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The Elections and After

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THE Indian electorate has given an undisputed victory to the Congress(I) and returned it to power with overwhelming majority. Never since independence the ruling party got such a huge majority—around 4/5 of the seats. Neither Pandit Nehru nor Indira Gandhi could ever achieve such massive victory.

Of course this is not Rajiv's magic, but the sudden swing in favour of Congress(I) generated by the dastardly assassination of Smt Indira Gandhi. The mass of people did not identify the imperialist conspirators and turned their indignation against them, but they considered in the background of the secessionist challenge in the Punjab and her murder at the hands of Sikh security guards, that she died while defending national unity and fighting the disruptors of national unity.

This concern for national unity and the feeling that Indira died for it, made the people rally round the Congress(I) forgetting the misdeeds of the ruling party during the last 5 years.

All earlier indications and political developments suggested that the ruling party would loose heavily in the elections to the Lok Sabha. In fact the estimate of the ruling party was that it would be short of majority by at least 20 seats. The estimate made a few months before Indira's assassination was not officially owned, but it appeared in the press. That the ruling party was not confident of securing a majority was made clear when Shri Vasant Sathe, the Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers in the Indira cabinet advocated a change for the Presidential system under the plea that no party was likely to get a majority in the coming elections.

This was not surprising. The economic situation, the unrelieved misery of the people during the last 5 years of Congress(I) rule, the closures, mounting unemployment, ever rising prices, the police atrocities, the growing support from among the bourgeois opposition parties for overhauling centre state relation coupled with the inner fights in the ruling party and its unbriddled corruption—all pointed to a rapid erosion of the influence of the ruling party leading to the conclusion that it would loose its majority in the Lok Sabha. However, certain contrary developments were also taking place. The activities of the Sikh secessionists in Punjab, the murder of innocent people, the open support given by outside powers — USA, Britain, etc. to the secessionist elements, all focussed the attention of the people on national unity and security. In this battle in the Punjab, the centre of stage was occupied by the secessionists and the Congress(I) Govt. and the latter appeared to be the force fighting the secessionists. The entry of the army into the Golden Temple was considered by large sections as only a measure in defence of national unity and integrity and welcomed. This enabled the Congress(I) to check the growing erosion of its influence.

But the masses were vigilant. They did not commit themselves to the Congress(I). The same sections that applauled the Congress(I) govt. for its action in Punjab reacted uniformly in a sharp manner against the dismissal of the NTR Ministry. The massive bundhs to protest against the dismissal were unprecedented political protests of recent times.

But this democratic vigilance were also getting submerged under concern for national unity. The replacement of civilian governments by the army in many parts of the country did not evoke protests because it was considered as exceptional measures taken to fight the menace of secessionism and protect the integrity of the country.

The turning point came with the assassination of Smt Indira Gandhi, which led to a qualitative change in the out look of the mass of the electorate. The shock the assassination administered made them rally round the Congress(I) despite all the evils of its rule and took their mind away from the pressing problems of economic living and democracy. The sympathy the Congress(I) and for Indira's son generated by the murder was accompanied by concern for national unity and over destabilisation.

The sympathy wave turned into a huge election rally around the Congress(I) because the bourgeois-

opposition parties the main contenders for replacing the Congress(I) could not provide a promise for national unity, stability or strength.

In the first place the failure to unite, their interminable wranglings, their formation and reformation of parties—all sapped faith in their credibility to win and provide a suitable government.

But above all, these parties were totally out of touch with the prevailing dominant concern of the people — protection of national unity. Among the bourgeois-landlord parties only the Congress(I) took the issue and presented itself as the champion of national unity.

In this situation these opposition parties failed to develop any rapport with the wide ranging sentiment for national unity and above all reckoned with the sympathy for the Congress(I) developed by the assassination.

They treated the assassination as an electoral inconvenience and ignored it. People's concern for unity, their fear of destabilisation all remained a closed book to them. People's anxiety over the arming of Pakistan by USA was not part of their consciousness. On the other hand when Congress(I) leaders expressed their concern for national unity and concern over arming of neighbours some of the leaders ridiculed it, and asked the people not to attach any importance to such talks.

Thus the bourgeois opposition parties missed the issue which in the eyes of the electorate formed the central point of the election. The left parties were not in the running to form an alternate government. Only the bourgeois parties in their combination were contending for it and the electorate therefore swung to the Congress (I) hoping that it will protect the country's unity and save it from destabilisation.

It will be wrong to think that everything was just and fair in the elections. The ruling party did everything to violate the norms of procedure laid down by the Election Commission. It used official machinery to help the ruling party. Never before were mass media-radio, television were so blatantly used to influence the electorate. Money power, muscle power, were also used and over and above it in the state of Bihar and other states booth capturing and rigging was also used under police protection.

Some news papers have published photos of illegal stamping of the votes in Shri Rajiv Gandhi's constituency. Inspite of this it is unrealistic to describe the election verdict as a result of manipulation and rigging. The electorate gave its confidence to the Congress (I) thinking that it can be charged in the task of protecting unity and defending destabilisation.

It is because of this that the bourgeois-opposition parties have suffered heavy losses. Unless they understand the major cause of debacle they will not be able to restore their credibility in the coming Assembly elections.

So devastating are the effects of the wave that the BJP could return only 2 to the Lok Sabha having contested more than 200 seats, the DMKP only 3, the Janata 10. Among these parties the Telugu Desam has the honour of routing the Congress (I) in Andhra Pradesh. The ruling party could secure only 6 seats out of 42. Here the Congress (I) could not capitalise on the sympathy and national unity wave because the people were full of anger towards the ruling party for its unscrupulous attack on the NTR Ministry in August last.

The electoral wave in favour of the Congress (I) can be seen from the voting figures. In Andhra Pradesh where it got only 6 seats it got 42 per cent of the votes compared with 56.2 per cent in 1980. In Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi it got more than 50 per cent of the votes cast. In some of the States there is a slight reduction of vote percentage as compared to 1980. For instance in Karnataka in 1980 it secured 56.3 per cent of votes and 27 seats while in 1984 it secured 24 seats with 51.6 per cent votes. Even with reduced vote the Congress (I) got more than 50 per cent in these states. The spectacular come back of 1980 was maintained and many more seats were won.

In Kerala the Congress(I) got 26.3 per cent vote in 1980. Its vote increased to 33.2 per cent in 1984. In West Bengal the Congress(I) increased its vote from 36.5 per cent in 1980 to 48.2 per cent in 1984.

It should not be thought that there was an absolute reduction of opposition votes everywhere. On the contrary in a large number of cases the opposition vote remained the same as before or even increased. But the Congress(I) vote increased much more with entrance of new vote and increase in the percentage of votes polled. It is obvious that, thanks to sympathy wave and people's concern for national unity, the Congress(I) was able to overcome the erosion that had taken place in the last 5 years and rally the new entrants and youth under its banner.

It is equally obvious that the capture of 80 per cent seats exaggerates Congress(I) success. In an electoral system based on proportional representation the Congress(I) would have got 50 per cent seats or a little more. Its 80 per cent success in seats is due to the electoral system and does not reflect the real strength of the political parties and their influence.

In contrast to the bourgeois opposition parties the CPI(M) and the left parties have fared better. In Tripura the Congress(I) was defeated despite its alliance with the secessionist TUJS and both the

seats were captured by the left front headed by the CPI(M). In West Bengal the Left Front headed by the CPI(M) had to wage an intense struggle. The Left Front captured majority of the seats 26, out of 42, the CPI(M) getting 18. The Congress(I) which carried everything before it in all the other states except Andhra Pradesh had to accept a second place in West Bengal.

These are praiseworthy achievements of our people of Tripura and West Bengal, of the Lest Front.

In both the states the Left Front allies, the CITU and mass organisations took care of the problems of national unity and put before the people a concrete programme to maintain and defend it. This together with the achievements of the Left Front ministries held a major section of the people together and gave a majority to the Left forces. The bourgeois parties faced a debacle because they ignored the people's concern for unity, the Left held its own because it was one with the people in the struggle for national unity.

At the same time the CITU and the working class cannot ignore the fact that both in West Bengal and in Kerala there are reversions and the Congress(I) has advanced its influence. The Congress(I) has captured 10 Lok Sabha seats from the CPI(M) in West Bengal and the party has lost 5 sitting seats in Kerala. In West Bengal in industrial areas the Left Front has suffered losses and important CITU leaders have been defeated. So also in Kerala. The Left-CPI(M) has secured only one seat in Kerala. It has 2 seats (one CPI(M) and 1 CPI) in Andhra Pradesh. Everywhere else including Tamil Nadu, the left has no representative.

It is obvious that the wave had its effect in West Bengal and Kerala. A big section of the workers and the people turned to the Congress(I) out of consideration for national unity. The Left was not in the race to form an alternative government. The vote therefore got centered on Congress(I) in preference to bourgeois opposition parties whose credibility was low.

The present prepossession of the people in favour of the Congress(I) cannot last long. The problems of economy and daily life of democratic rights, now swept under are bound to emerge and occupy the attention of the people and they will again face the bitter experiences of the past because there will be no change in the basic policies of the triumphant Congress(I).

The Congress(I) leaders assure that election promises will be carried out. But what promises have they made? The Congress(I) manifesto says: "The Congress(I) has raised workers' wages substantially in the last 5 years. The Congree(I) will ensure for the working class rising level of real incomes based on rising productivity, expand services for education and training and health, housing and cultural advancement of the workers; emphasise labour participation in management."

This is all the grand manifesto has to say about workers. Can anything be more farcical? There is no promise of full nutralisation against rising prices, there is no promise to defend and expand trade union rights, to assure union recognition, there is no promise to withdraw anti-strike legislation like ESMA. On the other hand there is an assurance that wages would be linked with productivity.

The CITU and the working class must also understand that efforts are being made by the imperialists to undermine and weaken our policy of non-alignment. One cannot take it for granted that the Congress (I) and its govt. will remain unaffected by these pressures. A vigilant CITU and working class must actively intervene and fight every vacilation and sharpen the anti-imperialist edge of our foreign policy and strengthen friendship with socialist countries.

The post election task lays heavy responsibility on the CITU and its working-class. They must systematically bear with the masses who have temporarily swung towards the Congress (I).

The CITU and our working-class should popularise our line of national unity and make them aware that we are firm fighters against secession, communalism and casteism. This will help them to overcome their present illusions and gradually draw them in the common struggle for democracy, living conditions and non-aligned foreign policy.

Votes polled by CPI (M) Candidates in 1980 & 1984

West Bengal	*Seat Contested*	*Won*	*Votes polled*
1980	31	28	8,200 012
1984	31	18	9,119,541

Percentage and Votes Polled by Left Front & Congress

West Bengal	*Votes*	*percentage*	*1980*	*Difference*
Left Front—	12,252,963	48.48	53.97	—5.49%
Congress (I)	12,182,881	48.20	36.51	+11.69%
Difference—	70,082	0.28		
Others—	843,217	3.32		

Kerala	*1980*	*1984*
U.D.F. total votes	3,500,412	5,547,262
U.D.F. percentage of valid votes polled	42.56	50.91
L.D.F. total votes	4,125,440	4,338,439
L.D.F. percentage of valid votes polled	50.51	39.81
Difference of votes between two fronts In 1984.	1,208,823	(i.e. UDF gained 8.35 percent more votes than in 1980)

CITU For Movement on Bhopal Holocaust

THE CITU Secretariat in its meeting held at New Delhi on January 4 adopted a resolution on the Bhopal chemical holocaust created by the U.S. multinational Union Carbide, directing the State Committees and the affiliated unions to gear up movements on the issue. It was also decided to approach all other Central Trade Unions and national federations for holding a seminar in co-operation with the scientific organisations like Delhi Science Forum, etc. (The resolution on the Bhopal holocaust is published hereunder).

The meeting noted that since the question of submission of Annual Returns for 1983 was taken up in the General Council meeting at Jaipur, there has not been much improvement in the matter. The meeting directed the State Committees to pursue the matter with those unions who have not submitted the Annual Returns for early compliance.

The meeting also decided to hold the next Working Committee after the Assembly elections, which are scheduled to be held in March, are over.

Nrisingha Chakrabarty pointed out that CITU has been alloted with two Delegates and two Advisors for the Sixth Conference on Safety in Mines to be held shortly at Delhi. The meeting decided to nominate two Delegates from the Coal and Iron-ore/other mines in consultation with the State Committees and the federations. The meeting nominated P.K. Ganguly, Secretary as one of the Advisors.

The meeting further decided to pursue the efforts for holding a Conference of textile workers in co-operation with other trade unions. It also decided to make efforts to organise the workers in the sugar industry in a federation so as to co-ordinate their movements on an all India basis.

Resolution on the Chemical Holocaust in Bhopal

This meeting of the Secretariat of CITU held at New Delhi on January 4, 1985, denounces the U.S. multinational Union Carbide for the chemical holocaust caused by its plant at Bhopal on Dec. 3, 1984, which killed over 2500 presons and permanently maimed tens of thousands. The holocaust which has been recorded as the worst in the world is a sharp pointer to the working class and the people regarding the sinister role played by the multinationals in the third world by passing on their discarded technologies maintaining double standards of safety for their greed for profits.

The meeting also condemns the Government of India for its policy of wooing the multinationals, sacrificing all norms of industrial safety and environment at their feet. From the facts already revealed, the culpability of the Government of India as well as the Government of Madhya Pradesh along with the Union Carbide is established. The Government cannot claim that it did not have the sort of data which would have required it to enforce stringent measnres both before and after giving permission to the multinational to instal the plant to manufacture the Phosgene gas, the storage of which has been banned by international regulations since its use in the First World War. Furthermore, ever since its installation, a series of accidents including fatal ones occurred which are known to the government. But even then, instead of taking any precautionary steps, the government had refused to shift the plant away from the city precincts and on the contrary allowed the manufacture of MIC. The belated resignation of the State Labour Minister and action against the Chief Factory Inspector are only face saving measures to hoodwink the people before the coming Lok Sabha election at Bhopal.

The meeting further condemns the government for hurriedly winding up the relief camp. The relief extended to the victims has been utterly inadequate as has been evidenced from the indefinite dharna staged by the victims before the residence of the Chief Minister. The Govt. also did not take any steps to protect the victims from the horde of US lawyers who came down to Bhopal to cash in on the tragedy and dupe them.

The meeting also notes with deep concern the reported visit of a number of chemical war experts from USA, W. Germany, UK etc., to Bhopal in view of the spiralling of the chemical arms race by these imperialist countries providing them an opportunity to evaluate the potential of MIC in such warfare.

Considering the magnitude of the holocaust and in view of the likelihood of the great dangers in store, the meeting demands that the proceedings of the Enquiry Commission be held in public and the report be made public without delay. Since the effects of the poisonous gas are bound to prolong for a long time on man, on pregnant women and on ecology, the Govt. must take long term investigating measures with a view to alleviating the obnoxious effects of the gas.

The meeting further demands that the Government of India must take over all assets of the company without any compensation and arrange full compensation and relief to all the victims and affected people, while suitably absorbing all the workers affected. The Govt. of India must also undertake immediately the review of the safety systems in all the potentially hazardous plants in the country. The Secretariat directs the affiliated unions to explain the whole situation to the mass of workers so that a powerful movement can be developed against the Union Carbide in particular and multinationals in general for the violations of safety rules and the policy of the government in wooing the multinationals in dumping their banned products in chemicals, drugs, pesticides etc., in India. The Secretariat also appeals to all environmentalists, toxicologist, scientific research groups and organisations and all other trade unions for co-ordinated actions in this respect.

Stranglehold of Multinationals in India

P. K. Ganguly

THE chemical holocaust caused by the US multinational, Union Carbide at Bhopal, has been recorded as the worst in history. There was no word or example which could satisfy the people and the reporters to draw a parallel. Some said Bhopal was turned into Hitler's Gas Chambers, some said it was a mini Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The scene was compelling in its display of death—indescribable of the horror, squalour — the sheer magnitude and the force of death. The official number did not reach 2000 even. But in fact it was well over 2500 dead and tens of thousands incapaciated. At Hamidia Hospital, the largest in the city, the 760 bed capacity was increased to an unimaginable 20,000. But people were dying like flies. The burying grounds and the cremetoriums ran utterly short. The dead were huddled together in the same grave, old graves dug up again, and also a number of dead were being cremated together, the cremation going on round the clock.

This was the reality, an act of the US multinational and the policy of the Govt. of India to woo these multinationals for causing "Industrial Revolution" in India. A revolution indeed—massacring thousands, permanently maiming thens of thousands, orphaning thousands, widowing thousands and the incapacitated individuals dislocated from the right to normal living in one stroke by the multinational. While the monopolists and the multinationals have been soaring their profits, the govt. have been standing as a watch dog to protect their interests at the cost of the teeming millions, all norms of industrial and environmental safety being sacrificed at their feet. Over 90 per cent of the worst affected were the poor, living in the shanties of the factory. This is their way of life and death in a capitalist system. They fall victims to natural disasters and to man made ones both.

The Management and the Government Lied

J. Mukund the Works Manager told the ADM, "The gas leak cannot be from my plant. Our technology just cannot go wrong, we cannot just have such leaks". Even the management doctor said that the gas is only an irritant. These management personnel are reared in certain factory culture by the multinationals compromising in safety and even elementary technological competency. They could not believe that Union Carbide Corporation, USA can do wrong. This is the result of a thorough brain wash. And what was the role of the Govt? They immediately announced that everything was fine. The vegetables and water were absolutely safe. The government's pronouncement was made without even having started to analyse the samples. The role of the government and the Chief Minister, even the Governor, was thoroughly exposed. On 3rd December itself, even after seeing the magnitude of the disaster, the Governor flew to Bombay to have his dental trouble cured. The Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi made a hurricane visit to Bhopal on 7th and rushed back to continue his election campaign, the Chief Minister Arjun Singh following him. It was appalling that the Chief Minister left the devastated capital to attend on the Prime Minister for his election campaign elsewhere. Not that the presence of them would have made a material difference in the relief operations, but it would have helped to assure the victims that their plight was receiving the highest authorities' full attention. This was evidently because of the lack of their political will to deliver good to the people. Winning the elections was their prime motive even during this holocaust.

Vasant Sathe the Minister of Chemicals and Fertilisers assured that the government would take all precatuions to ensure that records and evidence were not tampered with. But can it be relied upon? The abject surrender of the government even at this moment was laid bare when the Chairman of the Union Carbide Corporation, USA, Warren Anderson was arrested on a number of non-bailable penal sections but released six hours later and whisked away to America. As the report goes, there was pressure from the Reagan Administration through the US Embassy in Delhi on Rajiv Gandhi. It also went on record that the tycoons of the Indian industries, who shed all their tears for the tragedy, immediately reacted on the arrest of Warren Anderson.

Series of Previous Accidents

The vicarious liability of the US multinational and the government is established from the fact that since the installation of the plant there were a series of accidents and no action was taken either by the government or by the management. The first danger signal was sounded by the then Municipal Administrator and Secretary, Environment, M. N. Buch in 1975, who wanted the plant to be shifted outside the limits of the Municipality. Buch was transferred. The State Labour Minister, Tara Singh Vigogi said in the Assembly even after several accidents that, "it is not a small stone that it can be lifted and shifted elsewhere. Rs. 25 crores have been invested, safety measures have been taken in the factory with full responsibiltty. Bhopal and its people will be safe". But in 1975 itself there was a blast and leakage in the plant. Then on November 24, 1977, there was a fire in the Naptha unit which took

10 hours to put out. Then a mishap occurred in 1978 when 6 workers died due to Phosgene leakage. Despite this no safety measures were adopted and on the contrary the Methyle Isocyanate (MIC) unit was launched. After this the first reported death occurred on December 26, 1981 when a plant operator Muhammed Ashraff died due to Phosgene leak. The then Works Manager, Warren Woomer, who is now the President of the Union Carbide Corporation, USA dismissed this as a human failure. A fortnight later 24 workers were seriously affected again due to Phosgene leak. This also happened in the presence of senior executives of the Carbide's plant in USA. On October 5, 1982 again 4 workers were seriously affected due to MIC leakage and the residents of the adjoining settlements experienced chocking sensation. Two other incidents of smaller severity occurred in 1983 and then in January, 1984 another worker Arun Mathur died of chemical allergy developed in the Plant. All these were enough evidences to put the management and the government in the dock. But neither the government nor the management took any heed of these fatal accidents. The present Works Manager, J Mukund brushed off all these as minor ones. Besides, it has been reported that one plant supervisor, Shakeel Ibrahim Qureshi had ordered for immediate stoppage of the operations on the fateful night the moment the workers first smelt the gas. But he was beaten up and locked inside a room by the security guards at the instance of J. Mukund who continued the operation resulting in the holocaust.

Substandard Safety Systems

Despite the series of mishaps the plant was running under grossly sub-standard safety systems as compared to the standard maintained in the USA plant. There was no computerised system or automatic alarms. The Delhi Science Forum reported the following glaring deficiencies: Pipe lines requiring 6 monthly replacement have been used for over 2 years; pressure gauges in the control panel were faulty; the motor to pump caustic soda into the Vent Scrubber was down, rendering this vital safety equipment incapable; the pipeline inter linking the Vent Scrubber to the Flare room was under repair, thus rendering the system ineffective; and the refrigeration unit meant to keep the stored MIC on sufficiently low temperature had been switched off as an economy measure (MIC boils and vapourises at 32°C only).

The government knew everything about this. But the Union Carbide Management took care to keep the authorities happy. Found in its roster today are the nephews of the former State Education Minister Narasingh Rao Dikshit and the Irrigation Minister Digvijay Singh; son in law of the Additional Chief Secretary, Raj Kumar Khanna, son of S.L. Verma, another senior bureaucrat. Vijay Gupta, a local Congress(I) leader is a legal advisor of the company. Apart from this the contract for the security arrangements had gone to the unit owned by the former IG of Police Ram Narain Nagu. The Company's guest house is always at the disposal of the Chief Minister, Arjun Singh. Several Union Ministers stayed there during the Congress(I) convention last year.

The workers and the unions in the plant alleged that the 200 page safety manual was hardly followed by the Bhopal plant. No labour inspector visited the factory since 1980. The workers further alleged that the number of operators at the MIC plant was reduced from 10 to 5 and the maintenance staff from 4 to 2 on the plea that the total number of working hours in a week would be 42 instead of the original 48 hours. Several trained experts were either transferred or sacked.

Third World Countries For Industrial Colonialisation

The Third World Countries are not only a dumping ground of wastes, for out moded technology and sub-standard and obsolete machinery, but also a hunting ground of the imperialists for industrial colonialisation. The ruling class — in business, industry and Govt. are browbeaten by the manufacturing interests of the multinationals, the tentacles of imperialism. It has become a vast laboratory for experimenting on the people with banned and discarded chemicals and medicines as guneapigs. What happened in Bhopal can happen anywhere in India. There are 56 major pesticides manufactured by 50 companies in India, with a total installed capacity of 96,851 tons. In addition to this 83 letters of intent have also been issued by the government for a capacity of 32,857 tons. A large quantity of agro-chemicals are also being imported every year. The government has also approved registration of 122 more pesticides. Almost 100 per cent of these chemicals, pesticides/insecticides and their intermediaries are considered to be highly hazardous. The "development" of the chemical industry has been made by the multinationals, but the govt. has kept far behind the development of expertise in toxicology. This expertise is a private property of the multinationals and their "trade secret". The government does not have access to these. This short of technology is being introduced rendering high profits to the multinationals at the cost of the life and health of the Indian people and this is being trumpted as self sufficiency. The Bhopal holocaust has exposed this self sufficiency.

Banned Pesticides, Insecticides

Top Indian scientists and the toxicologists have been warning year after year of the dangerous use of pesticides which have been causing serious threat to life and environment. Only two years back the Industrial Toxicology Research Centre (ITRC), Lucknow, pointed out that hundreds of cases of pesticide poisioning were being admitted in the various hospitals of the country. In 1982 it pointed out that residues of Chlorinated pesticides in the placental tissues, blood and plasma of pregnant women resulted in early termination of pregnancy. In June, 1984 it warned that evidence of its persistence in human

tissues and biological systems have been traced. A question was raised in the Rajya Sabha on August 6, this year about the health hazards of pesticide sprays. But the government did not give any answer to that. According to the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa 7,50,000 cases of pesticide poisoning, half of them in the Third World occurred every year. This alarming number is atributed to the increasing number of chemicals and their use without testing their toxic properties. Over 40,000 untested chemicals are dumped in the third world by the multinationals, a large number of them being banned in their own countries. According to United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) about 22,000 people die every year in the developing countries due to the use of pesticides discarded in the west.

In India, the use of pesticides have risen from 2000 tons a year in the 1950s to about 72,000 tons in 1983-84. India contributes 1/3 of the pesticides poisioning cases in the Third World. Cases of Cancer, stunted growth, deformities, blindness, hepatic disorders, and abnormalities in the nervous system have been indentified among the farm labourers by the ITRC, Lucknow.

The WHO identified a number of agro-chemicals as highly toxic, like DDT, BHC, Methyl Parathion, Heptachlor, Lindane, etc. These have been banned in USA, UK and other western countries. But the government of India permits them to be dumped in India. 8000 tons of DDT are sold in India only. BHC which is 2 1/2 times more toxic than DDT is sold 33,000 tons a year, Methlye Parathion which is 20 times more toxic than DDT is sold to the tune of 3000 tons annually. According to both WHO and UNEP the level of DDT accumulated in the body tissue of an average Indian is highest in the world. More than 30 per cent of Indian daily food samples tested by WHO exceeded the tolerance limit prescribed by it.

India Pays 350 Million Dollars a Year as Royalty

In a recent conference in West Berlin on technology transfer and investment under the programme of Industrial Cooperation between India and the EEC countries, it was revealed that India pays 350 million dollars annually to the western countries for transfer of technologies to India. This is a 6 fold increase in the last 4 years. According to a study made by the National Council of Applied Econcmic Research (NCAER) and the Indian Council for Research, India made 220 collaborations with 170 firms after it signed an agreement with the EEC in 1981 for Chemical and Economic Cooperation. The EEC participants recognised the need for "Assistance" to India in providing information and expertise in technology transfer to India. And, we have seen the information and expertise of the Indian experts in the case of Union Carbide.

Multinationals in Drug Industry

The multinationals control about 78 per cent of the drug production in India even after 37 years of independence, 16 per cent of the production is in the hands of the Indian private sector — again the monopolists controlling it. Only 6 per cent of the drugs are produced in the public sector. The Research and Development (R & D) here makes only priliminary screening of different microbial strains from the Indian soil for production of life saving antibiotics. They are then shipped to the parent companies abroad, products and technologies developed and then sold back to us at exhorbitant price — 5 to 6 times higher than that in the European countries, and the prices are rising 4 times as fast as the GNP in many third world countries. Although the govt's policy is to make the public sector play a commanding role, even the two big public sector drug units, viz, Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (IDPL) ann Hindustan Antibiotics Ltd., (HAL) are mostly dependent on imported technology and imported strains for their production of antibiotics, whereas we can very efficiently strengthen our own R&D in close liaison with the national laboratories and the universities, achieve self sufficiency and also drastically reduce the prices of drugs for the access of the teeming millions. India was one of the pioneers in the quest for specific knowledge and developed various indigenous medicines. Dr P. C. Ray and S.S. Sokhey were pioneers for their efforts to develop such medicines, serums, vaccines, pencillin, Streptomycin, Anti Leprotic Drugs, and above all the public sector. But the policy of wooing the multinationals by the govt. of India nipped the developing indigenous medicines and the process of indigenisation in bud, exposing the people to the throes of an international capitalist racketeering in drugs and pharmaceuticals. The motive of production being only profit, the needs of the people, the pattern of diseases in India, the problem of banned drugs and Research and Development have gone into oblivion. In a short span of 35 years the drug industry in India has recorded a "growth" of producing drugs worth Rs. 1200 crores from Rs. 10 crores in 1947. This is what the government boasts of. About 45,000 drug formulations are sold in India. But according to WHO and also the Hathi Committee, 80 per cent of the drugs are non-essential. A majority of the rest are banned in the parent countries of the multinationals as they have been found to produce dangerous toxic effects from causing cancer to teratogenic effects. Even though under pressure from the trade unions and other oaganisations, the govt. have formally banned some of these drugs, yet they are selling in the market. The current example is the Oestrogen-Progesteron combinations, causing teratogenic effects, i.e. formation of deformed babies. Obviously, the government could not withdraw the drugs under pressure from the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers in India (OPPI), an organisation of the multinationals. From various publications it is known that many of the commonly used drugs are banned. Apart from dumping their banned nrugs in India, these "renowned" multinationals produce large quantities of sub-standard medicines and through the Benami companies and put their own seal as manufacturers.

Pointing to these realities the Hathi Committee by a majority decision noted that the activities of the multinational drug firms in India are anti-national and had recommended for their nationalisation. The All India Chemical and Pharmecutical Employees Federation (AICAPEF) and the Federation of Medical Representatives' Association of India (FMRAI) have been consistently demanding for nationalisation of the multinationals. The National Seminar on Drugs and Indian People held at New Delhi in 1981 raised the same demand. But the government of India has been allowing further colloboration and import liberalisation to woo the multinationals causing great danger to the life and health of the Indian people.

The drug policy of the government declares that the multinationals engaged in the manufacture of formulations or bulk drugs involving "high technology' need not dilute their existing foreign equity. This leads to a dangerous postulation that India cannot be self reliant technologically and has to depend continuously for import of technology from the multinationals. The result is that the multinationals not only dictate their terms to the government but also function as a state in themselves. The govt. does not bother to have any machinery to prevent the entry of spurious, banned and substandard imports into the market. It is worthwhile to quote Justice Subramanyan Potty and Justice Padipuram of Kerala High Court here: "Between the lives of the citizens of this country on the one hand and the loss that may result to the manufacturers and sales on the other, the government has chosen to view the latter as of more concern".

Chemical Industry—A Part of Military Industrial Complex

The Bhopal holocaust has sounded the warning bell. It has very pertinently opened up a vista for the working class to probe into the activities of the imperialists in the chemical industry. The imperialists have virtually turned the chemical industry to a chemical warfare industry. The US imperialists are the worst offenders in this respect. The chemical industry there has become a part of their military industrial complex. Apart from racing for nuclear and space warfare, they are utilising the scientists to prepare chemicals, neurotic gases and bacterials capable of killing millions in a more insidious way by spreading mortal epedemics without causing the public shock of a nuclear explosion. Not only against human beings, they are developing the culture of chemicals, bacteria and microscopic fungi capable of exterminating cattle and other animals in human service and for destroying crops in large scale when more than half a billion people in the third world are suffering from hunger. Apart from their immediate genocidal effect it is impossible to foresee their long term ecological, medical and social consequences. Vietnam, especially the Southern Vietnam was the worst victim of the US imperialist's chemical and bacteriological warfare. More than 20 years have elapsed, yet the effects of the chemical and bacteriological devastations are persisting on man and ecology there. Phosgene was first used by the Germans in the First World War, then by USA and Germany in the Second World War. Thereafter the USA has held the reins. From 1978 to 1984 the US have increased their funds from 111 million dollars to 1400 million dollars for the development of such chemicals and bacterials. It is the largest arsenal of chemical weapons in the world. It has stockpiled 150,000 tons of chemical weapons at its storage facilities in USA, Japan, Europe and the Pacific Islands. The US army apart from having 90 types of these weapons are now concentrating to make Binary weapons which make it considerable more difficult for other countries to determine their chemical armaments. The basic Binary materials are produced practically by all modern chemical industries as intermediary product for cosmetics, pharmaceuticals insecticides, pesticides, etc. It is thus esay to draw large quantities of the basic materials from the traditional chemical industry and then combine them to form explosives. The Binary technology thus makes it possible to camouflage the preparations for active chemical war.

The harrowing taste of Bhopal is a foretaste of the destiny, a catastrophe in store of a chemical warfare. Press reports pointed out that 50 to 60 chemical arms experts from USA, West Germany, Britain and Canada have arrived at Bhopal under the guise of relief organisations. It has also been reported that they are digging up the records of the gas victims and that the Bhopal gas holocaust has provided an opportunity for the imperialist countries for evaluating the MIC's potential as an agent for chemical warfare.

Press reports have also revealed that the Union Carbide Research Centre at Bhopal has been synthesising and field testing new chemicals for the last six years and supplying the date to the parent company in USA. This has been going on without being screened by the high level screening committee of the scientists under the Defence Ministry. It has also been reported that projects of the multinationals escape the screening nets. Further, it has been pointed out that the datas supplied to USA are not just for peaceful applications, but for biological warfare also. Apart from this, Dr Sushil Kumar Mukhopadhya, former Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University has asserted that the gas leaked was Phosgene and not MIC. It was deliberately passed off as MIC as international regulations prohibited the storage of Phosgene. Now it has been reported that the Union Carbide has further proposed for production of both the killer gases Phosgene and MIC much beyond their captive requirement for merchandising, as under the relevant provisions governing the chemical industries, the end product manufacturers need not necessarily go in for industrial license approval for manufacturing the raw materials.

It is worthwhile to analyse the attitude and objective of USA as markedly different from that of the

USSR in respect of chemical arms race also. As back as in 1925 the Geneva protocol outlawed the use of chemical weapons. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have been making consistent efforts for banning and elimination of chemical weapons. But in the Multilateral Chemical Weapon Talks within the frame work of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, the US presented an alternative proposal which only revealed its adamant determination to accelerate its chemical warfare programme. The system of verification which they have proposed provides for free acess to any industrial plant regardless of whether it is related to the production or storing of chemical weapons or not. Furthermore, it wants it to be applied only to the govt. owned or govt. controlled enterprises. Since the Americal Chemical Corporations are private companies, the proposal applies only to Soviet Union and other socialist countries while the production of chemical weapons in America can go on without any control. The US proposal also stipulates clearly that failing agreement on such terms they will take measures to produce advanced chemical weapons.

Conspiracies of US Imperialism

With all the exercises done at Bhopal, the real things are yet to come out. Of course a judical enquiry has been installed. But a pertinent question arises as to whether it was an accident or a deliberate test of the effects of the chemical agent; for the first time Bhopal is providing an opportunity for evaluating MIC's potential as an agent for chemical attack. The conspiracies of imperialism in India have been open since long from Assam to Punjab leading to the assassination of Indira Gandhi. But still the government of India refuses to point to these imperialist conspiracies headed by the USA. Despite the murder of the Prime Minister and despite the Bhopal holocaust the government is afraid to anger the USA and is anxious that the Indo-US relations are not jeopardised by the Bhopal episode. The bourgeois-landlord government cannot in fact afford to have the wrath of US imperialism. It has to be the task of the working class to unite the people and wage a struggle against the policies of the government and expose the role of imperialism. All trade unions must unite to protect the unity of the people and sovereignty of the country. CITU has demanded take over of all assets of Union Carbide. CPI(M) has also raised the demand. All CITU unions and other trade unions, mass organisations and political parties must raise their voice unitedly against the depredations by the multinationals and the policy of the govt. and demand policies of planning with a view to independent development of national economy in full freedom from foreign influence and dependence on the World Bank, IMF and multinationals. Internal resources must be raised by better management of the public sector with workers participation on equal footing in the management of industries, and above all, the monopoly concerns — foreign and Indian must be nationalised. Along with this it has also to be noted that the working class in Europe and the socialist countries, drawing all sections of the people, have been waging massive struggle against the war pursuit by the imperialists headed by USA in chemical and biological warfare also. It is high time that the trade unions in India must wake up to the realities and launch unremitting struggles against the imperialist machinations.

CITU Condemns Violation of Safety Rules

M.K. Pandhe Secretary CITU has issued the following Statement to the press on December 5:

The ghastly tragedy in Bhopal on 3rd December which has shocked the entire country was due to the clear violation of the safety rules by the management of Union Carbide. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns this manslaughter by the multinational company which deserves stringent punishment to those responsible for this unprecedented loss of life.

According to the telephonic message received by the CITU from Bhopal this morning the actual number of persons died has exceeded five thousands and many more are likely to succumb to the lethal gas.

The M.P. Government failed to act immediately on the situation. Instead of quickly shifting the people to far away places of safety by using all available transport in the city the Government was satisfied with loudspeaker announcement. Many people died on the way as they were running hear and there not knowing where to go. The action of the Government in arresting leading management personnel was only meant to save them from the public wrath.

The order of the M.P. Government to close down only Bhopal unit is not a deterrent punishment. In any case the factory cannot start production immediately. It is reported that the management was using toxic chemicals which were banned for use in Western countries. The M.P. Government failed to take action against this violation even though loss of human life was reported earlier also. The theory of sabotage is put forth by some interested parties only to protect the guilty management.

The so called relief operations are only symbolic and do not meet the requirements at all. Thousands of people have been rendered destitute and are starving but the M.P. Government has failed to provide necessities of life to them. It is necessary to give immediate relief to all the affected persons irrespective of the cost involved.

The CITU demands that the Government of India should immediately take over all the assets of the Union Carbide in India without compensation, arrange adequate relief and financial assistance to all the persons affected by the accident and take stringent action against all the guilty persons.

The report of the judicial enquiry may take time and the multinational company may use its financial power to supress the evidence. The CITU therefore demands of the Government of India to act immediately against the multinational company so that such serious accidents are not repeated in future.

Protest Demonstrations Against Union Carbide

CITU, SFI, DYFI and CPI (M) and other trade unions organised protest demonstrations at several parts of the country against the Union Carbide. Demonstrations were held by workers in other parts of the world also. Following are the reports:

Bombay

On December 14, amidst hectic election campaign the people of South Bombay witnessed a big procession of slogan shouting workers, students, youth, college teachers and women with CITU banners through the biggest commercial centres of Charni Road demanding noose to the bosses of the multinational Union Carbide and their Indian stooges responsible for the Bhopal holocaust. The demonstration was jointly organised by CITU, SFI, DYFI and CPI (M). The morcha marched to the office of the company and shouted slogans, "Arrest and Try the American Culprits", "Multinationals Pack off", "American Imperialism Murdabad", "Confiscate Union Carbide Assests", "Nationalise Multinationals in India", etc. The demonstrators also demanded payment of adequate compensation to the dependants of the dead and the affected people and their proper rehabilitation.

The Government, true to its class character, immediately released the state machineries to stand as a watch dog to protect the interests of the multinationals. While almost an equal number of policemen marched along with the demonstrators, they put three lines of barricades including women police at the entrance of the premises of Union Carbide. Scores of police trucks and vans with armed officers took positions near the entrance. Besides, plain clothed policemen were stationed all around. However, the demonstrators remained peaceful and unprovoked. The rally was addressed by Prabhakar Sanzgiri, General Secretary, Yaswant Kohli, Vice-President and P.R. Krishnan, Secretary of the Maharashtra State Committee of CITU and Mahendra Singh, President, Bombay Committee of DYFI.

Delhi

The West Delhi Committee of CITU organised a demonstration on December 5 at the Union Carbide godown in Kirtinagar industrial area. The demonstration was addressed by S.B. Bharadwaj and Puran Chand, the State CITU leaders. A memorandum was submitted to the manager of ths godown demanding removal of the dangerous chemicals from the godown and punishment to the guilty officers responsible for the Bhopal gas leak.

The same day, SFI and DYFI held an angry demonstration before the office of the multinational. The demonstration demanded shifting of the plant to a safer area outside the city precincts of Bhopal, stringent punishment to the guilty officers, payment of compensation to the victims from the assets of the company and its immediate nationalisation. SFI and DYFI further demanded of the Government to curb the predatory policies of the multinationals which are syphoning out crores of rupees from India in complete disregard to the health and lives of the people.

Bhopal

Over 500 slum dwellers close to the Union Carbide marched from their colonies to the residence of Arjun Singh, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh at Bhopal on Decemer 6 in protest against the inadequate relief provided to them. It was reported that more than 4,000 people still living were very seriously affected by the gas leakage which made them permanently incapacitated. It was alleged that hardly any relief was provided to them and a large number of them had to go without food for the past four days.

W. Bengal

A massive rally was organised jointly by eight left organisations of the students and the youth on December 13 in front of the United States Information Service, Calcutta. The rally was presided over by Amar Bhattacharjee of DYFI. The demonstrators accused the authorities of the Madhya Pradesh and the Central Governments and the management of Union Carbide for their utter negligence, and violation of the safety measures due to which the holocaust was caused killing and maiming thousands at Bhopal. They also denounced the US imperialism for its policy of industrial colonialisation and treating the people of India and the third world as guineapigs. The angry demonstrators burnt an effigy of Ronald Reagan before the Information Centre. The rally adopted a resolution condemning the activities of the multinationals and compared the Bhopal holocaust with the chemical and biological warfare carried out by the US imperialists at Vietnam. The resolution also condemned the policy of the Government of India for wooing the multinationals to dump their discarded technologies in India with substandard safety systems. It castigated the Government for allowing the US multinational to produce the same Phosgene gas which was used to kill human beings by the imperialists in the First World War and which they cannot produce in their own country. The resolution demanded nationalisation of all multinationals including the Union Carbide.

The W. Bengal State Committee of CITU while condemning the Government of India for giving permission to the US multinational for manufacturing such poisonous gas, demanded take over of the company and full compensation to all the affected people. The CITU union of the Calcutta establishment of the company, the 12th July Committee and the artists, journalists and litteraturers also raised same

demand. Workers of several research institutions also held demonstration before the Union Carbide office on December 14. The Civil Audit & Accounts Offices Association, W. Bengal also adopted a resolution in this respect.

Tamilnadu

The faculty, staff and students of the Madras Institute of Development Studies in a resolution strongly condemned the management of Union Carbide for its criminal negligence. The resolution pointed out that it was clear that both the Union Carbide as well as the Governments of India and Madhya Pradesh had prior knowledge of the dangers presented by the conditions at the plant and that despite this knowledge the events of December 3 could not be prevented, emphasised the responsibilities on them for their criminal negligence. The resolution also condemned the blatant instance of the double standards of safety that the multinationals adopt. It demanded that the proceedings of the Commission of Enquiry be held in public and the report be made public without delay. The resolution further pointed out that the national Governments of the third world are often found to not only condone the double standards of the multinationals but also are indifferent to react to the fact that drugs, chemicals, pesticides and other hazardous products banned in the advanced capitalist countries are advocated for use in the third world countries. The national Governments sometimes actively collaborate with the commercial profiteering interests of the multinationals. It is the duty of the duly elected Governments to protect the fundamental right of life of the people. The resolution demanded of the Government of India to immediately undertake the review of safety arrangements in all the potentially hazardous plants and processes in the country. It further called for coordinated actions by the environmentalists in the country and abroad as well as the political parties and the trade unions in this respect.

DEMONSTRATIONS ABROAD

A big rally was organised by the All People's Congress at New York before the Union Carbide's office on December 19 in which people of the Indian community also joined. The demonstrators shouted slogans, "Union Carbide Guilty of Murders," "Jail Warren Anderson," "Pay Reparation, "Union Carbide, Out of India", "Safety Yes, Profits No". In a resolution they charged the Union Carbide for the mass murders and destruction and demanded prosecution and jail for Warren Anderson, the Chief and other officials for their criminal negligence in maintaining safety for the Bhopal plant. The resolution said that the industrial holocaust was brought about due to greed of profits; the Union Carbide like all powerful American multinational corporations go to developing countries for cheap labour to reap huge profits.

Another mass demonstration was organised on December 7 before the Union Carbide corporate head quarters at Danbury by the Connecticut college students under the banner of the Democratic Socialists for Citizens' Action. The demonstrators shouted slogans, "Stop Toxic War", "Union Carbide Pollutes the World." Aulie Dorf a spokeswoman of the demonstrators said that they want to make sure that the Union Carbide reimburses the same amount to the Indian victims as they would have done had this case happened in America. She said that more demonstrations were planned to protest against the disregard by the multinationals for the workers and the people of the third world countries.

Following the Bhopal tragedy, anxiety swept through a number of small towns nestled around the five chemical plants in the West Virginia Valley of Institute, where Union Carbide has the MIC plant, the only such plant in U.S.A. A town meeting at the Institute attended by about 2000 people and workers, demanded of the managements to immediately take better safety measures.

Violent protest actions occurred at Husum, a West German town on December 6, at the branch office of Union Carbide. Molotov cocktails were tossed at the office and writings like "Pigs" and "Poisoners" were stamped on the walls of the building. The Union Carbide plant at Hasum manufactures containers for storage of gases like Oxygen, Nitrogen, Argon etc. The environmentalist Greens Party of W. Germany has demanded of the Government a freeze on all productions of chemicals containing MIC, until the exact reasons of the catastrophe in India were totally explained. In a statement, the Greens Party severely condemned the multinationals for their profit orriented chemical business.

MESSAGE FROM ABROAD AND REPLIES

From All China Federation of Trade Unions

Shocked to learn Bhopal Pesticides Factory gas leaking causing great damage to life and health of workers and people there. We express deep sympathy and sincere solicitude for you and through you to all victims and their family members.

Reply

18th December, 1984

The Secretary
All China Federation of Trade Unions,
BEIJING-CHINA

Dear Comrade,

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your telegramme expressing deep sympathy to all the victims of the Bhopal Pesticide Factory gas leakage. This was the worst ever holocaust in history created by an U.S. multinational violating all standards of safety in industry and environment. The activities of the multinationals rightly deserve condemnation by international trade unions.

Looking forward for further strengthening the fraternal bond between our two organisations,

With Greetings,

Yours Fraternally,
P.K. GANGULY
Secretary

From Michele Magno-International Department, CGIL, Rome

10th Dec. 1984

Dear Brothers, Italian workers and people have been deeply saddened with immense and cruel disaster that has victimised Bhopal workers and inhabitants with hundreds of dead and thousands of others intoxicated by poison from local Union Carbide Factory. Through your organisation express deepest sympathy. In addition to sorrow we feel indignation for irresponsibility of those multinational corporations which, as was the case for the Swiss Roche in Italian city of Seveso, are pursuing their own interests while neglecting the safety of human beings and the environment.

We are committed to struggle for strict national and international controls to defend safety of mankind and their environment. With fraternal greetings.

Reply

19th December, 1984

Com. Michele Magno
International Department,
C.G.I.L., C-70, Rome,
ITALY

Dear Comrade,

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your telegramme expressing deepest sympathy for the victims of the Bhopal disaster and indignation over the irresponsibility of the multinational Union Carbide in maintaining safety in industry and environment. Both your country, by the Swiss Roche and ours, by the U.S. Union Carbide have now experienced the devastating results of violation of safety standards by the multinationals. We fully endorse your view that the multinationals are only pursuing their own interests while neglecting the safety of human beings and environment. The activities of the multinationals deserve to be condemned universally. We also opine with you that we are committed to struggle for strict national and international controls to defend safety of mankind and their environment. In India we are trying our best to wage united struggles against the depredations by the multinationals and their infiltration. We look forward for further strengthening the fraternal bond between our two organisations and contribute to the international struggles by the trade unions against the multinationals — the tentacles of imperialism and against the danger of a nuclear war created by imperialism headed by USA.

With Greetings,

Yours Fraternally,
P.K. GANGULY
Secretary

CITU Memorandum on Workmen of Inland Water Ways

THE Inland Transport Committee (ILO) is going to consider the question of the working and social conditions of the boatmen in domestic and International Inland Navigation in its 11th Session to be held at Geneva in January 1985. The CITU has submitted a memorandum when its views were elicited by the Government of India in terms of ILO procedure.

The CITU has pointed out that before the railway system was introduced in India, Inland Navigation had played a dominant role in development of trade and commerce. In 1876-77, 366,000 country boats were registered at Culcutta, Hoohgly and Patna. By 1976-77 there were 234 self propelled Cargo boats, 857 passenger boats and over 10,000 other boats registered with the authorities. Data about the number of passengers, Cargo livestock carried by the Inland Water Ways is not there. But it is noticed that in the North Eastern region the freight carried by Inland Water Transport was sharply reduced from 717,000 tonnes in 1951 to 31,000 tonnes in 1971, which later on increased to 206,000 tonnes in 1979. Although the cost of carriage of freight by the Inland Water Ways is the cheepest, no attention has been paid by the Government to develop it. In the Ferry Services there is a system of allotment on yearly tenders which reduces the workmen to the status of contract labour and the CITU has demanded that the system of yearly tenders should be given up and socially owned enterprises should be formed to run the Ferry Services.

The CITU has pointed out that there is no facility for training in Inland Navigation in our country. The Government has already approached the ILO for setting up one training centre in India, which the CITU has supported. The CITU has pointed out that the Hours of Work of the workmen in Inland Navigation have not been properly fixed. It has been pointed out that in September 1984 the CITU has already lodged a complaint that there is no national law of 8 hours duty to the workmen in the Inland Water Transport. It has been pointed out that the duties of the workmen in Inland Water Transport Services barring those who are engaged in Ferry Services are of a nature which demands their absence from their Head quarter for 2 to 10 days. Hence, while their entire period has to be treated as duty, the system of payment should be so devised, so that overtime allowance is paid on a rational basis. The quarters provided to such workmen in the boats are not proper and hygeinic. The CITU pointed out that the Government of India has not given effect to recommendation No. 8 concerning Hours of Work (Inland Navigation) Recommendation of 1920. It has demanded early enactment of duty hours. The CITU has also demanded that steps should be taken to determine a system of payment covering all the peculiarities of the trade and also ensure implementation of social security legislations.

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON

Productivity and Trade Unions

A national workshop on Productivity and Trade Unions was held at Panaji, Goa from December 4 to 6. The workshop was organised by the National Productivity Council (NPC) in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation and the Ministry of Labour, Government of India. Office bearers and, or members of the Central Executive Committees of the Central Trade Union organisations were invited to participate in the workshop.

CITU was represented by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary. Other trade unions which were represented were INTUC, AITUC, HMS, BMS and NLO. The Resource Persons who participated in the deliberations included A.N. Sexena, Director General, N.P.C.; D.P. Upadhya, Director, N.P.C.; R.S. Gupta, Dy. Director General, N.P.C.; R.N. Tiwari of National Labour Institute; Jagdish Joshi, Director, Ministry of Labour and S. Sankar Narayanan, Director, ILO. P.K. Ganguly and the representatives of INTUC, HMS, BMS and NLO chaired one session each.

The objective of the workshop was to reinforce the relevance of increasing productivity for economic development and provide a forum for trade union leaders to exchange views based on experiences. The themes of discussion were productivity and its linkage with economic development, the impact of technology, human resource development — all with a view to sharing the gains of productivity so as to generate more employment, control the price line and alleviate poverty.

The sum and substance of the deliberations of the resource persons were that, it is very essential to ensure increase in productivity for raising the standard of living of the workers, as increased productivity leads to generation of more employment and control the price lines. New and higher technology was an essential factor in this respect which would ensure production of quality goods also. The entire process however would depend on the cooperation of the workers and success of the scheme of workers' participation in management which the Government has formulated. While explaining the "gains" of productivity, the resource persons repeatedly drew examples from the advanced capitalist countries like USA, Japan, U.K. and West Germany and pleaded for carrying the message to the grass root level of the workers so that the economic development goes on at a quick space in India and the country achieves self sufficiency within a short period as per the objectives of the Seventh Plan. They advocated technological collaboration with those advanced countries in this respect.

The representatives of all the trade unions in one voice rejected the arguments of the resource persons. They said that trade unions were not against increased productions and productivity, but while productivity was rising, along with this poverty, unemployment and prices were also rising. Thus alleviation of poverty remained a far cry.

Dissecting the points one by one, P.K. Ganguly emphasised that there has to be agreed norms of productions and productivity with the trade unions and it must not be imposed. But the experience of the workers is otherwise. In the name of productivity higher work loads are imposed. He stressed the importance for the basic approach in this respect, i.e. recognition of the right to collective bargaining. But the Government of India has refused to ratify the two vital Conventions of ILO, viz, Right to Collective Bargaining and Right to From Association and Freedom of Association. This has led to attacks on trade union rights and imposition of agreements. Regarding equitable sharing of the gains of productivity he said that it has remained a myth. Increased productivity is being utilised only to increase the profits of the monopolists. He quoted that in one year only from 1981-82 to 1982-83 the top ten monopolists have increased their assets by Rs. 2000 crores. On the other side, prices had increased by 60.8 per cent during the last four years. He quoted the datas to show that unemployment also has been rising by leaps and bounds. Lockouts and closures are also on the increase, while 98 per cent of the reasons of industrial sickness are due to corruption, inefficiency etc on the part of the managements. Installed capacities of the plants are not utilised. The poverty alleviation programme has became a mockery with the poor peasantry and agricultural workers being fleeced mercilessly. Pointing to the question of "new and higher" technology, he said that the Government accepts the discarded technology from the advanced capitalist countries and that too without the proper know-how and expertise and substandard safety systems. He cited the glaring example of the Bhopal holocaust. On workers' participation he said that the Government refused to accept the constructive proposals of CITU and some other trade unions for participation of workers on an equal footing with the result that the scheme has failed to create enthusiasm among the workers and it is being utilised again to impose higher work loads on the workers. In the advanced capitalist countries also along with productivity unemployment and prices were also rising. He reiterated that while workers are not against productivity, the Government has to change its anti-labour policies if it really wants that gains of productivity should be equally shared by the workers. Pronouncements have to be translated into actual practice.

The workshop thereafter turned into a brisk

(*Contd. on page 15*)

The AIRF Annual Convention

THE 58th Annual Convention of the All India Railwaymen's Federation was held at Puri from 10th to 13th December, 1984. Madhu Dandavate, M.P., former Railway Minister in the Janata Government inaugurated the Convention. His characterisation of AIRF as a "Militant Organisation with Constructive approach" and his call for voting out the present anti-labour and anti-people Government was greeted with cheers in the largely attended inaugural session. While the H.M.S. General Secretary, Brijmohan Toofan and AITUC representative addressed the session, messages of greetings were sent by many national and international Trade Union Centres. Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU in his message stated "Despite tremendous sacrifice ... the railwaymen who are made targets of attack in brutal repression by Government, have not been able to secure justice." Recalling the example of the Port and Dock workers' achievements he pointed out the tremendous importance of a most broad based unity in an industry and expressed hope that obstacles in the way of such unity on the railways will be removed in order to ensure that the workers may secure justice. The session was also addressed by a leader of the Japanese Railway Union. A large procession paraded the streets before the inaugural session.

The General Secretary's Report placed at the delegate session, attended by a little over 700 delegates and a large number of visitors, highlighted the serious attack on democracy in our country, unprecedented price rise and wage erosion, growth of unemployment and deteriorating law and order situation, etc. and declared support to the international trade unions' efforts for peace and disarmament. The report gave a detailed account of the totally negative attitude of the Government and the railway authorities in regard to grievances and demands of railwaymen.

Most of the delegates, including leaders of the Zonal Railways, who took part in the discussion on the report, however, complained of a lack of a sense of direction in the report and were highly critical about the failure of the organisation to pursue an adequately action oriented policy and programme to resist the growing offensive of the Government and the railway authorities and demanded a militant programme. This discussion was initiated by the General Secretary of the Eastern Railwaymen's Union.

Apart from a resolution on charter of demand, the convention adopted resolutions on price rise, on Bhopal tragedy, on the illegal utilisation of railway resources by the Railway Minister for personal political gains, on price rise and against dark forces of communalism and regionalism backed by foreign vested interests.

The main resolution on charter of demand warned the Government, that the patience of the Railwaymen had reached its limits and that its refusal to fulfil the legitimate demands, ignoring the organised labour and disrupting the trade union movement in the railways would not be tolerated by railwaymen. The resolution declared that a Protest Day would be observed all over India on 29th January 1985 and called for a broad based unity of all Central Government employees to compel the Government to concede the rightful demands of railwaymen and other Central Government Employees.

While the resolutions were in general hailed by the delegates doubts born out of past experience were however in the minds of many as to how far these resolutions will determine the course that would actually be followed.

Eastern Railway Workers Demonstrate

The Eastern Railwaymen's Union held demonstration on 20th December '84 in front of all Divisional offices, workshops and the Zonal Head quarters. This programme was the last in a series which was decided upon as preparatory to broader united struggle against growing offensive of the Government. The General Secretary of the Union Sujit Roy addressed large gatherings at the Eastern Railway Head Quarters and Kancharapara Workshop and exposed the anti-labour policies of the Government and the railway authorities. He reprimanded the Railway minister for gross misuse of railway resources for his own political gains. While emphasising the need for united struggle to resist the anti-labour policies of the Government, he called upon the railwaymen to dfeat the anti-labour forces in the coming election.

NCCR Demonstration on 17th December

On 17th December '84, railwaymen all over India demonstrated before the Divisional offices of the railways at the call of the National Campaign Committee of Railwaymen, to press important demands of Railwaymen such as payment of another instalment of Interim Relief and D.A. arrears, reduction of duty hours, vacation of all victimisations, withdrawal of ban on recruitment etc.

The programme was preceded by a fortnight long intensive campaign in course of which meetings, rallies etc. were held at important railway centres. Workshops, Loco Sheds, C & W Depots etc. The demonstration on 17th marked the culmination of the programme.

Alipurduar junction, N. F. Railway, witnessed a huge demonstration on the day. Initially the Divisional authorities declined to have discussion with the leaders, but in the face of the firmness of the huge mass of workers, they had to agree to hold discussion on their demands. After the demonstration, a large procession paraded the streets of the junction and held a meeting where the workers took a vow to defeat the anti-labour forces in the election. But later the authorities have reportedly decided to take reprisal on the workers by penal transfer of a divisional leader to a distant station.

Reports have also been received of impressive demonstrations in front of Howrah and Sealdah Divisional offices of Eastern Railway. Bilsapur Divisional office of South Eastern Railway and Vijayawada Divisional office of South Central Railway.

RAILWAYMEN ABROAD

British Railwaymen Resist Job Cut

"Almost everyday we hear of more plans to cut jobs. Latest information from BR (British Railways) shows that railway staff will be cut from 155,423 at the end of 1983 to 141,715 by March '87 and down to 137,317 by March 1990". In these words the Transport Review, organ of the U.K. National Union of Railwaymen describe the situation in British Railways. The Review adds that closure of depot yards is also planned.

But the British Railway Workers are not taking it lying down. The two major organisations of railwaymen, the National Union and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) have come together to resist this offensive. "We cannot stand on the sideline and merely observe the decimation of our industry and the further slashing of jobs" — declared the Rail Unions' Federation and demanded an urgent meeting with the British Rail Board. "If the BRB do not accept our proposition" the Review declared "We should instruct all members...to adopt a policy of non cooperation" and also called for a strike in all London Area Managers' Districts. The British rail workers have finally succeded in forcing a negotiation. "They are now listening to what we say and making an effort to respond".

The unions have suspended their strike decision to conduct negotiations, but they have made it abundantly clear that it does not mean that they have sacked off or abandoned their campaign.

"The fundamental challenge are still there and must be faced", they declare. "If our talks fail, we must be ready and while to take positive industrial actions to secure our objective. The battle has still to be won".

The Indian railwaymen threatened by the grim respect of installation of 3rd, 4th and 5th generation computers and other job willing devices, have a lesson to learn from their British comrades.

Bihar State CITU Meeting

A meeting of the Bihar State Committee of CITU held at Patna on 24-25 November, 1984 demanded immediate reopening of Rohtas Industries, where more than 20,000 workers have been rendered jobless due to lock out declared by the Dalmia management. The meeting condemned the attitude of the Government of Bihar which was actually helping the Dalmia management in their anti-working class policies of suppressing the legitimate struggle of the Dalmia workers. The meeting condemned the police firing on Dalmia workers on October 20, 1984 and demanded nationalisation of Rohtas industries by the Govt. without any delay.

Yogeshwar Gope President of the CITU State Committee presided over the meeting. Chandi Prasad, General Secretary of the State Committee in his report of activities referred to the struggles of workers in coal, heavy engineering, Dalmia Nagar and of the State Govt. employees. In his report he mentioned about the new situation created in the country after the assassination of Indira Gandhi and called upon the CITU unions to campaign against the imperialist agencies who have been responsible for the assassination.

M K Pandhe, Secretary, CITU explained at length the decisions of the General Council of the CITU held at Jaipur and emphasised the need for implementing the task laid down by the CITU. Referring to the activities in the states he suggested measures to strengthen the movement in Coal, Steel, HSCL and of Dalmia Nagar workers. During the discussion on the General Secretary's report the members pointed out the local problems they have been facing and the efforts made by the CITU to defend the Sikh workers against the attacks by the anti-social element during the recent riots. Many representatives pointed out that several well-known INTUC leaders were involved in the attacks on the Sikhs.

The meeting decided to launch a State wide movement in support of the Dalmia Nagar workers' struggle and organise a demonstration before the Assembly after the elections.

(*Contd. from page 13*)

debate. All the trade union representatives vociferously tuned with P.K. Ganguly's deliberations. The Government officials were at the receiving end and had to admit with the facts and figures. S. Sankar Naryanan of ILO had proposed a resolution making commitments on the Government's sermons. But the proposal was dropped. Similarly, the Government wanted to incorporate a point that traditional collective bargaining should be replaced by productivity agreements. This point also had to be dropped. On insistence of the trade unions the Director of NPC noted down the conclusions and read them out. The trade unions made it clear that in case there is change in the final conclusions, they would be free to reject them.

LIC Management Adamant Against Settlement

THE negotiation on the charter of demands submitted by the LIC unions which commenced at New Delhi on November 26, remained in conclusive due to the adamancy on the part of the management. In a written submission made to the management's unreasonable offers, the AIIEA said that the offers made were totally unacceptable.

The scales offered, needed improvements including the minimum and maximum, otherwise, the quantum of increase would be paltry. The proposal to withdraw Functional Allowance was pernicious, to say the least. It was withdrawal of a long standing benefit and further a reduction of whatever wage rise was offered in earlier two rounds to the concerned employees. Withdrawal of Special Pay was in the same manner pernicious. The Allowance that was now being proposed in lieu of Special Pay would end in depressing the benefit and pegging it to a low level; the benefit that continued to accrue following rise in D.A. would disappear. The important demand of retention of stagnation increments for all cadres as at present had been totally ignored. Protection of D.A. at 408 points in the manner demanded had also not been conceded. So also ceiling on salary had not been removed. The distinction sought to be made against a section of employees occupying staff quarters in the matter of HRA was unacceptable. Not only that no distinction was ever in vogue in LIC, in recent settlement in comparable undertakings such distinctions had not been made. For occupying staff quarters, a group of employees were sought to be doubly punished. Proposal to date back the offer from April 1984 was no improvement at all. Unlike the previous occassions when in LIC settlement had been signed closely on the heels on the expiry of the previous one and in each case the terms and conditions taking effect from a date one year earlier, the proposed one would be after a lapse of long seven sterile years. During these seven years not only no benefit had been gtanted to the employees, but existing benefits had been mauled one after the other and employees were subjected to cuts of all kinds. The most unreasonable cut was, however the withdrawal of stagnation increments in the so-called promotional grades and dilution of existing provisions for others. The fact that promotions in LIC are few and far between and most employees retire in their respective grades, made it imperative to continue the existing provision of stagnation increments introduced 15 years ago. The contention of the management that no settlement could be signed, revealed its adamant attitude.

In view of the exceedingly good working result of the LIC in 1983-84, the AIIEA demanded settlement under I.D. Act without further delay.

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	August 1984	Sept 1984	Oct 1984
Andhra Pradesh			
Gudur	512	520	525
Guntur	632	647	653
Hyderabad	589	604	614
Assam			
Digboi	590	595	594
Doom Dooma	480	481	490
Labac	463	473	457
Mariani	506	510	511
Rangapara	513	525	536
Bihar			
Jamshedpur	538	538	538
Jharia	519	523	525
Kodarma	598	597	598
Monghyr	601	604	587
Noamundi	541	543	542
Gujarat			
Ahmedabad	575	575	579
Bhavanagar	583	588	590
Haryana			
Yamunanagar	591	581	584
J. & K.			
Srinagar	639	640	643
Karnataka			
Ammathi	591	590	598
Bangalore	644	647	650
Chikamaglur	590	587	594
Kolar G.F.	590	604	601
Kerala			
Alleppey	672	679	665
Alwaye	628	640	633
Mundakayam	588	595	582
Madhya Pradesh			
Balaghat	597	601	612
Bhopal	625	630	624
Gwalior	595	597	594
Indore	623	608	605
Maharashtra			
Bombay	610	609	615
Nagpur	605	605	606
Sholapur	611	620	622
Orissa			
Barbil	536	542	553
Sambalpur	622	622	606
Punjab			
Amritsar	578	578	591
Rajasthan			
Ajmer	580	577	586
Jaipur	610	608	608
Tamil Nadu			
Madras	571	573	584
Coimbatore	620	612	615
Coonoor	635	638	648
Madurai	615	612	625
U.P.			
Kanpur	557	559	569
Saharanpur	575	579	582
Varanasi	649	667	672
West Bengal			
Asansol	578	580	583
Calcutta	592	592	602
Darjeeling	478	484	487
Howrah	542	542	555
Jalpaiguri	479	486	489
Raniganj	525	523	521
Delhi Territory	602	608	608
Other Centres			
Berhampur ('49)	838	825	823
Cuttack ('49)	744	758	769
Jabalpur ('49)	763	764	773
Beawar ('51-52)	665	676	671
Tripura ('61)	540	531	534
H.P. ('65)	421	422	425
Goa ('66)	437	432	431
Bhilai ('66)	395	394	394
Bhilwara ('66)	341	339	339
Chhindwara ('66)	308	308	306
Kothagudem ('66)	375	378	383
Rourkela ('66)	387	387	393
All India ('60)	586	589	592

(Figure in bracket indicate base year)

SAIL Management Backs Out from Commitments

THOUGH more than two years have been passed after commencement of the implementation of the National Steel Wage Agreement, the SAIL management has clearly shown its lack of seriousness in implementing some of the provisions of the agreement. This is causing strong resentment among the steel workers all over the country. Unless the SAIL management changes its dilatory tactics it will have to face united movement of steel workers.

The casual approach of the SAIL management can be seen from the fact that during the year 1984 only two meetings of the National Joint Committee for Steel Industry have been held. In both the meetings the issues were only talked out without making any tangible progress regarding implementation of the agreement.

The managements all over the country in the Steel Industry agreed to work out a pension scheme by deducting 2 per cent of the total wages of the workers from their wages and making a matching contribution from the management. However no step has been taken so far even to go into the preliminary issues relating to the scheme. If the situation is allowed to continue there is no possibility of evolving the scheme during the next 19 months after which the existing agreement would be expiring. The trade unions have repeatedly raised this issue at the NJCS meeting but the management gave only evasive replies.

The Steel managements gave a solemn assurance to workers in clause 3.1.1. of the agreement that, "Between 25,000 to 30,000 houses shall be constructed during the period of agreement". However it has failed to supply to the trade unions even the break up of the house construction programme in each plant during the period of agreement. It should be noted here that in the last agreement the management failed to construct the committed housing targets with the result that several workers were left without any housing accommodation. The details of the scheme to give house building advance has yet to be worked out despite definite commitment given by the management.

The commitments of the Steel Management concerning contract labour have by and large remained unimplemented. The Steel Industry continues to employ contract labour in permanent and perennial nature of jobs and the number of contract labour in the industry continues to increase with passing of days. Except in Durgapur and IISCO where the West Bengal Government issued statutory notification declaring certain jobs as of permanent nature and directed the managements to abolish them, in other steel plants the conditions have not materially changed during the last two years. The unscrupulous contractors openly violate the labour laws with impunity but the Steel managements have failed to fulfil the commitments as principal employers. The conditions prevailing in steel stockyard are shocking and the workers are exploited in the most ruthless manner. The contract workers in Rourkela, Bhilai and Vishakhapatnam have conducted several struggles to ameliorate their conditions but the SAIL management allowed the contractors to victimise the leaders of contract workers instead of taking action against the contractors.

The provision of safety is a serious casualty in steel industry. The glaring example was witnessed in Vishakhapatnam when the Dock safety organisation charged the SAIL management for violation of safety rules. However no step has been taken by the management to improve the matters.

The Steel managements agreed to improve the facilities in the plant hospitals. There is no principle laid down for the number of beds in the hospital in proportion to the strength of the employees in the plant. The commitment of the management to implement the recommendations of the standardisation committee relating to hospital facilities within six months also remained only on paper.

The steel industry agreed to pay Rs. 12 as special incentive to all the workers in India. Yet in several plants the payment is linked with various incentive schemes prevailing in the plants while payment has not been made to some of the plants. The management is giving its own unilateral interpretation to the relevant clause of the agreement and violating spirit of the bipartite consultation.

The question of revising the old money tables in the existing incentive scheme is also being unnecessarily dragged due to the dilatory tactics adopted by the management. Though the present rate of incentive payment was fixed in 1970 there has been no revision in this rate despite signing of several agreements leading to increase in basic wage from Rs. 200 to 550. The management now wants to get a commitment from the workers for higher productivity as a precondition for improvement in the rate of incentive payment though the spirit of the agreement clearly states that at the existing level of output the money table should be pushed upwards. The agreement regarding plant level discussions have been farcical because local managements refuse to increase the quantum of money table, perhaps due to instructions from the corporate office.

A deep discontent is prevailing in the steel industry on the question of bonus. No worker in the industry is entitled to get minimum bonus due to the restriction by the Act that the payment will be made only upto a wage Rs. 750 per month. The ceiling of Rs. 1600 for entitlement of bonus has deprived thousands of workers from the payment of bonus. Some workers who were entitled to get bonus prior to the agreement have been deprived of the bonus payment since their salary crossed

Rs. 1600. The SAIL management agreed to discuss the matter in NJCS but no solution could be found to the issue. In some of the public sector undertakings the managements have agreed to pay the bonus over and above the legal provision. Even in steel industry TISCO management is paying bonus without any ceiling.

The Bhadravati Plant management is making frantic efforts to water down the agreement. Its representatives did not even attend the NJCS meeting to clarify the position in this regard. It is not clear whether the management will implement the report of the Anomaly Committee constituted by the NJCS because its representative failed to attend the meeting of the Anomaly Committee itself.

All these issues were raised in the NJCS meeting held on 8th and 9th of December 1984. M.K. Pandhe while speaking on the subject pointed out that the discontent among the workers was growing and demanded an early meeting of the NJCS to consider all these issues. The representatives of INTUC, AITUC and HMS also pointed that the non-implementation of the agreement was a serious matter and demanded that steps should be taken to implement it in full.

The Steel Workers Federation of India in its meeting to be held in January will review these developments and prepare a programme of joint movement in the Steel Industry to ensure full implementation of the agreement.

Violation of ILO Standards by SAIL

APART from non-implementation of the provisions of the National Steel Wage Agreement, the SAIL management has been violating the ILO standards on safety and social security also. In the 70 stockyards/dockyards under the Central Marketing Organisation (CMO) of SAIL, about 4500 workers are doing the job of permanent and perennial nature like loading, unloading, stacking and reloading. Again the equipments of the company, i.e. mobile cranes which are to be operated by the company's own workers are being hired out to the contractors, though the jobs are of permanent and perennial nature. These workers are treated as contract labourers and do not have any job security. They are thrown out of jobs without assigning any reasons. They are denied even the elementary medical treatment. Although these workers are working under extremely hazardous conditions endangering their lives the management of SAIL does not provide them safety gloves or other safety equipments and does not take any safety measures as required under the law.

The workers are not even paid the minimum wages as prescribed under the Minimum Wages Act. The management is thus violating the ILO convention No. 26 concerning wage fixing machinery. This premier public sector organisation in the country has been violating the obligations as the principal employer despite repeated representations made by the unions and the Federation.

The violation of safety rules by the management of SAIL has become frequent. But the Govt. of India has not taken any action in this regard with the result that the conditions continue to deteriorate day by day. The management is not even keeping records of accidents in the stockyards. Letters by the affiliated unions of the Federation reporting these accidents have remained even unacknowledged by the SAIL management. On the contrary the management has been taking vindictive actions against the workers and the office bearers of the recognised trade unions for expressing their voice against the non-compliance of the safety rules and lack of safety measures. Representations made to the government on the above violation of safety rules and social security measures by the management of SAIL have remained unattended to, although the government of India has ratified the concerned ILO Conventions.

In a memorandum submitted to the Director General, ILO, Geneva, on November 16, 1984, Steel Workers Federation of India has given the details of such violations alongwith the list of accidents and the list of workers and office bearers of the unions who have been victimised. The Federation has urged upon the ILO to register the complaint and enquire into the matter so that the government of India takes steps for proper implementation of the ratified conventions. It has further urged to ensure full observance of the safety rules in the stockyards/dockyards of CMO by SAIL management; ensure full payment of wages to the workers working in the stockyards/dockyards and regularise them. It has further urged for joint supervision by the representatives of the workers and the management alongwith labour administration of the government of India to ensure full implementation of the safety measures.

Trade Union School at Ghaziabad

A two day trade union school was organised jointly by the CITU Unions in Bharat Electronics and Central Electronics on 8th and 9th December, 1984 at Lala Lajpat Rai College, Sahibabad. Sixty-two activists from these two Public Sector Undertakings participated in the programme.

Six lectures were delivered in the programme on Wages and Wage policies, Consumer Price Index Numbers and the Calculation of DA, Payment of Bonus and the Task of the trade unions in public sector undertakings. M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU conducted the classes.

Delhi Cong(I) Bosses Conspire Against Public Sector for Selfish Gains

AT the instance of Delhi Congress(I) leaders including H.K.L. Bhagat an agitation was launched in Delhi against the public sector undertaking, the National Thermal Power Corporation. The agitation was launched during the election campaign and was meant to handover the management of Badarpur Thermal Power Station to the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking (DESU). Outwardly the INTUC groups were spearheading the agitation and the BMS union joined it in return for some personal gains.

It is a well known fact that the management of Badarpur Power Station was handed over to NTPC by the Government because of rampant corruption and nepotism prevalent in the DESU. The theft of power under DESU was a common affair.

The demand for handing it over to DESU was also supported by some senior officials of DESU who openly encouraged the agitation and extended all possible help to it. What is strange is that some officials of NTPC also had a hand behind it.

On 30th November a demonstration was organised before the Energy Ministry office and a call for tool down strike was given from 11th December, 1984 in support of the demand. The agitators included some of the workers' demands to confuse the workers.

The CITU explained the issues before the workers and pointed out how the agitation was misguided. It however fully supported the movement on pending issues of the workers and called upon all the workers to jointly fight to achieve these demands. The CITU campaign evoked good response from among the workers.

Meanwhile the Central Government complicated the matters by applying ESMA to the Badarpur Power Station. M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU in a statement to the press on 11th December strongly condemned the application of ESMA and demanded its withdrawal. He also demanded unconditional release of the 14 workers who were arrested on the day. The workers of the Power Station spontaneously stopped work in protest against the action of the Government. In view of the united protest of the workers the Government had to release the workers.

The CITU criticised the dilatory tactics adopted by the NTPC management in not settling the legitimate issues of the workers. The meeting of the joint Committee was delayed considerably which only added to the discontent of the workers. It also pointed out that the persons who spearheaded the recent agitation were always opposing every struggle of the workers of Badarpur at the behest of the management.

The NTPC management had to transfer the General Manager of Badarpur for his complicity in the agitation launched at the behest of DESU management and some Congress(I) leaders.

The top Cong(I) bosses in Delhi are frantically trying to get back the management of Badarpur Power Station so that it could be used as a hunting ground for corrupt practices. The CITU is opposing this campaign and an overwhelming majority of the workers in the plant have rallied behind the CITU in fighting against the machination of the Cong(I) bosses.

The CITU has appealed to all the Badarpur workers to strengthen the organisation so that the unsettled issues can be settled through the united movement of all the workers.

M.K. Pandhe Secretary Centre of Indian Trade Unions issued the following statement on December 11:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns the notification issued by the Union Government applying provisions of Essential Services Maintenance Act to the industrial dispute in Badarpur Thermal Power Station managed by National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC). The CITU further condemns the arrest of 14 workers in Badarpur Thermal Power Station and demands immediate release of all the arrested workers.

Some interested officials in NTPC in collaboration with DESU officials have encouraged agitation to hand over the Badarpur Power Station to the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking. The CITU has difference of opinion on this demand though it was prepared to jointly launch a common movement on legitimate grievances of the workers. Instead of taking action against officers who indulge in harming the cause of public sector the Government is resorting to repression on the workers.

The CITU appeals to all workers to condemn this application of ESMA for Badarpur Power Station till 31st January 1985 and demands immediate withdrawal of notification and release of all arrested workers.

The CITU also demands that the legitimate grievances of the workers should be settled through bilateral talks so that normalcy is restored in Badarpur Power Station without any further delay.

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* Labourers working in the field or in factories or in plantation or on road, get wages at enhanced rate.
* Small farmers have exemption of land revenue upto two standard acres.
* Small farmers have protection of law to establish share corppers' right on the land.
* Tribesmen have their mother tongue recognised as the second language of the state.
* Candidates belonging to Tribal Communities have their quota in Government service ensured.
* Students have facilities of free education upto Class XII standard.
* School children get mid-day meals for those reading in classes I to V.
* Students belonging to scheduled caste communities have enhanced rate of stipends.

In the midst of tremendous problems of mass poverty, mounting unemployment, glaring inequalities of income all over the country, the Left Front Government of Tripura is pledged to strive for a united, democratic and self-reliant society, free from all exploitation.

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Directorate of Information,
Cultural Affairs & Tourism, Government of Tripura

AROUND THE STATES

HARYANA

Protest Strike by Polysteel Workers

Organised under the Haryana Polysteel Workers' Union (CITU), the workers of Haryana Concast Ltd. decided to go on one day's strike on December 10 in protest against corruption and irregularities on the part of the management of this state sector undertaking in allotment of residential quarters to the workers. The union made a number of representations to the management, the Labour Commissioner, Haryana and the District authorities bringing to their notice the corrupt practices indulged in by the Labour Inspector in the allotment of the quarters. He printed bogus application forms and demanded Rs. 1500 as bribe for each quarter from the workers. Also, in collusion with the management of Hissar Textile Mills, he used to demand Rs. 50 for each application form. On refusal to pay the bribes, the Labour Inspector rented away the quarters to outsiders at Rs. 40 for each quarter as monthly rents. When all the representations made to the higher authorities fell on deaf ears, the union served the notice for strike to the management.

RAJASTHAN

Successful Indefinite Strike

A 64-day continuous strike by the workers of Metal and Allied Factory, Udaipur, compelled the management to sign an agreement with the CITU union. The workers of the factory were previously organised under the INTUC union. The workers then almost enmasse joined the CITU union, which submitted a charter of demands. The enraged management let loose a reign of terror and resorted to rampant victimisations. The workers were beaten up by the hired gangsters of the management in collusion with the police and the INTUC leadership. But they remained undeterred and continued the strike when the management was compelled to make the settlement on November 19.

UTTAR PRADESH

Gangster Attack on CITU Leaders

The management of Jeep Industrial Syndicate, Allahabad, through its hirelings mounted up its attack on the workers of the factory to break the indefinite strike which commenced on October 11 led by CITU. The strike was launched when the management spurned all efforts by the union for a negotiated settlement of its long pending demands. Having failed to break the strike, the management deployed the gangsters to attack the CITU leader, Aloke Bose who was serverely beaten up on November 22 and his scooter burnt down. Aloke Bose is lying in the hospital in a serious condition. It could not however break the morale of the workers who are continuing the strike and stepped up the agitations. In a statement issued to the press, Daulat Ram, General Secretary of the State CITU has demanded immediate arrest of the management personnel and the hoodlums and settlement of the demands of the workers.

Another gangster attack on CITU leaders was made at the instance of the management of a sugar mill at Jahangirabad. On December 7, the Treasurer of the CITU union, Sukhbir Singh was dismissed without any reason. On protest actions launched by the workers the management unleashed repression on them. On December 10, the Vice President of the Union, Nand Kishore Sharma was dragged out from his residence by four gangsters and severely beaten up by motor cycle chains and other deadly weapons. The District CITU of Bulandshar has demanded punishment to the culprits and called upon the workers to launch protest actions against the management.

MAHARASHTRA

Seminar on Safety

A seminar on Systems Safety in Manufacturing Industries was organised by the Central Labour Institute at Bombay, from November 19 to 21. Sopnsored by ILO, Prof. Campes of West Germany delivered a lecture and gave demonstrations to minimise accidents in industrial establishments and manufacturing process. Technically qualified officers from different industries attended the Seminar. The only trade union represented was CITU, by P. Sanzgiri, General Secretary of Maharashtra State Committee. Sanzgiri pointed out the utter lack of safety systems in India and the increasing number of accidents caused due to the criminal negligence on the part of the managements. He said that as because the prime motive of production by the capitalists is profit, so safety and human considerations remain subordinate to profits.

ORISSA

Contract Workers on Struggle

Organised under the United Mines Mazdoor Union (CITU), the contract workers of Lime Stone and Dolomite mines of Purnapani, Rourkela are on struggle demanding inclusion of the contract workers' names as regular workers. The union made several representations to the SAIL management also, under which the mines operate. But the SAIL management refused to take any positive step to mitigate the demands of the workers. As a result of this, the workers were deprived of

all the statutory benefits and their legitimate demands. As the workers stepped up the agitational actions, the management closed down the mines throwing more than 700 workers out of employment. A huge mass meeting was organised on December 2 which was addressed by the leaders of CITU and also other trade unions. The leaders called upon the workers to intensify and carry forward the struggle till the demands are acceded to.

MADHYA PRADESH

Irrigation, PHED Workers Demonstrate

Organised under CITU, about 2000 workers of the Irrigation and Public Health Engineering Departments of the Madhya Pradesh Government staged a demonstration in front of the Public Health Engineering Department at Indore on December 13. Led by the CITU leader, Jagannath Bharati, a delegation met the officer-in-charge and submitted a 6-point charter of demands to him. The demands included confirmation of the temporary workers, old age pension, introduction of death insurance scheme, etc. After discussions, the officer assured to consider the demands positively. Thereafter, the workers marched in a procession to the Irrigation Department traversing the main thoroughfares of the city and held another massive demonstration there. The Irrigation Officer similarly assured to consider the demands. After the demonstrations, the workers held a rally at the Clock Tower which was presided over by Yaswant Singh Mistry and addressed among others by Jagannath Bharati, Gouri Shankar Sharma and Balaji Tokkar, the city unit secretary of the CPI(M). The leaders called upon the workers to carry forward the struggle till the Government conceded the demands.

A similar massive proccssion and demonstration was organised at Ujjain on December 18 by the Lok Nirman Vibhag Work Charge Karmachari Union (CITU). Apart from Ujjain, the workers from the adjacent areas like Barnagar, Moulana, Ingoria, Runija, Nagda, Khalroud, Tarana, etc joined the procession. They raised the demands for regularisation of the temporary workers, increase in wages, higher rates of D.A., reinstatement of dismissed employees, etc. The procession stated from Khirsagar Maidan and culiminted at the residence of the Assistant Commissioner. The charter of demands was handed over to him by a delegation. Among those who addressed the gathering were Narayan Bharati and Jagannath Bharati.

TAMILNADU

Struggle in BHEL

A strong wave of protest movement has developed in the Trichi unit of the BHEL because of the vindictive attitude taken by the BHEL management to arbitrarily dismiss five leading trade union activists, three of which belonged to CITU. The Government of Tamil Nadu resorted to imposition of a reign of terror in the workers' locality when a State wide strike was organised throughout Tamilnadu on 12th September in protest against the AIADMK government's anti-labour policies. Euen the family members of the workers were beaten up by armed policemen in the company owned residential areas. The angry workers' protests were met with vindictive actions by the management. M.K. Pandhe and R. Umanath met the Director (Personnel) BHEL and demanded withdrawal of the vindictive actions. Despite this the management resorted to vindictive actions against leading trade union activists. When S.P. Singh, Director (personnel), BHEL visited Trichi, the local management did not allow a deputation of women to meet him. However they did meet him later and submitted a memorandum condemning the attitude of the management. The CITU has demanded immediate withdrawal of the dismissal orders and reinstatement of all the victimised workers so that normalcy is restored. Eight trade unions have formed a Joint Action Committee to fight against the vindictive measures taken by the management.

MEGHALAYA

Central Govt. Employees on Struggle

Under the banner of Regional Coordination Committee of Central Government Employees and Workers, North East Region, the employees of this region have been on struggle in pursuance of their demand for Special (Duty) Allowance. About sixty thousand Central Government employees and fifty thousand Railway employees are involved in the struggle. Since the last one year a series of action programmes have been taken, which include demonstrations, rallies, dharnas, conventions, pen down strikes and sending memoranda and telegrammes to all the Government authorities. Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary of CITU also reprcsented the matter to the Finance Minister. The Government had originally sanctioned the S (D) A only to such employees who have all India transfer liabilities. Later, the Home Ministry also allowed in to the State cadre officers under its ministry. But the Finance Ministry refused to extend it to the employees under it. Resentments have been mounting among the employecs of the N.E. region for such blatant discriminations. The Regional Coordination Committee while deciding to settle the demand through further agitations, has urged upon the Confederation to include the demand as an all India programme.

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International Struggles

U.N. DISARMAMENT WEEK

The U.N. Disarmament week was observed from October 24 to 31 by thousands of workers and people throughout Europe, both West and East by holding huge rallies and giving a resounding NO to the U.S. imperialist's war preparations. Following are the reports of some of the struggles:

Great Britain

Thousands of people gathered at the shipyards in Barrow-in-Furness in north-west England on October 27 and formed a massive human chain around it to protest against the building of four new submarines there equipped with U.S. Trident nuclear missiles. These new submarines are designed to replace the existing flotilla of British submarines with Polaris missiles. Each of these U.S. Trident missiles will carry 14 nuclear warheads.

Italy

Over 10,000 students along with thousands of workers and other sections of people held a massive demonstration in Rome on October 27 denouncing the arms race and demanding a referendum on the stationing of U.S. nuclear missiles at Comiso in Sicily.

Sweden

October 27 witnessed a huge march on the Stockholm streets by thousands of people from the various Peace Movements in Sweden demanding scrapping of new missiles deployed in Europe and for resumption of negotiations on arms ban.

Spain

Following massive agitations demanding withdrawal of Spain from NATO, the Spanish Prime Minister announced for a referendum to be held on the question in February. El Pais, the Madrid daily held an opinion poll on this at the end of October in which 52 per cent of the people voted for withdrawal of Spain from NATO and 72 per cent wanted withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Spain.

France

In a most powerful demonstration held in recent years in Paris, over 3,50,000 people starting from Place Clichy and Place d'Italie marched through the streets of Paris and converged at Place de la Republique to protest against the danger of a nuclear war. People from all walks of life and different beliefs participated in the demonstration. The rally adopted a resolution which said: "Over and above our differences, the diversity of our sensivities and our public positions, we want to pull together in every way and with all our strength to substitute military escalation with negotiations and to put the money squandered on arms stockpiling to better use in working against the scourges of underdevelopment and hunger."

Denmark

Organised jointly by trade unions, left political parties and various peace and anti-nuclear movements, over 70,000 workers and people joined a rally at Copenhagen an October 27 protesting against deployment of nuclear missiles on the soils of Denmark. The rally demanded a nuclear free zone for the north east part of Europe.

F.R.G.

A Workers' Congress was held at Castrop-Rauxel on the topic, "For Peace and Jobs", which was participated by 1700 delegates from trade unions all over West Germany. The Congress adopted an appeal to all workers and people emphasising the need to strengthen united actions of workers in the fight for their rights and interests against the threat of another war designed by the U.S. imperialists. The appeal said, "With their adventurist militarist policies and their crusade against Communism, the U.S. leaders are putting our lives in serious jeopardy. The Kohl-Genscher Government is encouraging the transformation of the F.R.G. into a launching pad for the U.S. first strike nuclear missiles. In this perilous climate the trade union movement has a special duty to fulfil — to never let another war break out from the German soil". The appeal stressed the importance of joint efforts to demand withdrawal of the U.S. first strike nuclear missiles from the German soil along with all other highly destructive weapons, to stop further deployment of U.S. missiles, to stop the increasing military spending and to gradually reduce the military budgets. The demands put forward in the appeal reflected the demands of an increasing number of West German workers. H.J. Patzelt, President of the Production Council in the mechanical engineering factory, AEG Kanis in Nuremberg said, "Today the fight against unemployment is inseparable from the fight against the arms race and increased military spending".

U.S.S.R.

Thousands of people rallied at Leningrad on October 27 to condemn the Reagan administration for its policy of nuclear blackmail and demanded positive negotiations to end the present tension threatening peace. A series of demonstrations took place in various other cities of USSR.

Hungary

Over one lakh people participated in a Disarmament March in Budapest on October 26 representing all movements and associations in the

Hungarian society. The march was organised with the slogan "Peace is our Future" on the occasion of the tenth Peace Conference.

G. D. R.

The Bureau of World Federation of Teachers' Unions met at Berlin on November 14-15. The meeting noted the unprecedented worsening in the world situation and heightening of the danger of war caused by the policy of the Reagan administration to spiral the arms race. The Bureau reviewed the teachers' struggles for peace and their participation in the week long programme of the U.N. Disarmament week and called for further stepping up the struggles relentlessly.

OTHER STRUGGLES

Chile

Pinochet's military dictatorial regime mounted up unprecedented repression on the people's movement for democracy since it seized power in 1973. A state of emergency was clamped on November 6 following the mass strikes in October, totally curbing all civil liberties, meetings and freedom of press. The police and military with machine guns swooped the slum and working class areas in LaVictoria in Santiago and arrested all males from 15 to 70 years of age. Scores of marxist leaders and activists were arrested and banished. But despite the barbarous repression, the regime failed to contain the mounting struggles for restoration of democracy. Led by the alliance of People's Democratie Movement, massive demonstrations took place again on November 17 and 18. The reports said, the streets were under war. While the students occupied the campus of the university, processions criss-crossed the streets in Santiago and 20 bombs were tossed within 100 meters from Pinochet's La Moneda Palace headquarters. The city reverberated with the slogans, "End the Dictatorship", "Freedom and Democracy Now".

Bangladesh

Despite the ruthless repression let loose by the military ruler Ershad, the people's movement conducted by the 15 party alliance led by the Awami League President Sheikh Hasina Wazed and the 7 party alliance led by the Bangladesh National Party President Khaleda Zia made strong strides to compel the military ruler to postpone the elections scheduled to be held on December 8, for the third time, in the April. The opposition alliance demanded complete withdrawal of the Martial Law and formation of a Care Taker Government to conduct the elections. A total strike on December 8 completely paralysed the normal functions in the country. Despite the death of four persons and injury to a number by firing on the day, the 22 party opposition alliance forged ahead with a 48 hour bundh on December 22 and 23. The fundamentalists Jamaite Islami also joined the strike and raised the same demand. The military regime cracked down again and killed several persons and injuring scores others. Joined by the Bangladesh Federation of Workers and other workers' and peasants' organisations, the 22 party alliance has started a non-cooperation movement from December 24. The movement includes non-payment of land revenues and various other taxes and boycott of all Government sponsored meetings and functions. In the second phase it will include non-payment of railway and transport fares and boycott of all offices.

Great Britain

The two lakh coalminers' strike entered the tenth month on December 13. Despite ruthless repression and lure of a 1400 pound Christmas bonus offered by the Thatcher Government for returning to work and to break the strike, the determined coal workers are carrying forward the historic strike undaunted. Even the National Coal Board admitted that only about one third of the country's 174 mines are producing coal some how or other. The Govt., having failed to lure the workers with the Christmas bonus mounted up violence. On December 23, the last day of the offer, the police initiated a clash with the picketers in Northern England and arrested a number of strikers. The accounts of the National Union of Mineworkers, have been frozen in the banks, food packets and shipments meant to help the workers are being seized, several workers have been killed, over 7000 have been arrested, over 5000 have been charged, over 1000 have been fined apart from the NUM, but still the strike goes on undeterred. It has become a question of life or death to the coal workers, determined to save the industry and 20,000 jobs — the bitter dispute taking place in the background of about 4 million unemployed in the country (about 15 per cent of the adult workforce). Addressing a rally of the workers at Knottinglay on December 25, Arthur Scargill, the NUM leader congratulated the workers for rejecting the lure of Christmas bonus and urged upon them to stand firm.

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