



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Rising Attacks and Growing Struggles

GREETING the Third Conference of the Karnataka State Committee of the CITU, held at Harihar on 5 and 6 March 1981, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, said the progress that our organisation has registered in recent months could not have been achieved without selfless and devoted work of workers and leaders. Those who think that the trade union movement is a bed of roses should give a little attention to the heavy odds against which the workers and leaders have to fight despite the loudly proclaimed freedom of organisation under the Constitution.

Congratulating the public sector workers of Bangalore, Hyderabad and other places who waged a justified struggle for increase in wages on the basis of an earlier understanding, the CITU President said, "Those whose profession has been to break electoral promises have now taken to go back on written agreements with the workers."

Rapidly Growing Attacks

Referring to the labour policies of the Congress(I) governments B.T. Ranadive said, "The National Security Act—the new name for the MISA of Emergency days—is being shamelessly utilised against locomen and other strikers despite loudly proclaimed assurances that the measure was only intended against the anti-socials. In Bangalore under the Congress (I) State Government the police opened fire on striking workers, killing three people. The U.P. Government continues to ban strikes in an increasing number of industries almost every month. That Government openly and shamelessly discriminates against CITU unions, and foists on the workers agreements signed with the Congress (I) unions who have hardly any following. Rowdies with labels of Youth Congress (I) are used to

terrorise the workers. The promulgation of the LIC Ordinance constitutes the beginning of the Emergency Rule against the workers movement."

Pointing out the vengeful and barbarous attitude of the Indira Government towards labour which is seen in its treatment of the loco railwaymen and the scandal created by her Government by issuing the L.I.C. Ordinance, the CITU President B.T. Ranadive said, "The Government has now thrown to the wind the sanctity of agreements and collective bargaining and usurped authoritarian powers to impose on the employees whatever wages and conditions it arbitrarily decided. It has also reduced to a farce the

B. T. Ranadive

employees' right to approach the Court against injustices at the hands of the Corporation and the Government. The Ordinance presages similar attacks on the wage and conditions of all employees, all those who are described as 'high wage islands' and ultimately against the entire working class. The authoritarian attack against the trade union movement and the right to organise has started in right earnest. The Government demands the right to police wages, fix service conditions arbitrarily and reduce the working class to a rightless workforce. This is the import of the Ordinance though at present it is confined to the L.I.C. employees. The principles it proclaims and the powers it gives to the Government, when exercised widely will extinguish all trade union rights." He observed that "with the Government intent on putting a ceiling on dearness allowance and other restrictive measures in the name of a wage and income policy, intent on making the working class scapegoat of the crisis and its bankrupt pro-monopolist policies, big battles are

ahead of us, battles in which we will have to face the full impact of authoritarian repression."

Sixth Five Year Plan : A Menacing Direction

In the finalised Sixth Five Year Plan document there is no promise of taking possession of millions of acres of surplus land for distribution, of breaking the enormous concentration of land in rural areas which puts 30 per cent of the land in the possession of 6 per cent of rural families, of remunerative prices for the peasant producer. The Plan calls for withdrawal of subsidies on sale of food grains which will still further reduce the peasants prices. It intends to impose higher foodgrains prices on the people and at the same time defraud the peasants of adequate price. The Sixth Five Year Plan, B.T. Ranadive observed, "is a menacing document giving a menacing direction for throwing the burdens of the Plan and development on the common man." He called upon the working class that it "should refuse to accept barbarous exploitation of the peasants, demand remunerative prices for his produce, and increased subsidies at the expense of the landlords and capitalists."

New Burdens on Common People

The Plan calls for additional resources mobilisation of Rs. 21,302 crores and a deficit financing of Rs. 5,000 crores. Additional resources of Rs. 21,000 crores will be again raised by imposing new burdens on the common people. The CITU President observed, "The bourgeois-landlord government and their planners do not desire to curb the Indian monopolists and foreign multinationals. On the other hand they give them incentives and facilities in the name of promoting development. Their latest concession to the black-marketeers and profiteers is the scheme of Bearer Bonds. But they want the poorer section to pay for the development." Therefore, he said, instead of direct taxation which would affect the incomes of the big capitalists and landlords, the Plan propose to raise more than Rs. 5,000 crores through taxation mainly indirect falling on the common man.

Rupees 3,250 crores will be raised by reducing subsidies—including food subsidies. The railway budget of 1981 has already put new surcharges amounting to Rs. 320 crores and the railways has been asked to contribute Rs. 1,200 crores during the Plan. The P & T has been asked to mobilise Rs. 200 crores during the Plan period. Pointing out these figures, Ranadive said, "If the present measures do not mobilise the necessary resources, additional imposts will be imposed."

Class Bias of the Plan Openly Manifested

The public sector undertakings which are incurring enormous losses are expected to contribute Rs. 1,000 crores, through 'efficient management and appropriate pricing'. While the public sector undertakings can make a big contribution by increasing their efficiency, the CITU President said, "But this is not possible for the present corrupt and bureaucratic management which is hostile to the workers. The Bangalore strike shows how this management can bring about stoppages of work by its open breach of agreement', and hostility to labour organisation.... The public sector can improve its production only if the present anti-labour attitude is changed and workers' participation on equal terms in running the concern is ensured...and all facts regarding finances, raw materials and commercial transactions are made available to the workers' representatives." He added, "There has been no response from either the government or the employers."

The Coal India has raised the price of coal by Rs. 20 per ton. The States governments are asked to impose further burdens to raise their part of additional resources. They have to raise electricity charges so that losses of Rs. 3,500 crores are covered. Rs. 1,378 crores are to be raised through increase in bus fares. Increase in irrigation levy will contribute Rs. 325 crores. Referring to this wide net of raising resources at the expense of common man, B.T. Ranadive said, "Apart from commodity taxation, every requirement of modern life, transport, electricity, water, heavy postal and and railway service—is to be made more expensive—almost beyond his reach, while the incomes of big capitalists and landlords are sheltered from direct higher taxation." Elaborating this point, he observed, "The class bias of the Plan is openly manifested in the resource mobilisation proposals."

Real Character

Saying that the purpose of a genuine incomes and wages policy is to reduce economic disparities by redistributing incomes as between classes and push ahead the incomes of the lower strata—the peasants, workers, etc., the CITU President B.T. Ranadive said, "It can be done only by attacking the privileges, the profits, of the monopolies, of the exploiting strata and not by highlighting the minor differences among the exploited. But the Planners follow an opposite course, give an alibi to the exploiting classes and fail to demand that redistribution of incomes should take place at their expense

and more so redistribution of assets and the power over production.”

The blast of the incomes policy is reserved for the working class and the employees whose wages and incomes are to be attacked. After shedding tears over low wages of workers in unorganised industries, and pleading for employment opportunities, attention is directed towards the wages of workers in organised industries, wages and emoluments earned through bitter struggle and not through charity, he observed.

Referring to the ‘rationalisation’ of wage structure which means reduction of higher wages to a lower standard, B.T. Ranadive said, “The workers know that the present relationship between their wages and their productivity is biased against them and pays them a wage far less than what is their due. But now the Planners want to deny any wage increase unless further exploitation (like increase in workload) is assured.”

Referring to the determined efforts of the employers and the Government to erode and eliminate the concept of bonus as deferred wages, to put a ceiling on income for those entitled to bonus, standardisation of D.A. at arbitrary rate and ceiling on it and general opposition to any wage increase, BTR said, “To achieve these aims one agreement after another is being broken by the Government. The Palekar award and its manipulation by the Government demonstrates the real character of official policies.”

Mockery of the Self Reliance

The Plan depends on foreign loans of nearly Rs. 10,000 crores which is equal to ten per cent of the total plan expenditure. This will increase the burdens of foreign payment on the people and the working class and make the country more dependent on the Western Imperialists. Pointing out this, B.T. Ranadive said, “This makes mockery of the objective of self-reliance proclaimed in the Plan.” Ranadive cautioned the working class against the danger to our country’s freedom from this growing dependence on the imperialists loans, because the foreign multinationals are being given more freedom to exploit our people and capture our markets. He further said that such anti-people measures have been the demand of the World Bank for a long time.

Unity of Trade Union Movement

The onslaughts will increase with the implementation of the policies advocated in the Sixth Plan and will be “ferocious with increased

use of repressive measures, because Indian economy, like the economies of capitalist countries is in deep throes of a crisis and the ruling classes demand that the burdens of the crisis should be borne by the masses.” He called upon that “These have to be fought unitedly by the entire trade union movement—Because these are no longer questions affecting this or that industry but matters of official policies towards labour.” He repeated the CITU’s call for a Confederation of all Central trade union organisations and federations.

Right to Work

The total rural and urban unemployment on a single day according to the Sixth Plan was 21 million, which is an underestimate. Speaking on this question, B.T. Ranadive said, “It is a matter of satisfaction that the left front government of West Bengal and the Left Democratic Coalition of Kerala have taken steps to introduce unemployment relief to these unemployed. All Unions must demand and agitate for relief to all unemployed. They must demand that right to work be inscribed in the constitution as a fundamental right.”

Working Women

Highlighting the problems of the working women, the CITU President said “As in the capitalist world in India also women are the first victim of the crisis. They are the first to be retrenched, rendered surplus.” He emphasised that the unions should take appropriate measures to involve working women in the unions and encourage them to enable them to have their proper share and responsibility in participation and leadership of the union.

Strongest Democratic and Revolutionary Force

Highlighting the struggles of other sections of the people and the entry of the peasant masses in the battle arena, the CITU President B.T. Ranadive said. “The alliance of the workers, agricultural workers and peasants will be the strongest democratic and revolutionary force in India before which no Government of the exploiting classes can stand. The trade union movement has to contribute to the shaping of this alliance by championing the cause of the peasantry. The working class has to realise that there is no end to its exploitation, no socialism, unless the present ruling classes are deposed, a new state expressing genuine democracy of the people is reared and the present iniquitous order is liquidated. This can not be done without enlisting the help of the mighty force of the Indian peasantry.”

Shining Performance

The Indira Government has already forged new weapons to silence the people. After the National Security Act comes the attack on Judiciary, the second step towards the scuttling of the parliamentary system and the establishment of a Presidential form of Government. In the midst of this attack on civil liberties and democratic rights, he said, stands "the shining performance of the three governments of West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura. They have loyally served the common man, protected democratic rights, upheld his dignity and thrown their weight on the side of the exploited in economic struggles."

Frustrate Imperialists' Conspiracies

The forces of disintegration are out in the field to divide the country and the common movement. Communal riots in which the muslim minority suffers the most are unleashed. Caste feelings against Harijans are roused which again serves the same purpose. Backward classes, advanced castes all are brought into the picture to create rifts in the common movement. In Assam people are victims

of secessionist movement angered by the unequal treatment meted out to them. The USA imperialists are secretly helping the agitation to partition our country. Pointing out these dangers, B.T. Ranadive said, "If unity of the country is not maintained, freedom also will be lost. It is privilege and duty of the working class to defend this integrity and unity in cooperation with other democratic forces."

Referring to the international situation which is worsening day by day, the CITU President noted that the aggressive U.S. imperialists are feverishly arming themselves to break the peace of the world. He mentioned the dominance of the U.S.A. navy in the Indian ocean and arming of Pakistan to stage another war between the two countries.

The CITU President B.T. Ranadive called upon "the working class must frustrate all imperialist attempts against our country and warn the people against the USA war plot. Frustrating these designs, fighting for world peace, firmly determined to defeat authoritarian regime and its policies, our unions should defend the workers against daily attacks and help the other sections in the common battle against exploitation, dictatorship and for better living conditions." □

Karnataka CITU Conference

THE third conference of the Karnataka State Committee of CITU was held on 5-8 March at Harihar. 174 delegates and 88 observers representing 46,444 members of 65 unions participated in it.

B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU inaugurated the conference and S. Suryanarayana Rao, President, CITU hoisted the CITU flag. C. Nanjundappa, General Secretary, Karnataka CITU reviewed the application of the CITU line of unity and struggle in Karnataka since the Second Conference.

Jyoti Basu, Vice President, CITU and Chief Minister, West Bengal, addressed the Conference on 8 March. He explained the achievements of left front Government of West Bengal and warned against the growing threat of authoritarianism. He called

upon the delegates to organise the vast majority of exploited people.

The Conference adopted several resolutions against price rise, police repression, National Security Act, LIC Ordinance, and supporting the demands of plantation, beedi and textile

workers.

The Conference elected 85 member State Council with S. Suryanarayana Rao as President and C. Nanjundappa as General Secretary.

In the end of the Conference a public meeting was organised which was presided over by S. Suryanarayana Rao and addressed by Jyoti Basu and others.

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CITU Calls for United Struggles Against Capitalist Onslaughts

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions in its meeting held in New Delhi on 18 March 1981 expressed its grave concern at the growing attacks on the working class by the Central Government threatening the Freedom of Association and Right to Collective bargaining. B.T. Ranadive, President CITU, was in the chair.

The meeting expressed its heart felt condolence at the untimely passing away of Com. Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury, Vice President, CITU, member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly and a leader of Forward Block (Marxist)

The meeting congratulated the workers of Bangalore based public sector undertakings for 77 days old glorious strike. They fought deggedly despite heavy odds and have shown to the government that the public sector employees would not take Government offensive lying down. The CITU congratulated the one and a half million workers in public sector undertakings all over India for their one day strike on 11 March 1981 which was a remarkable demonstration of solidarity of the working class. The CITU is confident that the unity achieved during the strike would be further strengthened for broader struggles against the capitalist onslaught on their living standards. The CITU strongly condemns the attitude of the Central Government in not honouring the commitment given to the employees of Bangalore based industries and demands that the Government should change its attitude and honour the commitments given to them,

The CITU further congratulated the employees of LIC and GIC for their relentless struggle against the recent LIC Act and GIC gazette notification. In both these undertakings the Government had disowned the previous agreements and the Supreme Court judgements. The CITU fully supported the decisions of the unions in LIC to go on for indefinite strike from 2 April 1981 and assured them solidarity till they achieve their demands.

The vindictiveness shown by Railway Ministry towards the fighting Loco running staff all over the country has no parallel in the recent past. Over a thousand workers have been suspended while over 500 have been compulsorily retired and an equivalent number summarily dismissed. Even family members of the loco running staff were not spared from the vindictive actions. The CITU demands that all these measures should be withdrawn immediately and the assurances given to the All India Loco Running Staff Association should be implemented fully.

The CITU strongly condemned the Tata management for its brutality in dealing with the problem of TISCO contractor workers at Jamshedpur. While 10,000 contract workers were on strike since 11 February last the TISCO management with the help of Bihar police got arrested over 400 workers and leaders of the movement. The entire Executive Committee of TISCO Karmachari Union had been suspended and a reign of terror let loose on the workers. The TISCO contractors workers have been demanding their absor-

ption in permanent and perennial nature of jobs. This struggle has once again shown how much influence a monopoly house like Tatas are wielding over the Central as well as Bihar State Government.

The Secretariat of the CITU also noted with indignation the suppression of T.U. and democratic rights of workers in Haryana under Bhajan Lal Ministry. The Government is shamelessly siding with the employers in every dispute and Haryana Police are openly available to every employer to attack the struggling workers mercilessly. The CITU demanded an end to this repressive policy and ensuring of full T.U. and democratic rights to carry normal T.U activity in the State.

The CITU expressed its concern at the open interference of the Cong(I) Government in the T.U. movement by patronising the INTUC Unions without any influence among the workers. The trend is particularly serious in U.P. In Raja Textile, Rampur the strike is more than 3 and a half months old but the management is refusing to negotiate with the representatives of the workers. The J.K. Rayon-Kanpur management was forced to come to terms with the minority INTUC union by the U.P. Government though CITU commanded support of overwhelming majority of workers.

The Secretariat of CITU condemned the Congress (I) hoodlums who forcibly occupied the MICO workers union office at Bangalore. It also expressed its concern at the Chauvinistic posters in Bangalore against workers from Kerala and Tamilnadu. The Gundu Rao Government is conniving at these elements

[On Page Seven]

CITU Condemns Firing on Workers by Management Hirelings in Sirsa

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU has issued the following statement on 23 March.

The CITU condemns the dastardly attack and firing on the workers of Gopichand Textile Mills, Sirsa, by the managements' goonda hirelings under the cover of darkness in the night of 19 March 1981 at about 9 P.M. The fact that for the past two decades there had been no registered trade union in this mill and that the attack has come only a few days after the CITU made an attempt to form the union exposes the slander carried on by the management that this was a clash between two groups of workers.

The reality is that about 1300

workers employed in the mills have been denied the elementary right of forming any trade union and that every attempt for formation of any organisation is nipped in the bud by the goonda hirelings of the management with the blessings of the police speaks eloquent about the state of affairs. On the night on 19 March last, the goonda hirelings opened fire on the workers and injured 19 workers. Before the incident the workers noticed that some goondas brought by the management were being treated with a feast and drink and apprehended an attack. Hence the Police were informed before hand about the situation. But no steps were taken. Even

after the firing, when the goondas ran short of ammunition and were rounded up by the workers, the Police came to rescue them and released almost all the outsiders except one, which shows the complicity of the Police of Bhajanlal Govt. which has been suppressing all struggles of workers and peasants in Haryana.

The CITU demands that culprits including those of the management who are responsible for the firing should be brought to book, compensation paid to the injured workers and the demands of the workers settled forthwith through negotiations with the workers representatives.

The CITU congratulates the workers for their struggle braving the heinous attack of the management and extends full support to their just struggle. □

Railway News

Legal Aid to Locomen

B. T. Ranadive, President CITU in a circular dated 14.3.81 requested all the state committees of CITU to organise legal aid to locomen. The text of the circular is as follows :—

The Govt. of India has come down with a heavy hand on the locomen for their recent agitation. The Railway Minister has announced that 524 workers have been retired compulsorily before attaining their age of superannuation and another 526 workers have been summarily dismissed without any opportunity of self defence under Rule 14 (ii) of the Discipline and Appeal Rules of railway workers. These are arbitrary and vindictive actions which are blatantly illegal. In some cases such victimised workers have been forcibly evicted from their railway quarters with police help, throwing the family members and their belongings to the street in a

bid to strike terror in the hearts of this militant section of railway workers.

It is understood that the All India Loco Running Staff Association has already directed the victimised workers to contest the victimisation in courts of law and on 6 March 1981 eight cases against compulsory retirement and another eight cases against summary dismissals have been filed. The Calcutta High Court

has granted aninterim injunction against orders of compulsory retirement and also directed that the wages of those arbitrarily removed/dismissed should be paid till the writs are disposed off. The general legal opinion is that these orders could be successfully contested in Courts of Law.

I would, therefore, request you to organise legal aid to locomen so that the attempt of the Govt. to suppress these workers can be successfully fought.

Is It the Act of A Civilised Administration ?

DURING the locomen's struggle, several railway workers, both temporary and casual, were served with notices that unless their fathers resume duty within 12 hours, they would be discharged from service. The names of 24 railway workers' were struck off the rolls. While speaking on the Demand for Grants of Railway Budget on 17 March, Somnath Chatterjee M.P. asked whether it was the act of a civilised administration. The Railway Minister did not reply to this point. 7 workers whose services were thus terminated illegally, have filed cases in Calcutta High Court and stay orders have been granted in these cases. □

Call for Strengthening United Movement Against Anti-Labour Policy

A meeting of the representatives of the Central Trade Union Organisations and National Trade Union Federations was held in New Delhi on 23 March with Indrajit Gupta, M. P., General Secretary AITUC in the Chair. Among those who participated in the meeting were P. Ramamurti, M. P., General Secretary of the C. I. T. U., Shanti Patel, M. P., General Secretary HMS, B. N. Sathe, Organising Secretary, BMS, Pratish Chanda General Secretary UTUC (L. S.), J. S. Dara, President INTUC, Amal Chakrabarty (TUCC), J. S. Choubey, General Secretary, AIRF, S. M. Benerjee, President, AIDEF.

The meeting noted with deep concern the mounting offensive against the working class, their living standards and trade union rights and democratic rights of the working people by the Government.

It noted, at the same time, that the working class and the working people are resisting these attacks with ever more diggedness and determination than ever before. The sense of urgency of unitedly resisting this offensive is fast growing among the working class.

The meeting warmly congratulated the 1,25,000 workers of the Bangalore based Public Sector Undertakings in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Nasik, Kalamaseeri and other places or their united 80 days' strike, braving heavy repression.

It warmly greeted workers in the Public Sector throughout the country for their magnificent response to the call by the Central Trade Union Organisations and National Federations for one

day strike on 11 March to express their solidarity with the struggle of the Bangalore based Public Sector workers, Railwaymen, and LIC and General Insurance employees.

The meeting called upon the entire working class to fully support and extend solidarity with the LIC employees who have decided to go on strike from the 2 April 1981.

The meeting noted that the offensive has descended to the level of Government unilaterally breaking agreements with the employees, and even when the Supreme Court strikes down these actions of the Government, it shamelessly has resorted to ordinances and legislations taking away the Right of collective bargaining. Plans are afoot to enact the anti-working class provisions of the notorious Industrial Relations Bill which was resisted by the entire working class.

The meeting noted that these attacks stem from the inability of the Government to take the country out of the deep economic crisis, resulting in shrinking markets, ever rising prices, and mounting unemployment. These are the direct results of the economic financial and fiscal policies of the Government, which refuse to give proper prices to the peasantry, assure minimum wages to the agricultural workers and other working people, but on the other hand allows them to be fleeced more and more ferociously by the monopolists and their foreign collaborators, hoarders, black-marketeers and speculators.

It seeks to make out that the high prices are due to high wages in the organised sector,

while actually the real wages have been falling.

The meeting therefore, decided to hold a National Convention against price rise and anti-labour policies of the Government in the first week of June in Bombay. The meeting also authorised the former National Campaign Committee against Industrial Relations Bill to function as National Co-ordination Committee Against Government's Anti-Labour Policy. It further authorised the trade unions in Bombay of all affiliations to form the Reception Committee to make the Convention a grand success.

This meeting called upon the working class to be ready for a long drawn struggle against these policies till they are reversed. It earnestly appeals to all the Trade Unions irrespective of their affiliations to join the mainstream of the powerful struggle. □

CITU Secretariat Meets

[From Page Five]

by not taking any action against the culprits. These incidents are dangerous portents of things to come in our country if the T.U. movement does not fail these conspiracies.

The Secretariat warned the working class that the Cong (I) government is determined to impose wage freeze and burden of taxation on the workers. Their standard of living will be under severe attack during the Sixth Five Year Plan. The CITU felt that it was only through united struggles that these attacks can be effectively repelled.

The Secretariat welcomed the growing unity in the T.U. movement and expressed the hope that it would be further strengthened in the forthcoming days to meet the challenge of the capitalist class. □

Glorious Public Sector Strike On 11 March

THE countrywide strike of Public Sector employees on 11 March was a unique demonstration of solidarity in support of 1,25,000 striking workers of Bangalore based industries such as HMT, ECIL, BEML, ITI, MIDHANI, BEL, Bharat Dynamics etc., in protest against the LIC Act and the gazette notification on GIC, arbitrary and compulsory retirement or dismissal Loco Running Staff and the attack on the trade union rights of workers.

All the Central TUs except the INTUC jointly gave the call for strike. Several industrial Federations magnificiently responded to the appeal and expressed their determination to fight the anti-working class policies of the Government. Though the time was short and the preparations were inadequate the spontaneous response of the workers in public sector was remarkable.

In order to create a favourable atmosphere for the strike a dharna was organised before Prime Minister's residence on 27 February by the Central TUs and Federations and several members of Parliament also joined the dharna. A joint Memorandum was submitted to the Prime Minister in support of the demands stated earlier in this report. A colourful procession was organised in Calcutta on the same day in which industrial workers, office employees, State & Central Government employees jointly participated in large numbers.

On 3 March there were countrywide joint demonstrations and rallies in support of the 11 March strike. Leaflets and posters were also issued in large numbers.

When the date of one day strike was drawing near the Government made frantic efforts to create confusion among the workers. After pressurising the leadership of the INTUC Unit in HMT Watch factory the Government tried to get strike in that unit withdrawn. Despite betrayal by the INTUC leadership workers remained firm and only a small section resumed work. The INTUC gangsters attacked T.U. leaders leading the strike in order to create a reign of terror in Bangalore township. However these gangster tactics misfired and made the workers more determined.

The press was making efforts to point a picture that Bangalore strike was fizzling out so that the preparations for an all India strike would be averted. This type of propaganda also did not cut much ice.

Several Local and State Level Conventions were held to support the common demands. On 20 February a United Convention in Bombay supported these demands and decided to join the call of action that would be given by the Central TUs on 22 February.

Andhra State Convention was held on 25 February at Hyderabad and adopted a resolution similar to one adopted in the Delhi meeting. It called upon the working class through out the State to down their tools on 11 March.

A Bihar T.U. Convention was also held at Patna on 7 March which also endorsed the call for one day strike.

The local unions at city level held meetings and united calls for the strike were given. Though at certain centres the local unions

of the constituents of Delhi meeting did not respond to the call for the strike by and large the ranks of all the Central T.U.s joined the preparations for the strike.

N.K. Bhatt, President INTUC opposed the strike call and the INTUC unions generally did not participate in the strike. At certain centres INTUC local leadership resorted to gangster tactics to oppose the strike call. However in some centres the INTUC unions did not oppose the strike preparations.

The strike in Banks, LIC and General Insurance was complete all over and Bank Employees Federation, West Bengal, supported the strike call. All unions in LIC and GIC unitedly worked for the strike.

The strike in West Bengal was most spectacular and "near total" even according to the Press reports. The West Bengal State Committee of CITU made serious preparations for the strike and directed all the unions in public sector to exert their maximum to make the strike call a grand success. In colliery area out of one lakh 79 thousand more than 1 lakh 55 thousand workers participated in the strike. Doman Doshad of J.K. Nagar Colliery and Aftab Alam of Sitalpur Colliery were brutally murdered by the INTUC goondas but could not break the strike of the workers. Even according to the colliery managements not more than 25 per cent production could be organised. In Durgapur Steel Plant and the Alloy Steel Plant the strike was complete. In MAMC Durgapur the INTUC gangsters resorted to gangster methods which led to injury to 70 persons.

The strike in all the major centres where public sector was concentrated was successful. Workers organised massive procession and rallies protesting against Government's anti-labour policies. Co-ordination Committee of Public Sector Employees' Unions Bombay and the Co-ordinating Committee of All Trade Unions Madras made tireless efforts to organise impressive demonstrations.

The Eastern Zone Insurance Employees Association, Gauhati despite Assam agitation made good preparations to make strike call successful. A joint meeting of LIC and GIC employees held on 5 March expressed its determination to make the strike call successful. The chauvinistic leadership of Hindusthan Fertilizer, Namrup did its best to oppose the strike. However due to the determination expressed by the rank and file workers the leadership had to give a call for one day casual leave as per decision of the All India Fertilizer Employees Federation. The Workers of Central Inland Water Transport Corporation joined the call for strike.

In Rajhara Iron Ore Mines under Bhilai Steel Plant despite reign of terror prevalent in the area the strike was successful.

The strike on 11 March is a clear cut warning to the Government of India that the working class would not take the attacks on their living standards lying down. The growing urge among the working class for unity and sustained struggle was clearly reflected in the response given by the employees in public sector to this token strike.

The Joint Action Front, Bangalore withdrew the strike immediately after 11 March. It is unfortunate that the JAF

leaders did not consult the CITU and BMS units at Bangalore nor was there proper consultation with other units who were also on strike on a similar issue.

The workers in Bangalore based industries fought heroically and their 80-day old struggle was among the most deggedly fought strike. Though the strike was withdrawn without achieving the

demand in full the workers in these industries have not resumed their duties as vanguished but with full anger against the anti-labour policies of the Government. Even the Government had to admit that even 10 days after withdrawal of the strike normalcy has yet to be restored in these units. □

CTUs Congratulate the Strikers in Public Undertakings

Indrajit Gupta M.P., General Secretary, AITUC, Shanti Patel, M.P., General Secretary, HMS, M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, O.P. Aghi, Secretary, BMS, and J.S. Dara President, INTUC, issued the following statement on 11 March.

“**W**E congratulate more than 15 lakh employees of Public Sector Undertakings who downed their tools today in response to the call given by the Central Trade Unions and National Federations in support of 75 day-old strike of workers in Bangalore based industries, fighting LIC, GIC and the railway employees and in protest against the attacks on TU rights of the working class all over the country.

According to incomplete reports the strike was complete in banks, LIC, GIC, Oil, ITDC shipping, teleprinter and other industries while it was widespread in steel, coal NTC engineering and other industries. Central and State Government employees and railway employees have organised demonstrations in several centres in support of the demands.

We strongly urge upon the Govt. to give up its policy of confrontation with the workers

and settle the strike of Bangalore based industries through negotiations, withdraw draconian measures against LIC and GIC employees, reinstate all the terminated and compulsory retired railwaymen and withdraw the National Security Act.

We call upon the working class to strengthen the unity achieved in this strike action and be prepared for further actions if the Government persists in its anti-working class policies.

A meeting of the Trade Unions will be held in New Delhi on 23rd March to decide the future course of action. □

All India Convention on Drug Industry

AN All India Convention on Drug Industry is being organised by the All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation in New Delhi on 9 April.

The Convention will discuss various aspects of the Industry highlighting the exploitation of the people by the multinational drug cartels. The Convention will enable to forge ahead the the struggle against the multinational drug companies operating in India. □

Over One Lakh March on State Assembly in Bombay

MORE than one lakh peasants, workers and agricultural labourers from all over Maharashtra, under the banner of left and democratic front, surged ahead in a mammoth morcha on the State Assembly on 3 March. The morcha was a powerful and inspiring demonstration of worker-peasant unity, and its main demands included remunerative prices for agricultural produce, minimum wage of Rs. 7 per day to agricultural workers, monopoly procurement of agricultural produce by the government, lowering of rapidly rising prices, distribution of all essential commodities at cheap rates through an efficient public distribution system, scrap state transport and railway fare hikes. The left and democratic front in Maharashtra consists of the CPI (M), CPI, PWP, Janata, Lok Dal, Samajwadi Manch and RPI (G).

A large number of workers connected with the CITU unions took part in the morcha. The Shramik Mahila Sangh, SFI, DYFI also participated in the morcha. The procession took 4 hours to cover a distance of 12 kms.

The morcha converted into a mass meeting at 4 P.M. near Assembly house. The police had made very strong bandobust never witnessed before. The morcha was the strongest one in the history of Bombay. The Chairman of the Reception Committee Shanti Patel presided over the meeting, which was addressed by Sharad Pawar, Godavari Parulekar, R. A. Patil, George Fernandes, A.B. Bardhan, Vithalrao Hande, Mrinal Gore and S. M. Joshi.

The future course of action will be decided later by the left and democratic front. □

Successful Strike of Seamen in Calcutta

THE 13-day-old strike at Calcutta and Haldia ports by the Forward Seamens Union of India (CITU) was called off by the Union on 24 March following a meeting of its representatives with the Chief Minister Jyoti Basu in Calcutta. 28 ships were stranded at the port as a result of the strike.

Chief Minister met on the day the expert committee formed by the Union Shipping Minister to look into the problems in the country sports. Jyoti Basu said he had asked the committee to look into the problems faced by the Calcutta based seamen, especially their complaint of longterm unemployment. The union had gone on strike from 11 March demanding Rs. 700 a month as unemployment allowance or 10 months' guaranteed work for Calcutta-based seamen.

Earlier as per the decision of the working committee of FSUI the seamen, unemployed as well as serving, have been continuously agitating with sit in strike both aboard vessels in ports and inside the Government of India shipping offices in support of their demands.

Ashutosh Banerjee, General Secretary of the FSUI in a statement on 5 March said that unemployed but registered seamen are determined to continue their stir till they get written assurance from the

Shipping Ministry about the proper disbursement of Rs. 80 crores accumulated fund money of Seafarers' Welfare Fund Society for the benefits of the registered but unemployed seamen. He warned that the tense situation would go out of control if the Union Ministry of Shipping and Transport continue to play with the lives of Calcutta based seamen particularly by deploying goonda elements of NSUI on the one hand and by advertising false news propagnanda without solving unemployment problems of Indian seamen on the other hand. □

J & K Govt Employees Conference

ALL J & K Low Paid Government Employees Federation organised its two days conference of Jammu Province at Jammu on 6 and 7 March, which was participated by 700 delegates from Jammu Province and 125 delegates from Kashmir Province.

The conference began with a massive procession led by the Federation President Sampat Prakash and T.S. Rana, President of Punjab Subordinate Services Federation. T. S. Rana inaugurated the conference. Sampat Prakash delivered his Presidential address. It adopted several resolutions which included against price rise, early submission of pay commission report, restoration of full trade union rights, etc.

The conference unanimously elected Sampat Prakash as President and M. K. Bhat as the General Secretary. □

CITU Demands Govt. Intervention in TISCO Contract Workers' Strike

B. T. Ranadive President CITU has issued the following statement on 9 March :

The month old strike of 10,000 contract workers of TISCO is being further prolonged due to the refusal of the Central and the State Governments to effectively intervene in the dispute.

These contract workers working in TISCO for several years have been demanding regularisation since they do jobs of permanent and perennial nature. Though the TISCO management is committed to abolish contract labour in a national bipartite settlement in steel industry it is avoiding its implementation with the connivance of the INTUC affiliated Tata Workers Union.

The management has dismissed the entire executive of TISCO Karmachari Union (CITU) and a reign of terror has been let loose in the entire township Jamshedpur. Over 400 workers have been arrested by the Bihar police to intimidate the striking workers.

The Left Front Government in West Bengal by issuing a notification has regularised the contract workers in IISCO. There is no reason why a similar step cannot be taken by the Government of Bihar in TISCO.

The CITU congratulates the TISCO contract workers for their united struggle against the top most monopoly house in the country under the joint leadership of CITU and the AITUC unions.

The CITU urges upon the Central Government and the Bihar Government to effectively intervene in favour of workers so that the strike is amicably

settled without any further delay.

TU Leader Killed

On 14 February, the Tata management with the help of its Nagar Raksha Vahini and INTUC and Jharkhanda goonda forces organised a demonstration within the factory premises to terrorise the workers. In the evening, a large number of workers were arrested in the name of maintaining peace. They were beaten up brutally and even women workers were not spared.

Thousands of workers under the leadership of Late Comrade Kedar Das and Manas Mukherjee demonstrated against in front of the office of the Deputy Commissioner. They went to Labour Research Institute where a seminar was being inaugurated by the Union Minister P. Mukherjee. The peaceful workers were stoned by the goonda forces and lathi-charged by the police and the Chief Protection Officer, Shyam Sunder Singh, fired on the workers. Hundreds of workers were injured including Comrade Kedar Das who later died of injuries. Thousands of workers joined the funeral procession of Comrade Das.

Meanwhile, the workers observed 26 February as the Jamshedpur Day and 16 March as Anti-Contract Worker System Day. On 17 March, Patna marked demonstrations of the workers in support of Jamshedpur workers.

Bihar CITU Committee Meets

The Bihar State Committee of the CITU met on 2 March in which it has demanded judicial inquiry into the death of Comrade Kedar Das and whole

incident, abolition of contract workers system, reinstatement of all the dismissed and suspended employees.

It condemned the police repression and arrests of K.K. Tripathi, T. N. Singh and hundreds of workers who were demonstrating on 2 March in support of the struggle of the contract workers. It supported the struggles of the employees of LIC, GIC, public sector and loco running staff and called upon the workers to observe strike on 11 March. It also called upon the workers to participate in the Kisan Rally on 26 March in Delhi. □

All India Coal Workers Convention

THE All India Coal Workers Convention will be held at Burns Club, Raniganj on 4 and 5 April 1981. About 250 delegates from all the coal mine belts belonging to unions affiliated to and friendly to CITU will participate in the Convention. B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU will inaugurate the Convention.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU, will submit a General Report to the Convention. Jyoti Basu, Vice-President CITU and Chief Minister Government of West Bengal will speak in the Open Rally of the Convention on 5 April 1981.

The Convention will review the crisis in Coal industry and the growing attacks on the workers by the CIL management. It will go into the working and living conditions of the 6 lakhs coal miners, improper safety arrangements in coal mines and growing unemployment due to mechanisation of coal mines. It will also consider the question of building a united movement all over India to settle the outstanding issues facing the coal miners. □

MICO Factory

THE MICO Employees Association, an independent union, is the only recognised trade union with a membership of 5,900 of the total 7,000 workmen including officers in the Bangalore factory of the Motor Industries, Ltd. (MICO). The Karnataka CITU President S. Suryanarayana Rao is the President of the Association.

In a desperate bid to capture the Association, F.M. Khan, a Congress(I) M.P. and Hari Prasad addressed a meeting on 7 March organised under the auspices of the INTUC in Bangalore which decided to physically eliminate S.S. Rao and forcibly obtain the resignations of other office bearers.

The General Body meeting of the Association was to be held in the Association premises on 9 March and since the police had refused permission on the plea of Section 35 imposed in the area, it had to be cancelled. While the union leaders were busy informing the workers about this they were attacked by the gangsters who ransacked the office and destroyed files etc. Sensing big troubles and attempts to their lives, the leaders went away. Three platoons of police posted there did not protect the workers and instead helped the goondas to have their free time. The first Vice President of the Association was asked by the goondas to conduct the meeting and declare the removal of the President. When he refused to do so, he was assaulted and the goondas shouted pro F.M. Khan and pro INTUC slogans. Thereafter other workers were severely beaten up by lathis and iron rods while the police remained a silent spectator

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	1980			State/Centre	1980		
	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.		Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa			
Gudur	410	418	416	Barbil	379	390	391
Guntur	436	431	432	Sambalpur	438	422	414
Hyderabad	417	414	424	Punjab			
Assam				Amritsar	442	425	425
Digboi	414	416	416	Rajasthan			
Doom Dooma	367	357	349	Ajmer	432	433	437
Labac	344	325	338	Jaipur	448	443	452
Mariani	359	356	357	Tam il Nadu			
Rangapara	370	362	351	Coimbatore	429	435	431
Bihar				Coonoor	411	422	420
Jamshedpur	389	379	378	Madras	398	404	403
Jharia	392	382	386	Madurai	429	435	439
Kodarma	430	426	425	U.P.			
Monghyr	444	426	430	Kanpur	402	405	404
Noamundi	391	377	381	Saharanpur	419	414	422
Gujarat				Varanasi	470	475	480
Ahmedabad	381	377	385	West Bengal			
Bhavnagar	418	408	412	Asansol	428	423	422
Haryana				Calcutta	397	379	379
Yamunanagar	445	432	439	Darjeeling	352	343	341
J. & K.				Howrah	383	375	370
Srinagar	427	421	426	Jalpaiguri	349	332	331
Karnataka				Raniganj	414	410	406
Ammathi	434	419	428	Delhi	436	430	434
Bangalore	453	449	457	Other Centres*			
Chikamagalur	420	422	421	Berhampur ('49)	594	579	561
Kolar G.F.	420	425	425	Cuttack ('49)	512	525	523
Kerala				Jabalpur ('49)	541	539	549
Alleppey	416	414	421	Beawar ('51-52)	516	514	518
Alwaye	416	419	424	Tripura (1961)	357	364	374
Mundakayam	419	428	437	H.P. (1965)	303	308	310
Madhya Pradesh				Goa (1966)	296	301	305
Balaghat	419	424	432	Bhilai (1966)	275	282	284
Bhopal	410	413	420	Bhilwara ('66)	264	264	267
Gwalior	430	423	428	Chhindwara ('66)	232	228	229
Indore	428	428	442	Kothagudem ('66)	271	273	272
Maharashtra				Rourkela ('66)	293	293	291
Bombay	402	408	409	All India ('49)	500	496	500
Nagpur	405	404	411	-do- ('60)	411	408	411
Sholapur	419	422	435				

Figures in bracket

indicate base year.

even on a written request. Naked police connivance with the management and Congress(I) Gangsters is proved by the letter of resignation given to the first Vice President by a Sub-Inspector for signature posing a letter written for police help by the Vice President.

The leaders of the Association in a letter to the Bangalore Police Commissioner have protested against these goonda activities

and the partisan attitude of the police. Informing him the criminal conspiracy to murder and assault the office bearers and hinderance in their normal TU work, they have requested the Commissioner to give police protection to them. The Executive Committee of the Association has suspended second Vice President P.H. Narasimhaiah for his anti-Association and criminal activities. □

A Plea for Further Amendment of Section 2(s) of I.D. Act.

SECTION 2(s) of the Industrial Disputes Act gives the definition of a workman. Before its amendment under the Industrial Disputes (Amendment and Misc. Provisions) Act 1956, Clause (s) of Section 2 of the Act read as follows :—

“workman” means any person employed (including as apprentice) in any industry to do any skilled or unskilled manual or clerical work for hire or reward and includes for the purpose of any proceeding under this Act in relation to an industrial dispute a workman discharged during that dispute but does not include any person employed in the naval, military or air service of the crown”.

It would be seen from above that workman was defined to mean any person (including an apprentice) employed in any industry to do any skilled or unskilled manual or clerical work for hire or reward. After the said Amendment Act the definition of workman included two other types, namely, those who did supervisory work and those who did technical work.

The aforesaid definition expanded by the aforesaid amendment Act clearly showed that the legislature intended to make the definition of workman all comprehensive and further intended that, except for four categories mentioned in the said clause, all persons employed in any industry should be regarded as workmen.

In fact, the amendment appears to have been called for because the different Courts and Tribunals were speaking in different voices in regard to the question as to who was a workman. For example, in

Simpson and Company Ltd. v. Martin (1), it was held that a Foreman is not a workman, whereas in *Ray v. Ford Motor Co.* (2), it was held that a Foreman is a workman. Again, in *Ford Motor Staff Union v. The Ford Motor Co. of India Ltd.* (3), it was held that some Foremen are workmen but some are not if they discharge supervisory functions.

In *U.P. Bank Employees Union, Kanpur v. Hindusthan Commercial Bank* (4), it was held that a Sub-agent of a Bank is not a workman; in *Bank of Bikaner v. B.B. Goel* (5), it was held that an Assistant Branch Manager of a Bank is a workman and in *Madan Gopal v. Hindusthan Commercial Bank Ltd.* (6), it was held that a Sub-agent of a Bank is a workman. In *Earaya Sugar Factory v. Kalika Prosad* (7) and in *M.A. Majalsar v. General Motors India Ltd.* (8), it was held that a Foreman is not a workman.

Similarly, whereas in *National Tobacco Co. of India v. Hafiz Ahmed* (9), it was held that Salesmen are workmen because they were required to do regular clerical work, in *Bimal Glass Works v. G.D. Chawle* (10), it was held that a Salesman is not a workman.

The aforesaid are decisions of Labour Appellate Tribunal. There was difference of opinion on the question between the different High Courts also. Some of the opinions of the High Court are given below :—

In *Laxmi Devi Sugar Mills v. State of Uttar Pradesh* (11), it was held that Doctors and Compounders are workmen, but in *Workmen of Dimakuchi Tea*

Estate V. Management (12), the Supreme Court held that an Assistant Medical Officer is not a workman,

The Madras High Court contradicted itself by holding in *Janab S. Ahmad Hussain & Sons V. United Bidi Workers' Union* (13) that Bidi Workers are not workman and by holding in the case between *T.M. Abdul Rahim*

Legal Note

& Co. v. North Arcot Distt. Bidi Workers' Union (14) that Bidi Workers are workmen. In the case in *Re: Chinniar* (15), the same High Court held that carpenters employed casually in a soap factory are workmen whereas it was held in the same judgement that casual worker engaged in a soap factory who holds tin paint is not a workman.

In order to bring about uniformity in the concept of a workman, Section 2(s) was amended in 1956 to read as follows :—

(s) “Workman” means any person (including an apprentice) employed in any industry to do any skilled or unskilled manual, supervisory, technical or clerical work for hire or reward, whether the terms of employment be expressed or implied, and for the purpose of any proceeding under this Act in relation to an industrial dispute, includes any such person who has been dismissed, discharged or retrenched in connection with, or as a consequence of, that dispute, or whose dismissal, discharge or retrenchment has led to that dispute, but does not include any such person.

(i) who is subject to the Army Act, 1950 (XLVI of 1950) or the Air Force Act, (XLV of 1950), or the Navy (Discipline) Act, 1934

(XXXIV of 1934), or

(ii) who is employed in the police service or as an officer or other employee of a persons; or

(iii) who is employed mainly in a managerial or administrative capacity, or

(iv) who, being employed in a supervisory capacity, draw wages exceeding five hundred rupees per mensem or exercises, wither by the nature of the duties attached to the office or by reson of the powers vested in him, functions mainly of a managerial nature”.

One should have thought that, except the excluded categories, every employee would henceforth be regarded as a workman, and further that the definition in the purview of the clause that he who does any skilled or unskilled maual, supervisory, technical or clerical work for hire or reward is a workman, should include in its wide net of all catagories of workmen. Reading the entire clause (s), it should have appeared that all categories of employees except those specifically excluded would be workmen within the meaning of that clause.

A jolt was administered by the Supreme Court decision in *Burmah-Shell Oil Storage & Distributing Co. of India Ltd. V. Burmah-Shell Management Staff Association* (16). In that decision the Supreme Court held that a Salesman is a type of employee who does not fall within the definition of workman in clause 2(s). According to the Court, the duties of a Sales Representative was principally to promote sales of the company and to do canvassing and obtain orders and, according to the Court, that kind of work made him the company's representative in his district responsible for all

matters affecting the Company's interests and, in particular, the profitable sale of all its products. In spite of the contention of Mr. Chari for the workmen that the definition of 'Workman' in section 2(s) was now exhaustive and every employee of an industry must be classed among one of the four classes described in the definition, the Court held that the case of District Sales representative was clearly that of a person who cannot fall within any of the four classes because the work of canvassing or promoting sales could not be included in any of the four classifications and his work could not be held to be either manual, clerical, technical or supervisory. He was, therefore, not a workman.

Sales Engineering Representative was, on similar reasoning, also held not to be a workman because his chief duty was to promote sales and give advice. The mere fact that he was required to have technical knowledge for such a purpose did not make his work technical work.

The rationale of the aforesaid decision of the Supreme Court is based upon the finding that, in practice, quite a large number of employees are employed in industries to do work other than the kinds mentioned in the definition and those employees who do not do any of the four classes of work or functions would, therefore, be out of the scope of the word 'Workman' without having to resort to the exceptions.

Evidently, this decision of the Supreme Court would lead to divisions of the workmen of an industry according to their duties and the ingenuity of the Management would try to create distinctions where there are none and it is possible that genuine workmen might be excluded from the benefits of the labour laws on the alleged ground that their duties

are neither manual nor supervisory nor technical nor clerical.

That decision of the Supreme Court suggests a remedy also. While repelling the contention of Mr. Chari, the Court said that, if every employee of an industry was to be workman except those mentioned in the four exceptions the four classifications of duties need not have been mentioned in the definition and a workman could have been defined as a person employed in an industry except in cases where he was covered by one of the exceptions.

All the Central Trade Unions of India should, therefore, mount a pressure upon the Labbur Ministry of the Government of India to re-amend section 2(s) in the light of the above observations of the Supreme Court. This re-amendment is absolutely necessary because otherwise big chunks of workmen find themselves outside the protection of the Industrial Disputes Act.

It is significant in this context that the Left Front Government of West Bengal has already introduced a Bill to amend section 2(s) of the Industrial Disputes Act by adding the words 'or sales promotion' between the words 'clerical work and' the words 'for hire or reward'.

This is a step in the right direction.

- (1) (1951) 2 LLJ 43
- (2) (1951) 1 LLJ 167
- (3) (1952) 2 LLJ 344=1953 LAC 497
- (4) 1952 LAC 533
- (5) 1953 LAC 65=(1953) 2 LLJ 334
- (6) (1956) 1 LLJ 414
- (7) (1953-54) 5 FJR 691
- (8) (1954-55) 7 FJR 149
- (9) 1953 LAC 620=(1954) 1 LLJ 156
- (10) (1956-57) 10 FJR 298
- (11) (1955) 2 LLJ 1
- (12) AIR 1958 SC 353=(1958) 1LLJ 500
- (13) (1958) 2 LLJ 606
- (14) (1958) 2 LLJ 736
- (15) (1957) 1 LLJ 28
- (16) AIR 1971 SC 922=1971 Lab. I.C. 699=(1970) 2 LLJ 590

-Arun Prokas Chatterjee □

Police Raj in Rajhara

RUTHLESS and naked repression of democratic and trade union rights and unprecedented use of Section 144 being enforced inside a union office is seen in Rajhara in Madhya Pradesh where the Hindustan Steel Employees Union was organising its annual conference on 21 February with Abul Hasan, MLA, West Bengal as the Chief Guest.

Due to the contract workers agitation, the Administration had promulgated Section 144 in the area on 11 February. The Union applied for permission for mass meeting and use of mike which was refused by S.D.M., Rajhara. Since the preparation for the conference were already made, the comrades decided to hold the conference in the Union office.

On 21 February at 8 A.M.,

the S.D.M. Shri Gedam and two I.P.S. officers with one jeep and two truckload of armed policemen reached the Union office and ordered to stop the conference in view of the Section 144. Abul Hasan, M.P. CITU General Secretary S. Kumar, Union Vice President P.K. Moitra and others tried to persuade them in vain. They were threatened that they would be arrested thus effecting the provision of Section 144 inside the building of the Union.

There is complete police raj in the area with about 3,000 policemen deployed even at the mining areas and total censorship on all unions' letters. No union can get leaflet printed or cyclostyle or typed from the market without the permission of the police. No trunk call can be booked. The contractor

can not go out of Rajhara by bus or train and if caught going out they are arrested under NSA.

The management of the Bhilai Steel Plant is helping the police in all possible ways with training centre, rest house, employees recreation clubs, community hall turned into police camps. These workers are agitating for the payment of their wages which have not been paid for last 4 months and amount to Rs. 80,00,000. Earlier on 11 February the Union leaders were called by the District Magistrate, Durg to discuss the question of payment of wages but were arrested under NSA.

The CITU, AITUC, HMS and CMMS unions are planning for bigger action to protest against these acts and demanding release of all arrested workers. □

Contracts to Foreign Oil Companies : Against the Interests of the Country

IT is understood that the Government of India has awarded contracts to 33 foreign multinational oil companies for survey and drilling operations on vast areas covering about 75 per cent area of offshore and coastal regions of the country leaving only 25 per cent of area for activities of ONGC. Pointing out the reports regarding this, Ajoy Biswas, M.P., President, ONGC Workers' Union, Tripura Project, Agartala, has written to the Union Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals requesting him to cancel these contracts in the long term interests of the country.

As per the terms of contracts a large quantity of the produced oil will be at the disposal of the contracted companies which is against the national interests particularly in the present period

of international oil crisis. Biswas pointed out that ONGC is competent for the work. He observed that the contracts would squeeze ONGC activities and would

result in curtailment of employment opportunities and stagnation in the prospects of existing employees. □

Delhi TUs Call for General Strike on 14 April

A Joint Trade Union Convention of Delhi State held on 15 March in New Delhi called upon the working class of Delhi to launch a united movement and initiate propaganda campaign and organise meetings, rallies, etc. in support of the common demands raised in the convention and to observe one day General strike on 14 April.

The convention demanded Rs. 500 as the minimum wage for unskilled workers, abolition of casual and contract labour system, guaranteed supply of essential commodities at subsidised

rates from fair price shops, stronger public distribution system, right to work as fundamental right and unemployment allowance, etc. The convention criticised the government for its wage freeze policy and the attacks on the trade union and democratic rights.

The convention was participated by 2,000 delegates representing CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS, UTUC & INTUC (Dara) and independent federations of the employees in the banks, Reserve Bank, LIC, GIC

[On Page Sixteen]

Jute Workers to Launch Countrywide Campaign

THE Working Committee of the All India Jute Workers' Federation met at New Delhi on 19-20 March. Lakshmi Sehgal presided over. 28 members from West Bengal, Tripura, U.P., and Andhra Pradesh attended it.

Inaugurating the meeting, B.T. Ranadive, President CITU, said the Sixth Five Year Plan while giving several concessions to the monopolies and multinationals, has made the workers of the organised sector a special attack. Referring to the current economic and political situation, he cautioned the members against the imperialist designs against our country.

Niren Ghosh, M.P., General Secretary of the Federation, placed his report and appealed to the members to campaign for the peasantry while raising the problems of jute workers. Kamal Sarkar, Joint General Secretary, supplemented the report by saying that the jute barons are likely to go back on their agreement on grade scales and already various measures of increasing the workload are being taken.

Eighteen comrades took part in the discussion which revealed that modernisation is being resorted to in the name of replacement of old machines. The meeting decided that in order to prepare the workers for a long drawn battle, intensive campaign on the question of grade/scale and increase of workload should be conducted for three months and a Day is to be

observed when the charter of demands should be placed to the management.

The draft constitution of the Federation placed by Kamal Sarkar was adopted unanimously with some amendments. The meeting adopted several resolutions against National Security Act, victimisation of loco running staff and in support of the struggle of the LIC employees etc. □

Leaders of Medical Workers Union from USSR Visit CITU Office

A two member delegation headed by Com. Lidia I. Novak, President, Central Committee, Medical Workers Union, USSR, which has membership of 7 million, 90 percent of whom are women, visited CITU office on 26 February. Susheela Gopalan, M.P., Vice-President, E. Balanandan, M.P. and Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretaries of the CITU along with other staff members of CITU office received the delegation and exchanged views.

Com. Novak explained that the Medical Workers Union is preparing for holding a Conference against multinationals in the drug industry sometime during the year. It is also proposed to hold a meeting soon for preparations for the Conference.

The CITU representatives explained that a fight against multinationals in the drug industry in India is already being carried on and a national convention is being held in April 1981 at New Delhi by the All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees Federation. The CITU would fully cooperate with the Medical Workers' Union, USSR, in this respect.

Both the sides exchanged views and publications on the Subject. □

Engineering Workers' Convention Held

FIRST all India Convention of CITU affiliated engineering workers' unions held on 3-4 March at Ghusuri in Howrah, West Bengal, was attended by 100 representatives of the engineering workers.

Monoranjan Roy, General Secretary, West Bengal CITU, inaugurated the Convention. Shanti Ghatak presented the main report. Krishnapada Ghosh Labour Minister, Government of West Bengal, addressed the delegates and outlined the achievements and performance of the Left Front Government.

The Convention formed an All India Coordination Committee of Engineering Workers' Unions with Shanti Ghatak as the Convenor.

The Convention decided to launch a joint movement on fair wages, full neutralisation of rise in price index, housing and medical facilities, for trade union and democratic rights, against National Security Act and LIC Ordinance, etc. It also decided to organise all India campaign and a demands week from 25 to 30 May on their demands.

In the end, a 10 thousand strong public meeting was addressed by Krishnapada Ghosh, Monoranjan Roy, Shanti Ghatak and others. □

Delhi CITU...

[From Page Fifteen]

and newspapers. A six member presidium cum steering committee which included Sushil Bhattacharya, M.P., General Secretary, Delhi CITU, conducted the deliberations. Jogender Sharma, Secretary, Delhi, CITU, placed the main resolution. 22 delegates participated in the discussion and the resolution was adopted unanimously.

Editorial Board

B.T. Ranadive (Chairman),
P. Ramamurti, Monoranjan Roy,
Niren Ghosh, Sudhin Kumar,
M.K. Pandhe (Editor)