonstrations were held in 20 district head quarters and five divisional centres where large number of women joined the dharnas.

As per reports, the programme was successful in other places also. In all the places leaders of the organisations addressed the workers and submitted memoranda to the District or Sub-divisional authorities containing the demands.

In a statement issued to the press P.K. Kunjachan congratulated the agricultural workers for the success of the programme. He said that the enthusiastic participation embracing much larger number of workers was the clear indication of the determination of the agricultural workers to compel the Government of India to enact a comprehensive legislation for them. He made a scathing criticism of the Government for surrendering to the landlord lobby and dishonour the earlier promise, throwing the millions of the agricultural workers exposed to the ruthless exploitation of the landlords. He called upon the agricultural workers to intensify the struggle and prepare for the next phase of movement in pursuance of the demands. All opposition parties and the trade union centres extended full support to the demands.

Central T.U.s. Protest Against Verification Results

REPRESENTATIVES of four Central Trade Union organisations met the Union Labour Minister, Veerendra Patil on 28th January, 1984 and pointed out that the results of verification and membership as announced by the Ministry of Labour confirm the worst apprehensions voiced by the Central Trade Unions regarding the totally arbitrary and undemocratic nature of the method of determining the strength of various Trade Union Centres.

Those who participated in the deputation included Indrajit Gupta, T.N. Siddhanta, Y.D. Sharma (AITUC), M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Anil Das Choudhury, Pratul Choudhury (UTUC) and Amar Prasad Chakrabarty (TUCC).

The representatives of Trade Unions registered their protest against the manner in which the so-called verification had been carried out and slashed the membership of the Central Trade Unions. Though the CITU and AITUC did not submit the list for verification their membership was arbitrarily assessed and they were not even officially informed about the outcome. The UTUC and TUCC though submitted the lists earlier, later on boycotted the verification since it was not evolved on the basis of agreed procedure.

The representatives pointed out that the meeting convened by the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) on 30th January was only to give a seal of approval to the arbitrary verification results. They pointed out that most of the trade unions are critical about the outcome of verification.

The representatives emphasised the need to evolve agreed procedure for verification and demanded that a meeting of the Central Trade Unions should be called by the Union Labour Minister so that an alternative procedure could be worked out in consultation with all the Central Trade Unions.

The Labour Minister assured the deputationists that he would consider the issues raised by the representatives of four Central Trade Unions.

Subsequently, all the eight constituents of the National Campaign Committee jointly submitted a memorandum to the Labour Minister of February 16 demanding such a meeting.

NCC Protests Against New CPI Series

The National Campaign Committee in a joint letter signed by all the eight constituents on February 13 to the Labour Minister, has protested against the move of the Government of India to introduce a new series of Consumer Price Index Numbers for indus-

trial workers with 1981-82 as the base year in the light of the recommendations of the Seal Committee.

The main contents of the objection are that the Government of India, instead of calling a tripartite meeting to consider the entire question, appointed another committee of only officials to go into the matter. The Seal Committee had turned down some of the unanimous important recommendations of the Rath Committee like correction of the 1960 series by 8 points, appointment of tripartite committees to supervise the compilation of index at each state and central level and certain other improvements in the machinery of price collection.

The National Campaign Committee also did not approve the manner in which the family budget studies have been conducted for the new series and demanded a meeting of the Central Trade Unions at the central level before conducting the family budget studies for the new series. But the Government have not taken the trade unions into confidence and have taken a move to compile a new series without even correcting the 1960 series. The result is that the workers are losing crores of rupees every month in the Dearness Allowance as the Consumer Price Index Numbers do not reflect the real price rise. Therefore, in the letter the National Campaign Committee pointed out that it did not accept the recommendations of the Seal Committee and introduction of a new series. It has demanded a meeting with the Central Trade Unions to discuss the recommendations of both the Rath Committee and the Seal Committee so that proper steps can be taken to correct the existing series.

Doctors' Call Against Nuclear War

For the first time in India, several hundred doctors and medical research scientists participating in a seminar held at New Delhi on January 8, jointly called upon the people of the country in a declaration to raise their voice against the conspiracy of the imperialists for a nuclear war. The seminar called upon all the organisations of doctors to launch a campaign against the nuclear war and educate the people about its horrors. The seminar demanded of the nuclear powers to declare that they will not be the first to strike (which the Soviet Union has already done) and that they will put a halt to nuclear arms production. The seminar demanded a stop to deployment of nuclear weapons and complete disarmament. Among the signatories to the declaration were the President and Vice President of the National Academy of Medical Science and the President of World Medical Association.

National Seminar on Safety in Industry

A national seminar on Safety in Industry was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on February 15, organised jointly by the Directorate General of Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI), Ministry of Labour and the National Safety Council, Bombay. The objective of the seminar was to provide a forum for discussing the present position and the arrangements for safety and health at work including the problems in complying with the provisions regarding appointment, duties and functions of safety officers, and to suggest appropriate means for bringing out improvements in the situation, particularly to bring down the rate of accidents in different industries, as well as, improving the methods and practices for safeguarding the health of the workers.

More than 300 delegates participated in the seminar which included representatives from central and state governments, top executives from industries, executives responsible for organising safety, representatives from institutions concerned with promoting safety in industries, representatives from the central organisations of employers and representatives from central organisations of workers.

CITU was represented by M.K. Pandhe and P.K. Ganguly, Secretaries.

After inauguration by N.D. Tiwari, Union Minister for Industries, the background paper was submitted by the Director General of DGFASLI.

The plenary sessions were chaired by B.G. Deshmukh, Secretary, Government of India, Ministry of Labour. During discussions in the first plenary session, questions were raised regarding implementation of the safety rules, amendment of the Factories Act, responsibilities of the management and workers on safety, etc. M.K. Pandhe said that such seminars are being held since a long time, but the conclusions are not followed up and the safety rules are not being implemented. He suggested formation of committees to follow up the conclusions of the seminar. P.K. Ganguly said that the seminars cannot be held from academic point of view merely. The practical experience demands amendment of the Factories Act according to the needs of the situation and its strict implementation. He said that more than two years back the Government had issued a circular inviting suggestions for amendment of the Factories Act. CITU had given suggestions. The Government have sent another circular a few months back. CITU has again furnished the suggestions. But still no steps have been taken to amend the Act. He put particular stress on the construction industry where no safety provisions are observed.

After the plenary session, technical sessions were held in three groups. The main subject matters for

discussion in group I were the inadequacy of the provisions of the Factories Act and problems of compliance with its provisions. The main subject matter in group II was efforts for safety and health by the organisations of employers and workers. Group III discussed education and training for safety at work.

In group I, M.K. Pandhe pinpointed at the inadequacy of the Factories Act in the construction stage of the factories, inadequacy of the inspection machinery and non-implementation of the provision of the Act. He also suggested amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act and negated all arguments regarding the capacity of the industry to pay. He also urged for check against pollution and argued for imposition of penalties on the managements for their laxity in this respect. He further demanded implementation of the decisions of the ILO Conventions on safety and a complete review of such conventions. He also urged for election of safety inspectors from workers to supervise the safety operations and ensure full implementation of the Factories Act.

In Group II, the discussions mainly veered around the important task to promote co-operation between the organisations of the employers and the workers for making suitable arrangements to promote safety and health; finding out incidence of accidents, their causes and methods for controlling them in respect of the processes and operations; identification of the pollutants and assessing their effects; development of suitable designs of moderately priced personal protective equipments; funds for research projects for safety, etc.

Briefing the practical experience of the workers, P.K. Ganguly said the outlook of the managements and their organisations requires a metamorphic change in this respect. They do not tend to take cognizance of the workers' organisations as their representative bodies. For co-operation, betterment of industrial relations is an essential pre-requisite. But in reality they even try to throw overboard the process of collective bargaining and hamper industrial relations. They try to suppress the incidence of accidents and tamper with the evidences of the causes. He gave the example of the recent Harrah accident. When workers agitate to find out the causes, even the Government unleashes its machineries to repress the workers and come to the protection of the managements. Workers are compelled to work on defective and high speed machines under known unsafe conditions. Safety officers, medical inspectors and full time certifying surgeons are not appointed, violating the provisions of the Factories Act. Even regular check up against occupational diseases are not done. Safety equipments are not provided to the workers and they are forced to work without them on dangerous operations. In construction industry, the contractors totally bypass their

responsibilities with regard to safety obligations and the principal employer escape their responsibilities as such. He put the responsibilities on the employers and their organisations for ensuring safety and health and consultation with the workers' organisations in the respect. There has to be a thorough reversal of the attitude and policies of the managements if they are really serious of the problem.

There was a comment from a management personnel that many things regarding safety cannot be done because of lack of funds. He suggested that trade unions should contribute to such a common fund. He gave the example of the American AFL-CIO in this respect. He also said that because methods of production have advanced rapidly due to advance of science and technology, therefore it is not always possible to cope up with that so far as safety devices are concerned. Rejecting the contentions, P.K. Ganguly said that the comparison does not hold good so far as the reality in India is concerned. Here, workers are poorly paid. The Government does not prescribe need based wages. Vast sections of workers in the unorganised and small scale sectors are denied even the minimum wages prescribed by the Government. Huge amounts of provident fund, gratuity, etc are being eaten up by the employers. Under such circumstances suggestion for contribution means further exploitation of the workers. Regarding the contention of advanced process of production, he said that because of development of science and technology there has been development of safety devices also to cope with the advanced process of production. But because of the motive for profits, the employers utilise the scientific developments for profits only and not for safety devices. In Socialist Countries safety devices are taken care of equally along with the methods of production. He further suggested Safety Committees to be elected by secret ballot in all industries, plants and departments.

The discussions held in Group III related to effective implementation of the legislations, need based training to workers and safety officers, safety to be included in the curriculum of science and engineering students, doubling up the compensation rates etc.

In the final plenary session, after some discussions B.G. Deshmukh made the following conclusions:

Efforts will be made to hold such seminars every year and at the state levels also; efforts to be made to augment the machinery for implementation of the Act; amendment of the Act is also being looked into; the Government has not thought of any "umbrella" type of Act as in Great Britain; managements should make investments for safety officers on honourarium; compensation to cover every employee and should be inversely proportional to the age of the victim; a separate legislation for safety in the construction

industry may be introduced in the autumn session of the Parliament.

Port & Dock Workers to go on Indefinite Strike

THREE lakh Port and Dock Workers at all the ten major ports will go on an indefinite nationwide strike from March 15 to secure a settlement of their charter of demands. This was informed to the Ministry of Shipping and Transport of February 23 by the leaders of the four federations who gave the call jointly, viz, S.R. Kulkarni, All India Port and Dock Workers Federation; Janaki Mukherjee, President, M. Adyanthaya, General Secretary, Indian National Port and Dock Workers Federation (INTUC); Indrajit Gupta, M.P., President, M.V. Bhadram, General Secretary, Port and Dock and Waterfront Workers Federation of India; and M.M. Lawrence, M.P., President, K.K. Roy Ganguly, General Secretary, Water Transport Workers Federation of India, consequent upon the failure of the negotiations.

The tenure of the last settlement expired on 31-12-83. In a joint charter of demands submitted by the four Federations of the Port and Dock Workers, at major ports on 19th September, 1983, the Federations demanded for an early settlement of the demands so as to implement the revised wages and service conditions with effect from 1-1-1984.

In the joint charter of demands, the Federations demanded inter-alia a minimum wage of Rs. 1000 p.m. for the workers in the Port Transport Industry and payment of house rent and city compensatory allowances at the rates as are admissible in other public sector undertakings in the port cities. The Federations also demanded settlement of the long pending issue relating to decasualisation of cargo handling workers particularly in the ports of Tuticorin, New Mangalore, Paradip and Haldia Dock Complex in Calcutta. The demands include departmentalisation of the workers being engaged by contractors and through private pools on regular jobs. Another important demand is for proper classification and categorisation of the port and dock workers based on nature of job.

A series of discussions were held with the port authorities, Dock Labour Boards and other employers of Dock Labour and with the Minister of Shipping and Transport to arrive at a settlement on the charter of demands placed by Federations, but in vain. All the affiliates of the four federations submitted the notice of the strike to the employers on February 29 through demonstration and rallies.

CITU Appeals for Peace in Punjab and Haryana

B.T. Ranadive, President of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement on February 25:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses its grave concern over the recent happenings in Punjab and Haryana which have resulted in killing of innocent people. The minorities in both states have been the worst sufferers. It is a matter of satisfaction and pride that the working class of Punjab and Haryana have rebutted the communal forces and shown consistent endeavour to protect communal and class unity.

The CITU calls upon the working class and people of Delhi to emulate the example of the working class in the two states. The CITU considers that the call for hartal on Monday given by the BJP is inadvisable and will aggravate the situation. It also deprecates the proposal of Akali leaders to burn certain sections of the constitution on the same day. The CITU is of the opinion that both actions should be abandoned and all efforts should be directed towards maintaining unity. The CITU calls upon all sections of workers to whichever organisations they belong to stand by each other and foil those who are likely to disturb communal harmony.

NCC Appeals for Peace

THE National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions in its meeting on 23rd Feb. 1984 held at New Delhi adopted the following resolution on the situation in Punjab and Haryana:

The National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions appeals to the working class and all working people in both Punjab and Haryana to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, Sikh and Hindu, against the evil forces which are trying to drown both States in the blood of brothers. The organised working class is composed of all communities, and has a glorious tradition of united struggle against the capitalists and other vested interests. They have fought side by side for their common demands and their democratic and trade union rights, for minimum wages and better conditions, against lock-outs and retrenchment, in hundreds of struggles in centres like Amritsar and Panipat, Ludhiana and Yamunanagar, Batala and Faridabad. We unequivocally condemn the killings, assaults, arson, and attacks on places of worship. We pay homage to all those innocent persons who have lost their lives and property and send our sorrowful condolences to them.

The NCC appeals to the workers to resist the divisive forces unitedly in both states, to maintain peace and communal harmony at all costs, and to restore normalcy and calm as soon as possible. The

NCC is of firm opinion that the administration and police have totally failed to check the culprits and to control the situation. To depend on them is useless. The NCC appeals to the organised working class to take the initiative and leadership in defeating the divisive forces and saving the traditional unity of the Sikh and Hindu people.

Massive Demonstration by Coal Workers

Fifty thousand coal workers demonstrated before the ECL Head Qrs. on January 27 at the call of the All India Coal Workers' Federation in pursuance of their 14 point demands. The demands were against the attacks on the coal miners, 8 days wage cut for one day's cease work, victimisations and vindictive transfers, deterioration in mines safety, etc. Workers from Mugma area in Bihar, BCCL, IISCO coal fields and a large number of peasants also participated in the demonstration. A similar demonstration was held at the CCL Head Qrs. at Ranchi also. Before this the workers demonstrated before the Agents' offices on January 9 and before the Area offices on January 12.

Joint Convention: A joint all India convention of coal workers will be held at Asansol on March 24 and 25 to chalk out countrywide action programmes demanding implementation of the November 11 agreement and against the growing attacks on the workers. The organisations sponsoring the convention are All India Coal Workers' Federation, Indian Mine Worker's Federation, Khadan Mazdoor Sangh and Hind Khadan Parishad.

March To Parliament on April 18

The National Campaign Committee in its meeting held on February 23 decided to hold the programme of March to Parliament on April 18 instead of April 19.

Peace Convention by Left and Opposition Parties

The eight left and opposition parties will hold Convention on Peace against the danger of war at New Delhi on March 8 and 9.

Convention by the Opposition Parties

The Seventeen opposition parties will hold the all India Convention on the 11-point demands at New Delhi on March 30.

Road Transport Workers Conference Postponed

The Second Conference of All India Road Transport Workers' Federation scheduled to be held at Sangrur from March 15 to 17 has been postponed.

Convention of Working Women

A convention of working women will be held at Delhi on April 17.

The United Movements

P. Ramamurti

ON 13th February, **Opposition Parties** held all over the country demonstrations, rallies and protest meetings criticising the basic policies of the Government of India and other Congress Governments or Congress-led Governments or so called opposition Governments that support the Indira Congress at the Centre. The policies under talk were concerned with the daily life of the people. They concerned the policies of heavy loans from the imperialist governments, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the so called soft window, the International Development Association and the Commercial Banks of Western countries.

It is well known that the majority of the shares in these International Financial Institutions are of the imperialist countries. The Government of the U.S.A.'s contribution equals the combined contributions of the rest of the imperialist countries. The under-developed countries contribute a minimum just to enable them seek loans from these Financial Institutions. As a result, the Directors on these Financial Institutions have the whip hand, their directors dictate policies and succeed in imposing conditionalities that are detrimental to the interests of these countries. Some of these conditionalities demand of the borrowing countries that they should keep labour disciplined, which only means that workers should under all conditions including wages and other remunerations, accept workloads and work hours prescribed by the management which are heavy, untenable and breaking their backbones, lead to health hazards and early mortality. The safety rules and devices can be violated at will by the managements notwithstanding the legislation that may exist in these countries.

They force the borrowing countries not to encourage the Public Sector, but encourage the Private Sector and give a number of tax concessions and other incentives so as to enable the local monopolists and the multi-national corporations and also companies having technical and or financial collaborations make super profits. These profits and capital of the multi-national corporations can be repatriated at will so that the third world developing countries have to sit with folded hands, their scarce foreign exchanges getting depleted day after day.

These heavy borrowings enable these imperialists and the financial institutions under their control to impose on the developing countries unequal trade. According to the 6th Plan, India had to lose 5500 crores of rupees in foreign exchange by selling its products to these countries at less than the international price and purchase from them goods at prices higher than the international price because of the unequal terms of trade.

Naturally the price that the poor peasants get is

less remunerative, while the prices of essential commodities consumed by the common people goes on increasing.

The Finance Minister who boasted at the time of the presentation of the budget in February last year that the rate of inflation will not be more than four per cent is amazed that it has already risen by two digits in the third week and is rising more rapidly since then.

All fiscal measures that the economic 'experts' and the Reserve Bank could think of as a solution of this problem. How could it be otherwise when the parallel black market economy has grown since Independence rapidly and it is estimated that the black money in circulation is much more than the legal money. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru thundered in 1946 before he became the Prime Minister that, when he came to power, he would hang the black-marketeer by the nearest lamp post. During the thirty six years of independence we have not heard of a single big shark who control and manipulate the black-market, being sent to jail, let alone being hanged, despite Acts like the COFEPUSA and ESMA being on the statute Book.

On the other hand when the working class agitates and goes on strike for simple demands like adequate D.A., lathi charges, jails are the order of the day. The same fate befalls the peasants when they agitate for remunerative prices and the agricultural labourers agitate for minimum wages.

The lack of purchasing power inflicted on these people by these policies results in closure of factories, prolonged lay offs and cut in production, throwing lakhs of workers out of jobs.

The Government enacts laws banning strikes and providing for imprisonment for the workers on strike. The law provides that they cannot be trade union officials for several years thereafter. It seeks to blunt the militant trade unions.

On the other hand, when the big businessmen defraud and loot the companies and close down the factories and thereby inflict miseries on thousands of workers and halt economic development, they go scot free.

These are the issues that were highlighted in the meeting by the opposition leaders on the 13th February.

By the National Campaign Committee

The National Campaign Committee of Central Trade Unions has also taken up these very same issues. It has chalked out a country-wide programme

as well as a massive march to the Parliament. The programme has already been announced.

The Working Class during the last few years has been fighting back attacks on their jobs, living standards, and on the very right to association and collective bargaining, with a will, determination and courage never before seen in the country. In this fight they had conducted prolonged strikes unitedly with all unions affiliated to different Central Trade Unions and Independent unions. In many cases even the INTUC workers and local unions had joined the strikes.

As a result the Government had to come down. The guidelines of the Bureau of Public Enterprises to the managements fixing a ceiling to total rise in wage and allowances, which meant a wage freeze, had been shattered.

The Finance Minister had to agree to a revision of the D.A. formula in the Public Sector and negotiations have been going on for the last six months between the Central Trade Unions, the Central Government and representatives of the Private Sector. Both the Government and the Private Sector are moving inch by inch and the negotiations are dragging on.

The Government, in order to blunt the edge of the opposition of the militant Trade Unions, insists on the discredited method of verification for recognition of Trade Unions. The CITU and the AITUC have refused to accept this and are insisting on secret ballot. The Government has not taken any lesson from the eight month old strike of Bombay Textile workers. But some of the Private managements and Government officials as well as managements of the Public Sector realise that without the approval of these unions no agreements arrived at with the other unions, which represent only a minority of the workers can be sold.

The Government has revived the old slogan of Participative Management. But they do not want to have the workers' elected representatives participate in the managements at all levels. It wants only the persons nominated at the shop floor level to participate in the so-called joint management. This is a camouflage for increasing workload. Even the INTUC finds it difficult to swallow this fact, being pressurised by the large masses.

Movement for Peace

The campaign planned by the opposition parties have also taken up the issue of war and peace, and end to the stock piling of nuclear weapons, gradually leading through negotiations, to total disarmament both in nuclear and conventional weapons.

Indira Gandhi also talks of peace and disarmament. But she equates what she tells the super powers mainly the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. and the other imperialist powers. Who does not know

that the Soviet Union, which was born with the slogan of Peace and Peaceful Co-existence has been following a consistent policy ever since its birth? Who does not know that it has made the biggest sacrifice in the Second World War, — twenty million people killed and with no household in which there is not at least one person who had not been maimed? Thereby it saved humanity from Nazi domination. It does not want war, and has taken several initiatives to preserve peace and disarmament. But all its efforts have been spurned and thwarted by the imperialists, headed by the American Imperialists.

The Trade Unions must mobilise the working class and other people to take their places in the world-wide peace movement. The unity and determination of the peace and democratic forces of all countries, including the U.S.A. can put the warmongers into straight jackets and preserve peace on earth.

The working class must realise that the fight for peace, the demands of the working class, peasantry, agricultural labourers, middle class employees and all lovers of democracy are inseparable and inter-linked. They must therefore mobilise the people for this great task. It is heartening that the opposition parties have taken up all these issues and are fighting for the reversal of the anti-people, anti-democratic policies of the Indira Government.

It is the urgent task of the Trade Unions that while carrying on this message from their own platforms they should mobilise the entire people in the demonstrations, rallies and mass meetings of the opposition parties in their own interest.

Let them gird up their loins for this urgent task.

Rural Bank Employees Struggle

In pursuance of the programmes chalked out in the last Annual General Conference of the All India Rural Bank Employees' Association, the employees of the Gramin Banks are on struggle all over India. The agitation has been launched in pursuance of some long pending demands like recognition of unit, state, central organisations; national negotiating forum; uniformity in pay structure; recruitment and promotional policy; regularisation of daily wage messengers; leave travel concessions; etc. The association also put up the demand for effective and meaningful functioning of the rural banks in the interest of the rural poor. The association was compelled to launch action programmes as all assurances given by the Finance Minister since 1980 proved to be fake.

According to the phasewise programme chalked out in the Conference, all the affiliates sent memoranda to the Finance Minister, staged dharnas and observed one day's strike on December 30, 1983. The association is now preparing for the second phase of programmes.

AROUND THE STATES

the women employees with Anima Banerjee and Kanika Murmu as Joint Convenors.

Struggle of State Government Employees

Organised under the Co-ordination Committee, the State Govt. employees launched action programmes throughout the state from February 14 to 16 demanding of the Central Government to provide more funds to the states to meet their demands for bonus and other demands. At various places like in Writers' Building, New Secretariat, High Court, Assembly, Survey building, PWD, Irrigation office, etc demonstrations were held. Similar demonstrations were held in all districts, sub-divisions and Blocks. The programme concluded on February 16 with mass processions throughout the state. A memorandum was submitted to the Chief Minister and the Finance Minister in this respect.

Victory for Metal Box Workers

After a prolonged strike by the workers, the management of Metal Box was compelled to make a settlement. During the negotiations on their charter of demands, the management had closed down the paper and plastic unit of the plant, forcing the workers of the other units to go on an indefinite strike from July 18, 1983. The settlement was signed on February 3 and the workers joined their duties on February 9. According to the settlement, all the 371 retrenched workers of the unit were reinstated and they will be absorbed in the other factories of the Company. With regard to the wages, the workers will receive an increase of Rs. 160. The variable D.A. was increased from Rs. 1.40 per point to Rs. 1.50 per point which would subsequently be increased Rs. 1.60 and Rs. 1.70 in the next two years. Apart from this, all penal measures and police cases would be withdrawn.

Indefinite Strike by Hosiery Workers

Fifty thousand hosiery workers of the state went on indefinite strike from February 13, demanding Rs. 500/- as minimum wage, D.A. at the rate of Rs. 1.50 per point, house rent, ESI benefits, etc. The call for the strike was given by the joint action Committee consisting of five unions with CITU, AITUC, etc. The 7-point joint demand was placed to the employers on June 10, 1983. The workers observed a one day strike in August. All efforts by the State Government for a settlement were frustrated by the employers. Under the circumstances, the workers were compelled to go on the indefinite strike.

People's Long March

With various demands of the people with the Central Government, like development of underdeveloped regions, for the weaker sections, constitutional recognition of Nepali language, realignment of Centre-State relations, etc., a long march has started

WEST BENGAL

Conference of Co-ordination Committee of Central Govt. Employees

The 7th State Conference of the Co-ordination Committee of Central Government Employees' and Workers' Unions and Associations was held at Calcutta from January 27 to 30 under the presidentship of Dipen Ghosh, M.P. Inaugurating the Conference, Samar Mukherjee, M.P., General Secretary of CITU explained the present national and international situation and called upon the delegates to build up the organisation so that they can play effective role in the united struggle against the policies of the Central Government and also wage unremitting struggle against the danger of nuclear war created by the US imperialists and their NATO allies. Among those who addressed the inaugural session were Ajoy Mukherjee, General Secretary, State Government Employees' Co-ordination Committee; Ashis Sen, General Secretary, Bank Employees' Federation of India; Santi Bhattacharjee of 12th July Committee; Ajoy Das of Central Govt. Employees; Md. Ismail, M.P., President, W. Bengal CITU; Bimal De, Working President, All India Railwaymen's Federation, etc.

582 delegates from 90 unions attended the Conference. Sisir Bhattacharjee, General Secretary, placed the report which made indepth analysis of the economic crisis brought about by the policies of the Central Government which created immeasurable hardships to the common people of which the Central Government employees form a part. The report also focused at the danger of a thermo-nuclear war created by the Reagan administration and called upon the employees to step up united struggles against the policies of the Government of India and also wage struggles against war and for peace. The report was adopted after lively discussions. Resolutions were adopted expressing solidarity with the jute workers' strike, supporting the programmes of the National Campaign Committee, etc.

As a part of the Conference, a convention of the working women in the Central Government was also held which was attended by 400 hundred delegates. The Convention was addressed by Chhaya Bera, Minister of State, Govt. of W. Bengal. The Convention called upon the working women to fully associate themselves with the mainstream of the movement of the Central Govt. employees.

The Conference unanimously elected nine office bearers with Dipen Ghosh as President and Barada Bhattacharjee as the General Secretary. A nine member working group was also formed to organise

from February 19 from Cooch Bihar in North Bengal which will culminate at Calcutta Brigade Parade Ground on March 15. Various sections of workers, peasants and the people have joined the march. Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister will address the rally at Brigade Parade Ground on March 15.

BIHAR

Meeting of CITU State Committee

The Bihar State Committee of CITU met at Ranchi on February 18 and 19 under the presidency of Yogeshwar Gope. M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU attended the meeting. Chandi Prasad, the General Secretary placed the work report. In pursuance of the decisions of the National Convention of August 21, 1983 and the Convention against lockouts and closures, the meeting decided to carry-forward campaigns for implementation of the programmes. It decided to build up a strong movement against lockouts and closures and mobilise maximum number of workers for the march to Parliament in April. It also decided to step up the struggles for minimum wage. In a resolution, the meeting extended full support to the struggle of the Bharat Wagon workers and demanded of the Central Government to settle their demands. The meeting strongly condemned the killing of a worker in Barauni Fertilizers by the CISF and demanded compensation to the family and punishment to the culprit. The meeting also demanded judicial enquiry into the firing at Rajhara Colliery and demanded immediate settlement of the demands of the contract workers. The meeting called upon the affiliated unions to make full efforts for the success of the second Conference of the All India Coal Workers Federation to be held at Ranchi in May. The meeting unanimously decided to expel Harikrishna and D.N. Singh from the posts of office bearers and primary membership for their anti-CITU activities.

TAMILNADU

General Strike Against Lockouts, Closures

Protesting against the anti-labour policies of the Government and demanding settlement of the issues of strikes, closures, lockouts and retrenchments, the workers of Madras and the suburbs struck work on February 14. The call for the strike was given jointly by CITU, AITUC, Labour Progressive Federation (DMK), the Working People's Council (Kutcheler) and other trade unions. Strikes involving thousands of workers are continuing in the state for months. 10,000 workers of Simpson Group of Companies are on strike since the last three months. 8,000 workers of B & C Mills are on strike for more than a month. 3,000 workers of the private rubber plantations are on strike for more than four months. 800 workers of Karur mills are on strike for more than a month. The workers of EID Parry's Sugar unit at Nellikuppam are on strike against retrenchment of 50 per

cent of the workers. Many industrial units in textile, engineering, etc are closed. Victimisations are innumerable. The attitude of the State Government in all these cases is against the labour. It was in this background that the trade unions were compelled to call for the strike. Massive preparations were made for the success of the strike. On February 6, thousands of workers marched to the State Secretariat to submit a memorandum to the Chief Minister. Demonstrations and dharnas were held over all the state on the day. Strike notices were served on all the industrial establishment and state owned transport corporations. Gate meetings were held to explain the decision. Being afraid to face the strike, the Government declared a holiday on February 14, mentioning in the notice that it was done "in sympathy with the working class". In a rejoinder, the trade union leaders denounced the Government's "crocodile tears" and its dubious role and demanded immediate settlement of all the issues. The workers however notified the day as strike. Nearly 1.5 lakhs participated in the strike. The opposition parties like CPI (M), CPI, Kamraj Congress, etc. condemned the Government for its anti-labour attitude and walked out of the Assembly on the day.

Martyrs' Day Observed

As per decisions of the State CITU Conference, Martyrs' Day was observed throughout the State on January 19, to pay homage to the martyrs of the working class movement. In Thirumeiganam, a village in Tanjore District, where two agricultural workers were shot dead by the police for joining the strike on January 19, 1982, thousands of people from nearby villages assembled near the martyrs' memorial. Among those who addressed, were R. Uamanath, General Secretary of the State CITU, G. Bharati Mohan, Secretary of the District CPI(M) and leaders of the Kishan movement. At Madras, a meeting was held at "Ab Illam" where hundreds of workers paid floral homage at the martyrs column. V.P. Chintan and A. Sounderajan addressed the meeting which was presided over by K. Gajapathy, a veteran leader of the working class movement.

MAHARASHTRA

Total Bombay Bundh

On January 31, the three districts of Bombay, Thane and Raigad observed total Bundh in solidarity with the movements of the Kishans in Uran of Raigad district. By participating in the bundh, the workers and people also condemned the wanton brutality of the Congress(I) Government machineries which claimed more than five deaths by police firing. Many other cities and towns of Maharashtra also observed bundh on the day. Thousands also courted arrest during the demonstrations which was jointly organised by the opposition parties and supported by CITU and other trade unions.

The agitation of the peasants was on a justified demand for Rs. 40,000 per acre for their lands which were taken over for the Nhava Sheva port project near Bombay. The Bhosale Government had accepted the demand. But the Vasant Dada Patil Government rejected it and offered only Rs. 27,000 per acre, thus blatantly violating the commitment of the Government.

Even though the Government had clamped section 144 all over the state, the workers and peasants defied the prohibitory orders and staged massive demonstrations even at the various district and taluk centres. Even far off cities like Kolhapur, Sangli, Aurangabad, Akola, etc. observed the bundh. Even though the INTUC opposed the bundh, several thousands workers with INTUC affiliations defied the directive and struck work on the day. More than 1.25 million workers of about 5500 industrial concerns responded to the bundh.

In a statement issued to the press, Ahiliya Rangnekar, State Secretary of CPI(M) congratulated the people. She said that it was an illustration of worker — peasant unity. The various opposition parties and the trade unions by their united action have warned the Government of a more powerful and united struggle if the demands of the people are trampled under foot. The Joint Action Committee meeting held on February 8 decided to hold District level Conventions from February 20 to March 5 and an Assembly gherao on March 14.

KARNATAKA

Strike by Plantation Workers

Seventyfive thousand plantation workers went on six days' continuous strike in the state from January 19 demanding minimum wages. The call for the strike was given by the Joint Action Committee, consisting of CITU, AITUC, INTUC and other trade unions. The agitations started from January 9. The Labour Department convened a meeting on January 17. The Planters' Associations prepared a draft agreement with a consolidated wage of Rs. 9.35 only, even refusing to pay according to the Government's notification recommending enhanced rates with VDA linked to the cost of living index. Their plea was that they had filed a writ on minimum wages in 1982 and unless it was disposed of by the High Court, no new agreement for enhanced wages could be arrived at. The Joint Action Committee however rejected the managements' plea and called for the strike. Even non-unionised workers, contract workers and casual workers participated in the strike. Contingents of striking workers moved from one plantation to another, walking even 15 to 20 km to ensure success of the strike. Even gangster attacks could not deter the workers. V. Sukumar, member of the State CITU Committee was assaulted while addressing the workers at Punja Matsagara. Protesting against this attack over 2000 workers took out a procession demanding action against the

management hirelings. The Government convened a meeting on January 24, where the Planters' Associations ultimately agreed to start negotiations from February 12 for enhanced rate of daily wages. In pursuance of this the strike was called off.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Strike in Singareni Colliery

At the call of the Joint Action Committee consisting of CITU, AITUC and INTUC, the workers of Singareni Colliery went on two days' complete strike on February 9 and 10 pretesting against the penal cut in wages.

The management had escalated its victimisation policy against the workers. As a part of the all India programme the workers staged demonstrations on January 27. But when the management put up notice for the penal cuts, the workers reacted immediately and all the unions united and the strike notice was served. CITU took a leading role in organising the strike. 5000 copies of leaflets were distributed among the workers. Shift meetings and group meetings were held to explain the cause of the strike. After two days complete strike the Chief Minister intervened. The management was compelled to sit in negotiation and agree to keep the wage cut in abeyance and adjust the strike days towards casual leave.

Strikes, Dharnas, Conferences

R.T.C. workers at Vijayawada, Guntur, Eluru and Machilipatnam Bus Depots, resorted to work to rule from January 4 at the call of the Joint Action Committee of CITU, AITUC and other unions including that of Telugu Desam. This resulted in complete dislocation of bus services in the area.

2000 handloom workers of Mangalagiri staged dharnas before the residence of the Master Weavers demanding implementation of the previous agreement and ultimately compelled the Master Weavers to honour the agreement.

15,000 jute workers of Nellimarla, Chittivalasa and Auruna jute mills went on strike from January 28 responding to the all India programme.

Workers of Markfed Agro Services at Machilipatnam struck work from January 10 demanding reinstatement of their three leaders.

The Progressive Workers Front has won the posts of Vice-President, Secretary and all other five members of the committee in the election at the A.P. Heavy Machinery Engineering Workers' Union which was held after a lapse of several years.

The Conference of Khammam Town Brawn Oil Mill Workers' Hamali Union donated Rs. 350 to CITU after achieving new rates of wages.

The Thungabhadra Industries Labour and Staff Union, Kurnool elected all the CITU candidates with thumping majority.

Opposition Parties Appeal for Peace

THE opposition parties meeting at New Delhi on February 20, issued the following statement:

"The Opposition parties had suggested the revival of the tripartite talks on Punjab in a move to settle the issue on the basis of a consensus in an atmosphere of amity.

The deplorable outbreak of mass violence in Haryana last week had completely vitiated the atmosphere. The responsibility for this squarely lies on the Government for its lack of foresightedness, ignoring our timely warning. Today violence and communalism have once again gained ascendancy.

We feel that communal extremists are making a last ditch effort to torpedo the tripartite talks.

We appeal to the people of Punjab and Haryana to foil their designs and urge the Akali leadership to reconsider their decision about participation in the talks.

In the meantime, we call upon the Government to take effective steps to maintain law and order and protect citizens' life and properties".

The meeting was attended by: Tridib Choudhury (RSP), Rajeswar Rao (CPI), Madhu Dandavate and Sahabuddin (Janata), Tarakeswari Sinha (DSP),

Debabrata Barua (Congress-S), Mahendra Kumar Saini (Janwadi Party), B.T. Ranadive and Harkishan Singh Surjeet CPI(M).

TU Classes for Coal Miners

A four day Training School was conducted on behalf of the All India Coal Workers' Federation at Jhagrakhand in the Chirimiri Coal Belt. 55 Trade Union activists from the Western Coal fields in Madhya Pradesh participated in this school held at Coal Miners Club in West Jhagrakhand Coal field.

The classes were taken by M.K. Pandhe and Sukomal Sen. Ian Perry and Jacky Perry, Trade Union teachers from the Trade Union Congress in Great Britain also participated in the school. Ian Perry gave a talk on the Trade Union movement in U.K. with special reference to Coal Mining Industry.

A well attended public meeting was held in Jharkhand market on 26th January which was addressed by M.K. Pandhe, Kameshwar Singh and others.

The AICWF organised a school for Calcutta based coal employees at MLA Hostel from 30th December 1983 to 2nd January 1984. Forty TU activists from various coal offices in Calcutta participated in the School.

M.K. Pandhe, Sukomal Sen and Sunil Basu Roy gave talks during the classes.

The Spectre of Unemployment

In India

- * Registered unemployment in the Country as per the live registers of the employment exchanges has gone up sharply from 14.33 millions at the end of 1979 to 19.75 millions at the end of 1982 and to 21.74 millions at the end of 1983.
- * Out of the 19.75 millions at the end of 1982, 13.21 millions were of the age group of 20 to 29 years.
- * 41,000 children below the age of the 14 were registered for jobs in 1982, though child labour is banned in India.
- * 6,200 applicants of the age of 60 years and above were registered in 1982.
- * 3.1 millions of the 19.75 millions were

women, 66 per cent of whom were of the age group of 20 to 29 years.

- * 2.8 millions of the 19.75 millions were Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- * 18,500 of the 19.75 millions were qualified doctors out of which 3,700 were women and 1,300 belonged to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- * 23,000 thousands of the 19.75 millions were engineering graduates and post-graduates out of which 1400 were women and 1300 were Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- * 17,000 of the 19.75 millions were agricultural graduates out of which 200 were women.

(Source: D.G.E.T.)

In the Capitalist World

(Percentage Compared to the Working Population)

Year	USA	Canada	Japan	FRG	France	Italy	Belgium	Holland	Switzerl.	Sweden	Austria	GB	Portugal
1970	4.9	5.7	1.2	0.7	1.6	5.4	3.0	1.1	—	1.5	2.4	2.6	—
1975	8.5	6.9	1.9	4.7	4.7	5.9	6.7	5.0	0.3	1.6	2.1	2.6	6.4
1978	6.0	8.4	2.2	4.3	5.4	7.2	10.5	5.0	0.4	2.2	2.1	5.7	8.1
1980	7.1	7.5	2.0	3.8	7.8	7.6	11.8	5.9	0.2	—	1.9	6.9	7.8
1981	7.6	7.6	2.2	5.5	9.2	8.4	14.3	9.0	0.2	2.5	2.4	10.7	8.2
1982	9.7	11.0	2.4	7.6	10.3	9.1	16.6	12.4	0.3	3.2	3.7	12.5	10.0

Source: Main Economic Indicators; National Accounts

New Scheme of Workers' Participation in Public Sector

M.K. Pandhe

THE Union Ministry of Labour has recently announced a new scheme of workers' participation in Central Public Sector Undertakings which, though claimed to be comprehensive, does not materially make any departure from the old schemes. While making the participation symbolic, it continues to remain a show piece and would fail to generate enthusiasm among the workers if implemented in the present form.

Smt. Gandhi's Government included workers' participation in management as one of the point in the 20 point programme. The Scheme was opposed by the trade union movement because it was essentially a scheme to impose higher workload on the workers without giving them any additional powers. The management was also given arbitrary powers to pick and choose the workers' "representatives" to favour the patronised unions. The working of the scheme had clearly shown that it could not lead to any improvement in the working of public sector undertakings.

It is just not a coincidence that Smt. Indira Gandhi unceremoniously dropped workers' participation in management from her new 20-point programme. This fact remained unnoticed as far as the managements and workers were concerned.

With general elections in the corner, the Governments of India decided to revive the scheme once again to create an impression among the workers that the ruling party in India desired to do something good to them. The scheme was published in the Gazette when the AICC was in session in Calcutta.

Though the scheme is essentially meant for central public sector undertakings the state Governments have been asked to introduce the scheme in their own undertakings. The private sector managements have also been advised to implement the scheme. Though the Government of India is not contemplating any legislation on the question, the notification makes it clear that "It is the intention of the Government to bring legislation in due course after gaining experience in the working of the scheme". Thus the statutory enforcement of the scheme is likely to be introduced after some time by the Government of India.

As clarified by the notification, the new scheme will exclude all the departmental undertakings, though they were covered by the earlier scheme.

The plea given by the Government is that the departmental undertakings have been covered by the Departmental Councils under the JCM. If the JCM

is to be equated with the workers' participation in management then one can easily understand the hollowness of the new scheme. The trade unions in Government undertakings have already pointed out that the JCM has been a mere show piece and has no power in the real sense of the term. Yet the Government's thinking on workers' participative management does not go beyond this.

The Government has further empowered the employing ministries to exempt the undertakings from the purview of this scheme in consultation with the Labour Ministry. However in absence of well led guidelines the power may be misused by them. The Government has also clarified that wherever such forums have already been constituted they would continue to operate and the present scheme would not disturb the arrangements.

At present bipartite forums have been constituted in several public sector undertakings such as steel, coal, BHEL, NTPC, etc. but they have been essentially wage negotiating bodies and require lot of improvement in their functioning. Moreover these bodies cannot be considered as participative forums and the workers' representatives have no decision-making powers.

The Ministry of Industry appointed a Committee of Trade Unions to go into the question of working of the public sector undertakings in 1978. The Report submitted by the trade unions was unanimous and it also dealt with the scheme of workers' participation in Management. It was clearly pointed out in the report that workers' participation in the management can be genuine only if it is based on equality between the two parties and if it is at all levels. It categorically asserted that so long the master and servant relationship prevailed in the industrial undertaking the talk of workers' participation in management is meaningless. At present in public sector the standing orders and a system of police verification of workers have perpetuated the master and servant relationship. Unless these restrictions are done away with no scheme of workers' participation in management would be effective and real. The Government of India have not taken any step to implement the report.

Then there was also a study group on workers' participation in management constituted by the Ministry of Steel in the year 1977. The report was also unanimous. Yet the Government did precious little to implement the recommendations of the report. There were also reports on various aspects of the working of the entire steel industry but they have remained unimplemented which also highlights

the lack of seriousness on the part of Government of India to implement the scheme of workers' participation in management.

The most important aspect of the scheme is about the representation of the workers on the scheme. Here also the government has given upper hand to the management. The notification states, the number of workers' and the management's representatives would be arrived at "by the management in consultation with the trade union leaders in the undertaking". Here the power is given to the management to decide and the trade union leaders in the plant are only to be consulted. Here also the consultation will not be with the representatives of trade unions working in the plant but with the "trade union leaders" chosen by the management.

Though the scheme visualises evolving of a consensus among the trade unions to decide the mode of representation it does not specify what would happen if there is no consensus in a particular undertaking. Therefore the workers' representatives on the participative forum should be elected by the workers themselves. But the Govt is not prepared to accept this democratic proposal.

The notorious Bombay Industrial Relations Act and the Madhya Pradesh Industrial Relations Act have given arbitrary powers to the patronised unions to nominate representatives on the tripartite forums inside the factory and the entire scheme prepared by the Govt. would be powerless before these Acts. The textile strike in Bombay has proved worthlessness of the recognised INTUC union under the BIR Act. If only the recognised unions in Maharashtra, Gujarat and M.P. are allowed to represent on the joint committee under workers' participation in management then the entire scheme would be a mockery. In view of this the following so called safeguard will not help the workers in any manner: "The management would also ensure that adequate provision is made to safeguard workers' independence from management pressure so as to ensure workers' protection against any harassment on victimisation".

The new scheme visualises the participation at shop level, plant level and Board level and functions at different levels have also been spelt out. For instance the shop level committee may cover the following functions: "Production facilities, storage facilities in a shop, material economy, operational problems, wastage control, hazards, safety problems, quality improvements, cleanliness, monthly target and production schedules, cost reduction programmes, for mutation and implementation of work system, design group working, welfare measures related particularly in the shop."

In some of the public sector plants such shop floor committees have been formed but the experience shows that the consultation is only formal and the

workers' representatives have no decision-making powers.

Even the representatives of the management have no decision making power on several aspects of working of the undertakings since they are all decided by the bureaucrats in the Ministry. The consultation at the shop level would be only within the frame work of decisions taken by the Ministry.

The conditions in plant level participation will also be dogged with same difficulties. For instance the target of productions are fixed by the Ministry in consultation with the planning commission and the trade unions have no role to play in it. The demand of the public sector unions that they should have a voice in production target fixation is not yet accepted by the government. Trade unions have no control over the supply of power, raw material etc. They have no say about the conditionalities of the IMF loans which is playing havoc in public sector undertakings. It is well known fact that the government of India allowed steel to be imported when the same type of steel was available indigenously in plenty, causing accumulation of huge stocks of steel in the SAIL stockyards. There are many such examples and the workers have no say in the matter.

The participation of workers' representatives on the Board of Directors has not helped in improving the matters. Having a symbolic one director—that too chosen by the government keeping in mind political consideration—will not in any way ensure workers' involvement in the undertaking. The scheme does not provide for equal number of directors for workers and the matter has been left for the employing Ministries to decide. The demand of the trade unions that the member of the Board of Directors should be elected by the workers has not been accepted by the government.

Unless these shortcomings are cleared mere monitoring of the scheme by a tripartite body will not help in ensuring workers' participation in management.

A meeting convened by the Ministry of Labour on 20th February 1984 to discuss the scheme was presided by Shri B.G. Deshmukh secretary of Ministry. The CITU was represented in the meeting by Com. M.K. Pandhe. Com. P.K. Ganguly attended as advisor.

In the meeting the representatives of CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS demanded that the representatives at all levels in the participative forum should be through elections while the INTUC representatives wanted status quo to be maintained.

Since the discussion was inconclusive the next meeting will be held on 7th April 1984 for further consideration of the scheme.

Convention of Kerala P&T Women

A well attended, successful Women's Convention was conducted by NFPTE on 14 January at Ernakulam. More than 600 working women representing all the nine unions affiliated to the NFPTE in Kerala participated in the convention, which was presided over by K. Leelamma, Convenor, Mahila Sub-Committee of NFPTE, Kerala Circle.

K. Balachandran, the Mayor of Cochin and the Chairman of the Reception Committee for the convention welcomed the gathering. Sony Komath, leader of the women's wing of Kerala Government Teachers' Association inaugurated the Convention in the absence of K.R. Gouramma MLA who could not come due to illness. Sony Komath in her inaugural address, drew the attention of the house to the various problems confronting the working women and to the activities of Working Women's Coordinating Committee in Kerala and the Women's Organisations at national level. Leelamma explained the activities of the Mahila Sub-Committee since its formation in October 1978. She told the house that due to the consistent pursuance by the Committee, the P&T Department opened Creches at different places in the state. She called upon the women workers in P&T in Kerala numbering about 12000 to take more interest in the day-to-day activities of NFPTE.

P.S. Ramankutty, Convenor, Kerala Circle Coordinating Committee of P&T Unions greeting the delegates explained various issues. Five active workers of NFPTE are still out of service and 30 under suspension for trade union actions. About 300 comrades transferred to distant places in May 1982 have not yet been brought back to original stations, despite repeated assurances given by the higher authorities. Break-in-service was imposed on more than 300 workers including a number of women. In spite of all the victimisations and continuous harassment, the workers' movement could neither be destroyed nor defeated. The P&T workers in Kerala resisted all the onslaughts from the Government. Ramankutty explained the sad plight of women and the toiling masses in the country for which he made the Government responsible. He called upon the women workers in P&T to join the mainstream of the working class struggle and fight the injustice on and exploitation of women.

C.K. Omana of the Kerala Mahila Sangham also greeted the Convention.

V.V. Prasannakumari presented a charter of demands for discussion and approval of the Convention. After threadbare discussions the Convention decided to submit the Charter of Demands to the Circle and District level authorities on 8 February after mass demonstrations. Thereafter, mass dharna will be organised on 8 March at all the centres, participated by women employees of all sections of P&T services to draw attention of the public and the administration to the demands. It

was also decided to join the common programmes chalked out by women's organisations on 8 March, the International Women's Day. Further programmes will be decided by the Joint Circle Conferences of P&T Unions at Alleppey to be held in April.

The Convention registered emphatic protest against the price hike of rice, sugar, coal etc. In another resolution, the Convention demanded withdrawal of all types of victimisations of P&T employees in Kerala. The Convention also demanded that all temporary workers employed in the P&T Deptt. on 'hourly wages' as 'Reserved Trained Pool' be regularised in service immediately. The Convention called upon the District Mahila Committees and Local Coordinating Committees to organise trade union campus and study classes for women workers.

Uma Vasudevan, Convenor of the Reception Committee proposed vote of thanks.

Leadership Camp

A state level leadership camp was conducted for active workers of the Mahila Committee of NFPTE in Kerala on 12th and 13 November 1983 in Trivandrum. 81 comrades from the affiliated unions participated in the camp. C. Bhaskaran of Chintha Weekly took the class on 'Indian Economy & Black Laws' while P.V. Chandrasekharan dealt with the history of P&T Trade Union Movement in India from the time of the late Babu Tarapada. S. Ramachandran Pillai of CPI (M) took a class on 'history of mankind' with special mention of the exploitation of women at different stages. NFPTE has decided to organise such camps at different places in the state in 1984.

Meeting of AIDWA

THE Central Executive Committee of the All India Democratic Women's Association met in New Delhi on February 8. The meeting discussed the current national and international situation, the growing danger of a thermo-nuclear war created by the U.S. imperialists and their NATO allies and reviewed the women's struggles according to the demands of the situation and the forthcoming International Women's Day. The meeting took up the following programmes for implementation:

To observe the International Women's Day on March 8 all over India. Supporting the programme, CITU has called upon all the State Committees and the affiliated unions to activate the co-ordination committees of working women to participate in the programme. The programme would be observed jointly with other women's organisations. Apart from upholding peace, emancipation, of women and upholding the right to motherhood, specific demands like equal remuneration, equal opportunities for employment, training and promotion,

(Contd. on page 21)

Activities of the Public Financial Institutions

Nrisingha Chakrabarty

A few days back The Statesman on January 15, 1984 published a report by some investigating journalists in the front page under the caption "Public Money for Political Ends" dealing with certain personal loans granted by the Banks at the instance of three Congress(I) MPs of Delhi in a function in presence of Rajiv Gandhi. The reporters called into question the violation of banking rules under political patronage.

On January 30, Smt. Gandhi held a mass rally of Weaker Sections (Harijans and Adivasis) and justified the loans on the ground that the rich have not always paid back the loans taken by them from public financial institutions and hence why should the weaker sections not be given such loans even if the same suffers the risk of not being paid back. Through this meeting She has openly taken upon herself all responsibility for such improper loans in an attempt to save Rajiv Gandhi and the three MPs of her party.

The methodology of mobilising the people, a section of whom is the beneficiary of the violation of banking rules, shows as if any challenge to this gross violation will be interpreted by these people as opposition to the upliftment of these weaker sections. The special team of Statesman reporters did not come out with any rejoinder stating that it was her Govt. who had advanced loan to the rich and did not take steps to collect the same. Hence she cannot claim that because the bank management under her Govt. had advanced risky loans to the rich and did not collect it back, the bank funds could be given to people as "Loans understood to be gifts — not to be returned", as the reporters had put it. The Reporters said that there is in fact more to it.

About Rs. 2000 Crores are involved in sick industries. It is not known how much money advanced to new entrepreneurs cannot be realised now. Some of the sick units taken over by the financial institutions like IRCI or IDBI have become a legal method of diversion of public funds to the private sector. Even the MRTP Houses who have locked up like Rs. 1200 crores in sick industries, are granted further loans and aid by the Financial Institutions. Hence compared to this loot, which the Press had never highlighted, the money advanced to the harijans is small indeed. Even if reported 40,000 applicants of Delhi are paid Rs. 25,000 each, the amount comes to only Rs. 100 Crores. If assistance is given to 250,000 people this year as announced the total amount thus involved would be Rs. 600 Crores, only, which will be half the money involved in big sick industries.

The next question is whether the Financial Institutions can sustain such loss. The answer appears to be yes. Because the public financial institutions by holding equity shares in private sector and advancing money to some MRTP houses are netting dividends ranging from 18 to 32 per cent which is much more than usual landing rates and therefore such an amount can be taken out of the banks without caus-

ing much dislocation. The Congress leaders and the Bank Officials both know this.

This knowledge of the bank officials, is being put to advance the income of some of the Bank Officials. The case of Chairman, Syndicate Bank and the refusal of the Govt. to take up the case of another in the same bank is a pointer to the fact that they know about the attempt of the Congress party to secure political gain out of these advances.

The next question that comes is whether a part of such loans which are "understood as gifts" or at least a part there of is coming back to the Congress(I) party or Smt. Indira Gandhi as her election funds. The way the money power is being used for toppling game and other activities of the Congress(I) naturally raises a question as to where from such unlimited money is coming to Smt. Indira Gandhi. There are doubts that a part of this might be coming from the Public Financial Institutions.

There are a host of other questions like whether other states or cities would also get such "loans understood to be gifts" in proportion to the registered unemployed or the census figures of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. If so whether it would only be the prerogative of Cong(I) M.P. or their party men to recommend such "loans understood to be gifts" or it would be distributed among all M.Ps. on the basis of certain numbers in each constituency. What steps are being taken to guard against fraudulent use of the situation and diversion of money from the financial institutions. Similarly it should also be explained as to why during this period the process of denotification has been started which virtually throws out thousands of workmen to the streets as unemployed? Is it justified to freeze overdrafts to the States in these circumstances?

Would the Congress(I) Govt. now render at least an account as to who are the rich that have not paid back the money advanced to them and how much money is outstanding from them while stating how many people have been and how many are going to be paid the loan which are understood as gifts — not to be returned at the instance of the Congress(I) M.P.s and other functionaries?

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etc would be voiced during the observance of the day. The meeting also called upon all the units to participate in the programmes of the opposition parties and the National Campaign Committee and also carryforward the campaign for peace against war.

The meeting also decided to organise dharnas, demonstrations and meetings all over India on April 10 to protest against the recalcitrant attitude of the Government of India towards amendment of the Dowry Prohibition Act as recommended by the Joint Select Committee and for constitution of vigilance commission, family court, women's commission and for enacting common laws for women of all communities.

CITU Secretariat Meeting

A meeting of the CITU Secretariat was held at New Delhi on February 6. The meeting was attended by B.T. Ranadive, Samar Mukherjee, P. Ramamurti, Jyoti Basu, Md. Ismail, N. Prasad Rao, S.Y. Kolhatkar, Susheela Gopalan, Manoranjan Roy, E. Balanandan, M.K. Pandhe, Nrisingha Chakrabarty, P.K. Ganguly, Shivaji Patnaik, Ahiliya Rangnekar, Krishnapada Gosh and R. Umanath. B.T. Ranadive presided over the meeting.

The meeting discussed the task regarding the programme of March to Parliament taken by the National Campaign Committee and decided to mobilise the maximum number of workers for the success of the programme. While the major mobilisation would be from the nearby states, the powerful state committees would also send maximum number of participants. The State Committees should intimate about the final figures by February 20. As the CITU Centre had to meet a heavy burden of expenditure during the last march on November 23, 1981, it was decided that the camp charges would be Rs. 10 per head for the forthcoming march. All the State Committees should mobilise the workers accordingly.

Since the National Campaign Committee had postponed the proposed convention of working women, it was decided not to proceed with the proposed working women's demonstration before the Parliament which was decided by the All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women. However, as was done in 1981, a convention of working women would be held at New Delhi one day before the March to Parliament programme. All State Committees were requested to send a good number of participants from the working women to reach Delhi one day before the March to participate in the Working Women's Convention.

As regards the proposed Second Conference of All India Road Transport Workers' Federation, since the Punjab comrades had opined that it could be held, it was decided that the conference would be held at Sangrur from March 15-17.

Regarding the Second General Council meeting of All India Chemical & Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation to be held at Calcutta from March 22-24, Manoranjan Roy reported that a Reception Committee had been formed and the preparations were complete. P.K. Ganguly reported that the Constitution of the Federation also included industries like Fertilizers, Oil, Synthetics, etc. Discussions were held whether we could broaden the federation by including all those industries. After discussions it was decided that for the time being only chemical and pharmaceutical unions should be included. Later on integration of the other industries would be considered. It was decided that all CITU unions in chemicals and pharmaceuticals would be requested

to participate in the meeting. P.K. Ganguly also stated about a Supreme Court case on banned drugs. Details were furnished to Manoranjan Roy for necessary actions so that CITU can be an intervenor in the case.

Discussions were held on the question of an Asian Trade Union Seminar on New International Economic Order scheduled to be held in November, 1984, as proposed by Ibrahim Zakaria, the General Secretary of WFTU during his visit to CITU Office. The meeting opined that the Seminar should be jointly organised by the N.C.C.

Shivaji Patnaik reported in details about the struggle of the contractor workers in Rourkela Steel Plant and murder of our CITU activist by the management hirelings on January 5. The police have not yet arrested the five culprits nor the management has taken any action against them. It was decided that M.K. Pandhe should meet the SAIL management so that action is taken against the culprits and protection assured to the workers. As decided in the meeting a press statement was issued by CITU demanding stern action against the gangsters and settlement of the demands of the contractor workers.

The meeting also took the following decision:—

M.M. Lawrence, Secretary, would attend the DYFI Conference at Calicut on February 16 on behalf of CITU.

Nrisingha Chakrabarty would attend the 15th Congress of the Central Workers' Union, Cuba, to be held at Havana from February 20-24.

Albel Singh of U.P. and G.K. Parmar of Gujarat would attend the trade union cadres' course to be held at Prague from April 2 to May 10.

M.K. Pandhe and P.K. Ganguly would attend the meeting called by the Labour Minister on February 20 to discuss the Scheme for Employees' Participation in Management of the Central Public Sector Undertakings.

In regard to the invitation for sending a delegate to attend the May Day Celebration at Moscow, as stated by the Secretary of the AUCCTU, who visited CITU, it was decided that W. Bengal State Committee should name one delegate for the purpose.

Regarding the proposed visit of a delegation of ACFTU, China, as reported by M.K. Pandhe, it was decided to accord the usual welcome to the delegates and also to hold a meeting of the local CITU activists.

Appeal by TUs of European Socialist Countries

IN an open letter on February 2, the Central Council of Bulgarian Trade Unions, Central Council of Hungarian Trade Unions, Central Council of Free German Trade Unions, Representatives of the Trade Union Movement of Poland, Central Council of the General Union of Romanian Trade Unions, All Union Central Council of Trade Unions, USSR and the Central Council of Czechoslovak Trade Unions made the following appeal to all trade unions of the world (*excerpt*):

The United States, ignoring the legitimate demands and aspirations of the working people, the trade unions and all peace loving forces, has started the deployment of Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles in the territories of the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain and Italy. The first of these missiles have already been placed in combat readiness. This has led to the discontinuation of the talks in Geneva and to the adoption of counter measures on the part of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

The anti-war movement in which trade unions take an active part has given evidence of its considerable strength and popularity. It has demonstrated that working people have no intention of surrendering to the forces of militarism and reaction, that they have no intention of reconciling themselves to the inevitability of nuclear war.

In the new situation, one of the primary goals of the struggle is to demand a halt to the deployment of new American missiles in Western Europe, the withdrawal of the missiles already deployed and a return to the situation which prevailed prior to the start of the deployment of missiles.

which culminated in a rally in London Festival Hall. Uruguay

In a countrywide strike on January 18, the first since the military Government came to power in 1973, all activities in Uruguay were crippled. The call for the strike was given by the General Inter Union of Workers (PIT) demanding lifting of ban on political activities, restoration of civil liberties and democratic system. Rebutting the threat of the Labour Minister, the union leadership warned the Government that in case of any retaliatory arrest the strike will be launched for an indefinite period.

Bolivia

At the call of the Central Trade Union Federation of Bolivian Workers, hundreds of workers launched a hunger strike at La Paz on January 25 protesting against the Government's economic policy. The agricultural workers' trade union, the biggest in the country announced that unless a substantial wage increase is accorded, the union would block the highways throughout the country.

South Africa

Over 12,000 workers from twelve companies participated in a continuous strike in the country in January demanding wage rise, reinstatement of dismissed workers and other demands. The most significant strike was at AECI, where more than 7,500 workers joined the strike, the first national strike by the black workers in the country. 1500 workers at Rosslyn plant near Pretoria downed the tools. 1500 workers in the Impala Platinum Refinery in Transvaal and several hundreds at the Riestspruit coal mine also went on strike.

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	Sept. 1983	Oct. 1983	Nov. 1983
Andhra Pradesh			
Gudur	467	471	480
Guntur	564	577	589
Hyderabad	551	551	564
Assam			
Digboi	525	535	547
Doom Dooma	477	483	479
Labac	446	470	446
Mariani	468	504	495
Rangapara	473	471	457
Bihar			
Jamshedpur	529	534	535
Jharia	546	549	554
Kodarma	620	614	616
Monghyr	605	598	604
Noamundi	546	545	539
Gujarat			
Ahmedabad	550	555	556
Bhavanagar	568	566	558
Haryana			
Yamunanagar	562	563	568
J. & K.			
Srinagar	587	578	599
Karnataka			
Ammathi	571	581	551

State/Centre	Sept. 1983	Oct. 1983	Nov. 1983
Bangalore	599	601	615
Chikamagalur	569	571	568
Kolar G.F.	530	532	527
Kerala			
Alleppey	596	607	611
Alwaye	598	599	606
Mundakayam	553	555	569
Madhya Pradesh			
Balaghat	580	568	570
Bhopal	598	599	603
Gwalior	549	546	555
Indore	576	573	581
Maharashtra			
Bombay	566	566	566
Nagpur	578	576	575
Sholapur	588	589	595
Orissa			
Barbil	535	540	514
Sambalpur	628	592	575
Punjab			
Amritsar	542	548	549
Rajasthan			
Ajmer	544	538	540
Jaipur	572	566	570
Tamil Nadu			
Madras	557	549	559

(Figures in bracket indicate base year)

State/Centre	Sept. 1983	Oct. 1983	Nov. 1983
Coimbatore	591	586	598
Coonoor	591	607	622
Madurai	603	605	629
U.P.			
Kanpur	534	548	547
Saharanpur	542	543	544
Varanasi	637	641	640
West Bengal			
Asansol	534	538	546
Calcutta	516	526	532
Darjeeling	470	471	470
Howrah	497	505	508
Jalpaiguri	458	462	447
Raniganj	534	539	539
Delhi Territory	557	565	563
Other Centres			
Berhampur (*49)	803	791	780
Cuttack (*49)	703	714	725
Jabalpur (*49)	716	719	732
Beawar (*51-52)	628	628	636
Tripura (*61)	463	473	469
Goa (*66)	385	387	390
H.P. (*65)	394	395	396
Bhilai (*66)	367	367	362
Chhindawara (*66)	295	296	301
Bhilwara (*66)	344	330	326
Kothagudem (*66)	349	357	352
Rourkela (*66)	378	381	378
All India (*49)	673	678	682
All India (*60)	554	558	561

International Struggles

Sweden

Organised by the Swedish Trade Unions' Central Union and the Central Union of White Collar and Public Employees, a huge demonstration was held before the Swedish Parliament during the start of the Stockholm Conference. Thousands of people and workers voicing the public opinion marched in procession outside the building for peace, detente, security and disarmament. The participants submitted an appeal to the Governments at the Stockholm Conference expressing deep concern over the present escalation of the arms race and the growth of nuclear arsenals in Europe. It called for an immediate halt in the production of nuclear weapons, eliminate nuclear weapons throughout Europe and guarantee peace and freedom to all peoples of the world.

U.S.A.

The Annual Conference of the "Doctors for Social Responsibility", an organisation of over 30,000 American doctors, called upon the doctors to take pains to convince the population of the fact that they would be incapable of protecting themselves from mortal danger in the event of a nuclear war. The Conference branded Reagan's policy as essentially militarist despite his "pacifist" declarations. The

organisation took upon the responsibility to educate the population on the damaging consequences of a nuclear war and mobilise them against the arms race.

Profits of the Military-Industrial Complex: The militarist policy of the Reagan administration is reaping massive profits for the military-industrial complex. The Los Angeles Times stated that in the last quarter of 1983, Pentagon's main suppliers earned 50 per cent more than in 1982. Watkins-Johnson which specialises in electronics for military purposes had added 66 per cent to its turns over. The General Dynamics, which makes tanks, sub-marines and fighter planes have boosted up their earnings by about 49 per cent.

Great Britain

Tens of thousands of local Government workers in London and other cities went on a one day strike on January 24 in protest against the Government's decision to abolish the Greater London Council and six Metropolitan County Councils. Nearly all the 100 schools and 30 colleges were closed. About forty thousand people marched through Central London

(Contd. on page 23)

Who Started First?

Type of Weapon (First Generation)	U.S.A.	U.S.S.R.
Atom Bomb	1945	1950
Hydrogen Bomb	1953	1954
Long range Bombers	1953	1957
Midium range missiles	1953	1959
Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM)	1955	1957
Nuclear Submarines	1955	1962
Submarine Launch Ballistic Missiles (SLBM)	1959	1968
Anti-ballistic Missiles (ABM)	1960	1961
<i>(Second Generation)</i>		
Multiple Re-entry Vehicles (MRV)	1964	1972
Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicles (MIRV)	1970	1975
Cruise Missiles	1976	X
Pershing-2 Missiles	1979	X
Neutron Bomb	1982	X
Missiles with multiple manoeuvrable warheads	1982	X
<i>(Third Generation)</i>		
Electromagnetic bombs and laser weapons (enabling the destruction of missile systems and communication system)	Around 1990	X

Who is Encircled?

*The USA has 2,500,000 military bases in 114 Countries, 386 of them stationed around USSR.

*The USA has 500,000 of its soldiers stationed overseas, i.e., every fourth soldier in the American army.

*The USA has 12,000 nuclear warheads overseas, 9,000 of them in Europe.