



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## Comrade Konstatin Ustinovich Chernenko

THE Centre of Indian Trade Unions joins the working class and the people of Soviet Union to express deep sorrow at the passing away of Comrade Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Soviet Union and the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of USSR on March 10 at the age of 73. His short period of one year in office was marked by his determination to further the struggle for the defence and consolidation of the socialist system and world peace against the war pursuits by the U.S. imperialists.

Born on September, 24, 1911 in a peasants' family, Com. Chernenko started party works from early years. In 1930 he volunteered his services in the Red Army and served in the Frontier Troops till 1933. After completing his service in the Army he started working in the various party bodies. In 1956 he was promoted to the staff of the CPSU Central Committee. In 1960 he became the Head of the Secretariat of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. He was an Alternate Member of the Central Committee of CPSU from 1966 to 1971 and was elected as a Member of its Central Committee in the 24th Party Congress in March, 1971. In the March, 1976 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, he was elected as a Secretary of the Central Committee. In 1977 he became an Alternate Member and in 1978 became a Member of the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU. On February 13, 1984 he was elected as the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee in its Extra Ordinary Plenary Meeting and was elected as the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in April, 1984.

Com. Chernenko made great contributions to the collective work of the Central Committee and in implementing the resolutions of the 26th CPSU Congress. He devoted much attention to perfecting organisational work of the party in the masses, in improving the activities of the Soviets and the trade unions, as well as for raising the pace of economic, scientific, technical and agrarian progress. Heading the Defence Council of the USSR he made great contributions to enhance the defence capability and the combat readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces for the defence of the Socialist system against the



war manoeuvres of U.S. imperialism. At the same time, he ceaselessly worked to translate the Leninist peaceful foreign policy for strengthening peace and international security, for curbing the nuclear, chemical and space arms race and averting the threat of a nuclear holocaust. In this respect he gave special attention towards strengthening cooperation and cohesion of the socialist countries, for unity of the world communist and workers' movement, furtherance of the Non-Aligned Movement and for support to people's national liberation struggles. The Indian people will always hail Com. Chernenko's contribution in strengthening the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Cooperation and Friendship which helps the struggle against imperialism. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions dips its red flag in memory of Com. Chernenko.

## **Sinister Conspiracy Against Workers**

**M.K. Pandhe**

**T**HE Cotton textile industry which produces about 10 per cent of the total industrial production in the country is facing acute economic crisis and the mill magnates have been trying to come out of the crisis by passing its burden on the textile workers and the common people of India. Over 80 textile units have been closed down while several others have been declared as sick. More than one and a half lakh workers have been thrown on streets during the last two years in the mill sector alone.

According to an estimate, there are more than 12 lakh looms in the composite mills, 17 lakhs in the powerloom sector and over 40 lakhs in the handloom sector employing over one crore of people in the industry. As a result of the Government's policy the handloom weavers are forced to purchase costly yarn and their operation is becoming uneconomic. Several mills are closing down their weaving sections and getting the cloth woven in powerloom sector. The abolition of excise duty for powerloom sector upto 4 looms and cheap labour in this sector are being successfully used by the millowners to get their cloth woven in the powerloom sector. Another development in the textile industry is the emergence of processing units where the profit margin is extremely high. The companies such as Reliance Textile, S. Kumar, etc. do not have production units but purchase required cloth from composite mills and powerlooms and process it and mint money. The Bombay Dyeing has also entered this business recently.

The main reason of the crisis in the industry is the shrinking of the domestic market due to increase in prices of textile cloth. On the basis of sample survey conducted by the Market Research Wing of the Textile Committee, Ministry of Commerce between 1971 and 1981 the price of cotton cloth has increased to three times while that of all types of cloth has increased to nearly four times. This naturally brings down the offtake of cloth. It has been a systematic policy of the mill magnates to produce less cloth and earn more money.

### **Soaring Profits**

According to Reserve Bank of India statistics 145 textile mills earned a gross profit of Rs. 15 crores in the year 1950-51 but 238 textile mills in 1980-81 earned a gross profit of Rs. 277 crores. According to the same source the assets of these mills increased from Rs. 228 crores to Rs. 2260 crores. However the total production of mill made cloth which stood at 372.7 crore metres went down to 234.7 crore metres. The overall production of cloth which stood at 474 crore metres in 1951 went upto 778.8 crore metres

mainly due to the increase of cloth production in the handloom and powerloom sector.

To find out a way out of the crisis arising out of shrinkage of domestic market the Government decided to give more emphasis on exports of textile cloth and readymade garments. India's total textile export of cloth and garments went up from Rs. 79.17 crores in 1966 to Rs. 910.35 crores in 1982.

The serious nature of the crisis was clearly seen during the Bombay textile strike. Though the textile cloth production in Bombay is about 26 per cent of the all India output the strike of more than one year period did not show any dearth of textile goods in the market.

The Central Government continues to impose additional excise duty on textile every year. During 1982-83 a total of Rs. 261.73 crores were realised by way of excise duty, special excise duty, processing duty, additional excise duty on textile fibres and articles, handloom cess and auxiliary duty. During the last 20 years the excise duty on textile has gone upto four times and the burden of additional excise duty was falling on the consumers. It is estimated that during the period of 1950-51 to 1982-83 the excise duty collection on cloth from composite sector was as high Rs. 3706 crores which only highlights the loot of the people by the Government of India through its fiscal policies on textiles.

### **Workers Cheated**

The handloom cess does not reach the actual weavers. A study conducted in Sholapur on the disbursement of hadloom rebate clearly established that it was all pocketed by the middlemen and swindlers.

The Cotton trade in India continues to be controlled by speculators and racketeers. The establishment of Cotton Corporation of India in the public sector has not put an end to the depredations of these swindlers whose operations result in actual cultivators getting only half of the price paid by the mills for cotton purchased by them. The demand for monopoly purchase of cotton by the Government at remunerative prices to the peasants has not been accepted so far.

Though the National Textile Corporation, a public sector undertaking has taken over 100 units they are making heavy losses due to pilferage of funds by the officials and contractors. Due to bad marketing policies huge stocks of unsold goods are lying in NTC godowns resulting in NTC itself becom-

ing a sick unit. The inefficient functioning of NTC has given a handle to private sector to oppose nationalisation of all textile mills in the country.

The millowners have been raising a hue and cry about the high rate of wages to the weavers. However the statistics show that wage costs as percentage of the cost of production in the industry has gone down. As noted by Major Mahajan of Ahmedabad, "the workers' share of salaries, wages and bonus which was 21.3 per cent in 1951 in Ahmedabad has gone down to 17.4 per cent in 1981, there being a reduction of 3.9 per cent. This fact is further confirmed by the Reserve Bank of India figures." The figures include the expenses on Provident Fund, Gratuity, lay-off and retrenchment compensation and other fringe benefits paid after 1951.

The textile mills have spent hundreds of crores of rupees on modernisation during the last three decades. However, instead of making cloth cheaper for mass consumption it has only made the cloth costlier for the common man. After introduction of automatic looms and increasing the work load on the workers, the utilised capacity of the textile mills only stood at 50 per cent of the total installed capacity in the country.

### Government Policy

The Government of India now wants to further resort to modernisation to reduce the wage costs and job potential of the industry. The Approach to the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) has given special emphasis that some important industries like textile "require a major programme of modernisation and technology upgradation for continued viability". It further says "This is true also of many of the sick units which have been taken over from the private sector in the public interest and are in need of modernisation and diversification".

The Government of India has already started taking measures in that direction to further strengthen the grip of monopoly capital over the textile industry and introduce more sophisticated machinery in the industry in a massive way. The Ministry of Commerce has constituted an Expert Committee on 12th of October 1984, under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Textile, Ministry of Commerce to review the present situation and suggest measures for proper development in future. The 14 member committee does not include any representative of the central trade union organisations but has officials belonging to Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Bureau of Industrial Costs, Industrial Development Bank, as well as institutes of management and textile research organisations.

### Terms of Reference — A Cruel Hoax

Though the terms of reference of the Committee refer to harmonious development of mills, power-looms sector, they are heavily loaded in favour of

the textile millowners. The Committee has been asked "To study the need for modernisation of the textile industry and outline its requirements in terms of infrastructural facilities, capital goods/technology and financial resources for the textile industry". The terms of reference further enjoin upon the Committee "to suggest measures to increase exports of different types of textiles, particularly value added products, having regard to past performance, pattern of world-wide and comparative advantages to Indian textile industry". It is clear that the entire emphasis is on modernisation and export.

Though it refers to domestic consumption, the emphasis is of course on "distribution and marketing channels". It also talks of "structural adjustments in terms of infrastructural advertisements in the form of redeployment of labour and capital". It has been the experience of trade union movement that whenever they talk of redeployment of labour, they always hit the job security of the so-called surplus labour.

### Imminent Dangers

The outcome of the Committee should be seen in the context of the Government of India's recent thinking of not to go ahead with the measures of nationalisation but to denotify the units which the Government considers not viable or economic. The new Government has already made up its mind not to take over sick units but to allow them to close down and restart new units with modernised machinery and less complement. This move will hit the working class most severely. The Government is already going ahead with its plan to close down 26 textile units under NTC. Under these circumstances the Committee's consultation with the trade unions has become a farce. On behalf of the CITU, M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, and K. Venugopal, Secretary, Coimbatore District Committee of CITU appeared before the Expert Committee at New Delhi on March 4 and submitted a memorandum printed hereunder.

### Forge United Actions

It is a welcome sign that all the central trade unions, including INTUC have demanded nationalisation of textile mills and reopening of all the closed units with full complements. They have also demanded an end to bureaucratic bungling in the NTC and introduction of genuine scheme of workers' participation in management to improve its functioning. All the trade unions stand for the protection of handloom industry and supply of cheaper cloth to consumers. They have opposed reckless modernisation and asked for change in the excise policy on textile.

If the unanimity in ideas is translated into united movement of textile workers, the machinations of the Government can be checked in time.

## MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY CITU

At the outset, CITU wants to record its note of disagreement with the constitution of the Expert Committee. The Government have not taken the representatives of Labour in this Committee. In view of the importance of the textile industry in the national economy, in view of the fact that this is one of the largest employing industries and in view of the present acute crisis in this pioneer industry, there is no reason as to why the representatives of labour should not be taken in the Committee so as to help formulation of the policy from their practical experience of production, to save the industry from ruination. The exclusion of labour from the Committee runs contrary to the Government's pronouncements seeking cooperation of labour for the development and growth of industries. When the formation of the Expert Committee was announced in the press in November, 1984, CITU had written to the then Minister of Commerce for inclusion of Labour in the Committee. But the Minister of Commerce did not accept the contention of CITU and only replied that the labour representatives would be consulted. CITU also wants to record as to how the labour representatives had been systematically kept out of the forums of discussions previously also. In March 1982 the government had formed a Development Council in the textile industry. It is not known officially what this Development Council did and what happened thereafter. Again, in June, 1983 the Government formed a Tripartite Industrial Committee in Textile Industry. The Central Trade Unions nominated their representatives. But not a single meeting was called thereafter.

The importance of inclusion of labour in the Committee arises from the necessity of the labour being acquainted with the problem from all angles, i.e., including those of the entrepreneurs, the government and all sections of consumers so that they could assimilate all important points raised by all persons tendering evidence before the Committee and be a party to the formulation of the Industrial policy. Unless this is done the idea of workers' participation in the management would become a misnomer. The labour must be treated as an equal partner and therefore all committees which decide the basic questions related to labour, production and productivity must be with the conscious participation of labour with equal status so that the policy decisions are implemented fully and they give the desired result.

For this Expert Committee also it is seen that the CITU has been asked through a telegram dt. 24.2.85 confirmed vide letter No. 40/2/EB (STATS)/DLH/1557 of 24th February, 1985 to appear before the Committee on 4th March, 1985. Along with the post copy of the telegram the CITU was furnished a copy of letter No. 40/2/84/EB (STATS)/dated 4th January 1985 with a questionnaire to submit the views. This was received only in February 26, 1985, i.e. full 22 days after the period of 4 weeks which was indicated in the letter. The same complaint

has been received from various other unions also. Thus practically no time has been given to the trade unions to give a comprehensive view concerning this vast and crisis ridden industry.

However, the following note is being submitted by CITU which generally covers the salient features of the questionnaire:

1. The textile industry which occupies a significant position in India in the national economy by virtue of its significant share in industrial production and export earning, employes about 8 million workers in the organised mill sector, in powerlooms and handlooms. An equivalent number is estimated to work in trade and complementary industries which supply raw materials to the industry. But this textile industry which occupied a significant position in the national economy and a major source of bread earner for millions of people, is now embedded in a deep crisis. The crisis in this industry which caters to the basic necessity of the people, next in importance to food, was brewing for the last several years. At the root of the crisis lies the most important factor, i.e., erosion of purchasing power of the people at large. This has come about as a result of the policies of indirect taxation pursued by the Government of India. Excise duty have been increasing for all times.

Another factor which has to be taken into account is the policy of granting of Open General Licence for import of man made fibre which resulted in glut of man made fibre in our country for two years resulting in lay off and closure of several companies. The crisis relates to the basic economic policies pursued by the Government of India which also constitute the basis of the industrial policy relating to the textile industry. This policy is fully reflected in the Textile Policy Resolution of the Ministry of Commerce placed on the tables of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on 9th March, 1981. Although this resolution criticised the previous policy pronouncement of 1978 as not having looked into the needs and domestic demands of the country, it materially did not vary much with the previous one. On the country, this policy resolution of 1981, which although after "considerable thought" by the government, evolved a frame work to increase production of cloth so as to meet the requirements of a growing population at reasonable prices, promote harmonious and balanced growth of all the sectors of the industry and generate more employment, in actual fact exactly the reverse phenomena started thereafter. The reasons for these reverse phenomena are that, in practice, the other clauses of the resolution are being implemented systematically, viz, the aggressive export strategy, modernisation, import of foreign technology and machinery and production of high priced quality cloth.

As far as the question of license and other measures of control over the industry is concerned, the CITU has already submitted its views to the Committee headed by Shri M. Narsimham which was set

up to consider a possible shift from physical to financial control.

2. Thus the industrial policy relating to the textile industry has on one hand boosted the profits of the monopolists only as in the case of Reliance Textile and on the other hand resulted in rampant closures, lockouts and "sickness" in the industry, throwing tens of thousands of workers out of employment. At the same time, it has spiralled the prices of cloth, decreased productions and decreased per capita consumption. Exports are also progressively decreasing, except to the socialist countries. The policy of advancing loans to the monopolists at concessional rates of interest with longer repayment period has only helped the monopolists to make the units sick and divert the amounts to other more profitable pastures. Apart from this, the policy of boosting man-made fibre has been ruining the agricultural sector of the industry with lack of adequate cotton, the main raw material of the textile industry. This has resulted in destitution of the cotton growers who are denied the remunerative prices for their produce. This policy has run contrary to the 1981 resolution itself.

Now let us examine the factual positions of these phenomena in the industry:

3. Over 80 mills are closed now, a number under lockouts, over 1.5 lakh workers have been rendered jobless with an equivalent number in the connected industries and a number of mills have lined up for getting "sick". This is the result, despite so many measures having been taken by the Government for the growth of the industry like formation of the Development Council, Industrial Committee and the Expert Committee — all without participation of labour.

4. *Industrial Sickness and Closures:* At the outset the Centre of Indian Trade Unions would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the following conclusions of the 25th Indian Labour Conference held in New Delhi in April 20-21, 1968, under the Chairmanship of Shri Jaisukhlal Hathi in 25.4 on *Closure of Industrial Undertakings:* (i) "It was generally agreed that the problem of closures has two aspects: one preventive and the other relating to taking over and reopening of units already closed. While the workers and many State Governments suggested that the period of notice should be increased to three months, the employers felt that notice could not be given in all cases; (ii) It was generally agreed that notice alone would not help to prevent closures. A Standing Tripartite Cell for each major industry should be set up to keep a watch over the working and condition of all the units in the industry. Legislative provisions and governmental machinery for take over should ensure continuity of employment and production. Consequent upon the take over there should not be any reduction in employment or emoluments nor should there be any adverse effect on service conditions and benefits. (iii) The workers asked for an immediate Ordinance

empowering the Government to take over the units already closed or likely to close and to carry out any amendments in the law to ensure that any action for taking over is not rendered justiciable. Units taken over should not be handed back. (iv) State Governments stated that the Central Government should streamline procedures for take-over and provide sufficient funds to run the units taken over".

From the above it would be very clear that the Labour from the very beginning had been apprehensive about the growing sickness in Indian economy and the possibility of sickness and closure which was already there is the fore. The steps indicated setting up of a cell for monitoring the cases of sickness which might have resulted in closures. The intention behind this decision was to investigate each particular case of closure and to take up with the management the question of mismanagement, proper utilisation of depreciation fund and other assets. The CITU is of the firm opinion that had such monitoring cells been set up, the growing incidence of sickness could have been checked. It is pertinent to point out that the Reserve Bank study conducted in 1979 had shown that in 98 per cent cases mismanagement and other factors were responsible for the growing industrial sickness while the labour disputes accounted for only 2 per cent and that too due to the recalcitrant attitude of the management.

**In the above context, CITU is totally opposed to the reported move of the Government to wind up the sick units instead of making them viable, and opening of new units with new sets of workers. Unless the causes of sickness are rectified, the new units will also meet the same fate in course of time. CITU is equally opposed to the efforts to hand over these units to the private hands. CITU therefore reiterates its opinion that the entire textile industry should be nationalised by the Government and that its management should be ensured by participation of workers' representatives as equal partners.**

The Relief Undertaking Act and the management of the NTC has to be viewed with due seriousness. It is noticed that the NTC is following a unique principle in respect of wages of the workmen while refusing to implement Textile Wage Board scales to all workmen. It is following a principle of paying less on the basis of the NTC being a relief undertaking. The CITU at that stage had also opposed the idea of paying less to the workmen of the sick industrial undertaking as it violates the principle of "equal pay for equal work" and also creates a bad precedence of unfair labour practice of paying less to one worker while the value created by the workers are same. A decision therefore on the question of paying proper wages to the workmen is necessary.

Today there is a very wide range of disparity in the wage of textile workers, the highest being in Coimbatore and the lowest being in Haryana, Punjab and U.P. where the wages in textile are being guided under the Minimum Wages Act. The NTC management which is divided in four regions does

not even follow regional wages and is exploiting the workers by paying them less. This has to be brought to an end. The CITU demands that while deciding on policy in regard to textiles the wage policy also would have to be decided on an industrywise or regionwise basis and for that purpose a negotiating body at the top has to be set up.

5. The per capita off-take of textile has been continuously on the decline since 1979. According to one report it was 13.65 metres in 1979, it declined to 12.08 metres in 1981, and in 1984 it was estimated at 10.5 metres. The per capita availability of cloth has also been going down since 1962. It was 15.2 metres in that year. Then it started going down year after year to 14, 13, 12, 11 and then 10 metres. The root cause in the decline in the off-take in spite of decline in availability is the increasing price factor, the inflationary spiral engendered by the deficit budgets of the Government. This was admitted by the Textile Committee of the Ministry of Commerce. Its studies showed that in 1978 when the average value per metre of cotton textile was Rs. 5.56, the per capita offtake was 11.60 metres. But in 1981, when the average value went up to Rs. 8.22 the per capita offtake fell down to 9.40 metres. The Estimates Committee of Parliament, 1977-78 also confirmed the same and was surprised that "even after thirty years of independence and completion of four Five Year Plans, the Government have not yet been able to formulate an integrated national policy in respect of a basic necessity like cloth" and that "the fall in per capita consumption has been mainly in the rural areas and in those belonging to lower income groups".

6. The erosion of the purchasing power of the people, particularly of the peasants, and agricultural workers has been so much that they are not able to consume the existing production which is only 50 per cent of the estimated capacity. While the centralised and decentralised sectors together can produce 22,000 million metres of cloth per annum, the highest production was reached in 1983-84 which was only 11,500 million metres. This 50 per cent production was also too much to be consumed because of high price.

7. The industry's drive for exports and reliance to the Western markets had added to the difficulties. Because of their protectionist policies, the exports to Western Europe which were valued at Rs. 1368 millions in 1976-77, came down to Rs. 726 millions 1982-83. Similarly to USA the value came down from Rs. 406 millions to Rs. 114 millions during the same period. The total exports to Europe, America and Africa came down from Rs. 2622 millions to Rs. 1345 millions during this time, i.e. by 50 per cent. It was however USSR which came to rescue the situation by boosting the imports from India from Rs. 383 millions in 1976-77 to Rs. 1779 millions in 1982-83.

8. An important cause of the present state of affairs is the refusal of the mill magnets, encouraged

by the Government's policy, to attune to domestic market which demands cloth at lower prices, which hampers their profitability. They want to cater to the foreign markets or to those limited elite who can provide for high priced man made fibre cloth. The industry cannot survive on such a narrow market. This is an anti-social and anti-national outlook to go in for foreign markets keeping 50 per cent of the Indian people half naked. The industry has to depend upon the domestic market comprising of the vast mass of poor people both to meet the requirements of the growing population and survival of the industry.

9. The policy of boosting the powerlooms in the name of a balanced growth of all the sectors has encouraged the mill magnates with their profit lust to contribute to the present plight of the industry. There has been a rapid rise in the number of powerlooms from 23,000 in 1951 to about 8.5 lakhs currently. Many mills have shut down the weaving sections and transferred their yarn to powerlooms to escape excise duty and garner huge profits. Cheap labour, high profits and absence of labour laws in the powerlooms lure the mill magnets to close their show at the mills, retrench labour there and switch over to power looms and perpetrate ruthless exploitation and profit can be gauged from the fact that a superfine Dhoti produced at a powerloom and selling at Rs. 100/- to Rs. 120/- bears a labour cost of only Rs. 3/-. Similarly, the labour cost of a shirting selling at Rs. 50/- amounts to only Rs. 1/-.

10. So far as modernisation and import of technology is concerned, it is agreed that it will increase productions. But who will purchase the cloth? We have seen that even half of production capacities could not be consumed for high price and lack of purchasing power of the people. Moreover, can high technology produce cheaper cloth? The answer is No. Techno-economic viability analysis has shown that high machine productivity through automation is viable only when the fabric is high priced—beyond the reach of the common man. It is thus again limited to a narrow segment of market. Besides, modernisation would mean labour displacing. The industry will thus only pull the carpet from under its feet. It will intensify workers' exploitation and at the same time will not meet the needs of the people. When the industry is unable to thrive on the vast domestic market, it betrays the bankruptcy of the Government.

11. The textile policy thus caters to the need for profits of the textile monopolists. It breeds corruption, inefficiency and mismanagement. Even the public sector National Textile Corporation is no exception to this rule. But no steps have been taken by the Government either to rectify the things or to discuss a blue print for an alternative policy with the trade unions. Time and again policies are simply remodelled taking only the bureaucrats and the monopolists into confidence. This only multiplies the profits of the monopolists  
(Contd. on page 21)

## **Central Trade Unions to Hold Seminar**

**T**HE Central Trade Unions will jointly hold a seminar on the Bhopal gas tragedy at New Delhi on May 24. The proposal of CITU to hold a seminar on the Bhopal gas tragedy in cooperation with various scientific organisations and national federations was accepted by the Central Trade Unions in their meetings held in the Central office of CITU on March 9 and 21. The two meetings were attended by the representatives of HMS, UTUC, BMS, TUCC and ITUC (Dara) apart from CITU. Nrisingha Chakraborty and P.K. Ganguly attended the first meeting while the second meeting was attended by Samar Mukherjee and M.K. Pandhe in addition to them. AITUC could not send any representative in the meetings. They have however agreed to the decisions and assured full cooperation in holding the seminar. CITU approached INTUC and NLO also for co-sponsoring the seminar. INTUC agreed in principle for the seminar. However, they have not attended any meeting so far. There was no response from NLO as yet.

The proposal was placed by CITU on March 9. After discussions, as decided in the meeting the detailed proposal was circulated to the central trade unions. After further discussions on March 21, the following points were concretised:

**Objective of the Seminar:** The objective of the seminar would be to bring to focus to the working class and all sections of the working people, the scientific community and the public at large, the lag in the safety systems in industries; the hazards of manufacture of dangerous chemicals, pesticides, etc; the question of environment, pollution and public safety; the role of multinationals in this regard, who utilise the people of the third world countries as guinea pigs; the policy of the government to woo the multinationals who pass on their discarded technologies and banned chemicals, pesticides, etc in our country; the legal aspects of the holocaust and the question of payment of compensation by Union Carbide to the victims; the question of medical treatment, relief and rehabilitation of the affected people, etc. Follow up actions in the form of joint campaigns would be launched after the seminar.

The various scientific workers' organisations which would be approached and are likely to participate and submit papers would include Delhi Science Forum, CSIR, CFIR, ITRC, JCMR, IMA, ASWI, Defence Scientific Workers' Association, etc. Apart from above, the Confederation of Officers' Associations of Central Public Sector Undertakings, BHEL officers' Associations, BEL Officers' Association, etc, would also be approached. Representatives from ILO, WHO, etc. would be invited. Besides these, the various national federations would be requested to participate in the seminar. The meeting decided that the total number of participants should be

around 250. The papers proposed to be submitted in the seminar would cover the following subjects:

(i) Report on Bhopal and the aftermath — Delhi Science Forum, a team of which had visited Bhopal and had indepth interviews with various personnel, workers and the affected people, has already agreed to submit a paper on the subject; (ii) Industrial and Public Safety; (iii) Occupational Health and Diseases; (iv) Legal aspects including compensation and (v) Role of Multinationals, etc. The meeting decided to invite Shri P N Haksar, President of the Delhi Science Forum to inaugurate the Seminar. The next meeting of the Central Trade Unions would be held on April 2 to draw out the other details of the Seminar.

### **Observance of Bhopal Day**

In the meantime more reports came on observance of Bhopal Day on February 4, as called by CITU.

**Tripura:** In Tripura the State Secretariat of CITU chalked out the programmes. A procession of about 500 workers from various trade unions was taken out from the CITU office at Agartala which marched the various thoroughfares of the city and culminated in a street rally at Surya Chowmohani, the heart of the city. Radheshyam Banik, leader of the Tripura Chatkal Karmi Samity presided over the meeting. Addressing the rally Shibdas Baidya and Sudarshan Das, Secretaries of the State Committee explained the sinister role of the U.S. multinational Union Carbide and called upon the workers to build up united movements demanding full compensation to the affected people. They also condemned the pro-multinational policy of the government and called for trade union unity and joint movements against the policy of the government. The rally adopted a resolution as circulated by the CITU earlier. For the success of the programme, the State CITU held a group meeting with the representatives of the various unions on January 31 when Shibdas Baidya and Bimal Sinha, Deputy Speaker of the Tripura Assembly detailed the plan. Massive postering was held all over the city against Union Carbide. Shibdas Baidya held another meeting with 200 FCI and food handling workers at Arundhutinagar, a suburb of Agartala to mobilise FCI workers in the programme.

**Andhra Pradesh:** The Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU decided to observe the day on February 11 in the entire state. The State Committee published 20,000 copies of a 12 page pamphlet entitled "Who are the Culprits for the Bhopal Deaths" and distributed them to the CITU unions for the workers. The pamphlet contained statistics of the multinationals' exploitations and report of the devastation caused by the poisonous gas with photographs thereof. Apart from this, State CITU journal Karmikalokam in Telegu published series of write ups on the Bhopal disaster.

Responding to the call given by the State Committee, the CITU unions held gate meetings, processions, street corner meetings and seminars all over the state, despite the programmes for the Assembly elections. Hundreds of workers and other sections of people participated in the programmes. The meetings adopted resolutions on Bhopal.

At the Railway wagon workshop at Guntupally, Vijayawada, the railway workers held gate meeting on the day which was presided over by S.M. Subani. The meeting was addressed by M.V. Subbaiah, General Secretary; K. Subba Rao, the Branch Vice President and V.S. Salman Raju. The meeting adopted the resolution on Bhopal.

At Kakinada, street corner meetings were held at the Port area, Sarvaraya textile centre, Santa Cherve, Jammi Chettu Centre, etc, which were addressed by D. Subba Rao, the CITU leader and by the leaders of SFI and DYFI. Several hundreds of the booklets were sold in the meetings.

In the Kothagudem coal mines area, gate meetings were organised by the Signareni Collieries Employees Union (CITU) near the Barium Chemicals Factory, which was addressed by George and Basavaiah, the President and Secretary of the Union. About a thousand copies of the booklet was sold.

At Rajahmundry, a seminar on the activities of the multinationals was held. G.S. Balaji Das, Vice-President of the State CITU and the District Secretary of CPI(M) explained the role of the multinationals. The seminar was presided over by Boddu Buchi Raju. Hundreds of copies of the booklet were sold in the seminar. At Anantpur, gate meetings were organised by the CITU unions at MGM Factory and Markfed Oil factory. Konda Reddy, the CITU leader addressed the gate meetings among others. About 400 copies of the booklet were sold at the gate meetings. Apart from above, a large number of unions held meetings at different parts of country and adopted resolutions. (*The names of the unions, apart from those published in the March issue, are being published hereunder.*)

### Symposium at Bokaro

A symposium on the Bhopal tragedy was held in Community Hall, Bokaro steel city on 17th March which was presided over by A.P. Singh of the Bokaro Steel Plant. B.K. Chowdhury pointed out the dangerous industrial environment in the country and the lack of consciousness among the people on the question of safety. He observed that if such a ghastly tragedy is not to be repeated then immediate action is called for to ensure full implementation of safety rules. T.K. Palit of the Water Supply Deptt. said that there are a number of Bhopals surrounding the people and steps are called for to ensure proper environment in Bokaro. He narrated several cases of disturbance of ecological balance due to emergence of industries in the region. L.P. Sinha of the Safety Department gave exhaustive technical details of the Bhopal tragedy and called for a National Policy on Safety. He emphasised the need for preventive measures which have been lacking in India to a great extent. D.C. Mathur explained at

length the impact of MIC on human body and pointed out how the patients of Bhopal who were admitted in Bokaro hospital died due to failure of liver and kidney.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, giving the background of the Bhopal tragedy pointed out how the US multinational company violated safety rules which was mainly responsible for the ghastly tragedy. Quoting from ILO reports he noted how the multinationals are transferring hazardous industries to developing countries to save their countries from further pollution.

### International Solidarity on Bhopal

Roland Guyvarch, Secretary, Commission on Transnationals, WFTU, has sought international support by the trade unions in the subsidiaries of Union Carbide. His letter to CITU, dated March 6 read, "Union Carbide, the Transnational Corporation which was at the roots of the catastrophe, having made 2,500 deaths in Bhopal, India, perseveres in its harmful activities". He asked for international support to be sent in the form of protest messages to the management of Union Carbide at Columbia where the union has submitted a charter of demands to the management concerning safety, health, etc. The protest messages are requested to be sent to the management at the following address:— Luis Ocampo Simonds, Presidente de Union Carbide, Columbia SA, Carrera 13 II 26.45 Edificio Internacional, Bogota — Columbia. Copies of the protest letters are to be sent to the trade union in Columbia in the following address:— Luis Eduardo Torres T. Presidente, Sindicato de Trabajadores, Union Carbide Columbia SA, Carrera 4a No. 21.44; A.A. 18083 — Zona 3 Cali-Columbia.

### Unions which Adopted Resolutions on Bhopal

Municipal Workers Lal Jhande Union, Delhi; Prem Electrical Conductors (P) Ltd. Madras; Madras Electrical Conductors (P) Ltd, Madras; Madurai General Workers Union, Madurai; Madurai Engineering Workers Union, Madurai; Tamilgha Kooruravu Sanga Uziyar Sangam, Madurai; KEM Pvt (Ltd), Coimbatore; C.D.P.W Union, Valparai; The Ranebennur Taluka Weavers Employees Association; Tripura Bakeri Karmi o Hawkers Union, Tripura; Pearlless Employees Union, Calcutta; Tripura Biri Shramik Sangha, Tripura; Rubber Plantation Workers Union, Tripura; Tripura Kasta-shilpa Sramik Union, Tripura; Tripura State Committee Hospital Road South Extension, Tripura;

### Forward Seamen's Union of India Recognised

The CITU affiliated Forward Seamen's Union of India has been granted recognition. A telex message received by the union on March 2 from the Deputy Director General of Shipping reads, "As a result of verification of membership of the Unions of Seamen in Calcutta by the Ministry of Labour, the Forward Seamen's Union of India (CITU) at Calcutta emerged as the majority union and is eligible for recognition as the sole recognised union of seamen for a period of two years". The National Union of Seafarers of India (HMS) was likewise granted recognition at Bombay.

# CITU Secretariat Decisions

- \*Observe Protest Day on April 2 against hike in Railway fares and freight and inflationary budget.
- \*Build up joint movement against refusal of Government to increase D.A. in public sector.
- \*Nationalise cotton textile and jute industries.
- \*Observe 40th Anniversary of Victory over Fascism.
- \*Working Committee meeting at Ernakulam from May 30—June 1.

The CITU Secretariat met on March 23 under the Presidentship of B.T. Ranadive. At the outset the meeting paid homage to Com. Konstantin Chernenko and Com. Parimal Mitra.

The Secretariat decided to hold the Working Committee meeting of CITU at Ernakulam on May, 30, 31 and June 1. The Working Committee meeting of All India Plantation Workers' Federation and All India Coordination Committee of Working Women will also be held at Ernakulam during the same period. All the State Committees and federations are to send their reports by the end of April.

The Secretariat denounced the increase in the railway fares and freight and the imposts in the general budget which had already started increasing the prices of the daily necessities and called upon the State Committees and the affiliated unions to observe April 2 as the Protest Day.

The meeting recorded its strong protest against refusal of the BPE and the Government to raise the quantum of Dearness Allowance for the central public sector workers so as to neutralise the rise in prices cent per cent. The Government of India thus went back on its assurances given two years back. The Secretariat therefore urged upon all the public sector workers to prepare for united movement. It requested the National Campaign Committee to take up the question of organising a national convention of public sector workers on the issue and launch broad based joint movement all over India.

The Secretariat also urged upon the N.C.C. to take up further follow up action programmes on the issue of closures and lockouts in view of the Government's refusal to take over and nationalise the closed and sick units.

The meeting also discussed the serious situation in the crisis ridden cotton textile industry where more than 80 mills are closed and over 1.5 lakh workers are out of job. The recent move of the Government by appointing the Expert Committee in textile industry excluding the labour, its fake consultations with the trade unions and its drive towards modernisation and export, coupled with its move to wind up the sick units spelled further accen-

uation of the crisis for the workers and boosting the profits of the monopolists. The meeting reiterated its demand for nationalisation of the entire textile industry. With the objective of building up country-wide joint movement with the demand, the Secretariat decided to go ahead with the preparation for an all India convention of textile workers in cooperation with other Central Trade Unions. After discussions the meeting preferred to hold the Convention at Coimbatore.

The meeting also discussed the situation in jute industry. Md. Amin reported about the present position where the few jute barons had cornered the stock of raw jute and aggravated the crisis. They have closed down about 12 mills affecting about 50,000 workers and were pleading for cut in production by one day a week on the plea of shortage of raw jute. The Government of India despite several memoranda by the unions have taken no steps to dehoard the raw jute, which is being sold at exorbitant prices by the barons. The meeting reiterated its demand for nationalisation of the jute industry and extended full support to the struggle of the jute workers.

The meeting also discussed the situation in the sugar industry and opposed the setting up of Wage Board as this would stand in the way of collective bargaining. It decided to hold a conference of the unions in the industry to build up sustained movement with the demands of the workers.

The meeting heard the report from P.K. Ganguly regarding the Seminar on Bhopal tragedy to be organised in cooperation with several scientific workers' organisations, national federations and Central Trade Unions. The meeting of the Central trade unions had decided to hold it on May 24 at Delhi.

The Secretariat also discussed about observing the 40th anniversary of the victory over fascism and reiterated its earlier decision to observe it from May 1 to 9 all over the country.

The meeting also discussed the question of verification of membership and submission of Annual Returns and directed all the unions to prepare and submit the Annual Returns for both 1983 and 1984 clearly specifying about their affiliation to CITU.

The meeting noted the information about the visit of a two member delegation from AUCCTU. Soviet Union on April 7 to have fraternal talks with CITU for a few days and decided to draw up some programmes during their stay at Delhi. It also decided to receive a 4-member delegation from the Central Council of Czechoslovak trade unions at CITU office on April 1.

The meeting noted that the Union Labour Minister had invited a meeting of the Central trade unions on April 9 and nominated Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary to attend the meeting on behalf of CITU. The Secretariat also nominated Vimal Ranadive, Ananda Pathak and Manik Sanyal to attend the international conference called by TUI-APFW at New Delhi on April 17 — 19.

Earlier in its meeting held on March 10, the Secretariat heard the report from P.K. Ganguly about the meeting of the CITU delegation with the Expert Committee in textile industry. It adopted a resolution on the subject, (*The resolution is being printed hereunder.*)

The meeting also extended full support to the strike of medical and sales representatives called by FMRAI on March 25 in protest against victimisation and on their common charter of demands.

The meeting nominated P.K. Ganguly, Secretary to visit Moscow at the invitation of AUCCTU to attend the May Day celebrations and the international meeting on the 40th Anniversary of the victory over facism.

#### **Resolution on Expert Committee on Textiles**

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions records its strong protest against the cavalier fashion in which the Expert Committee on Textiles has dealt with the labour. Despite assurances from the Minister of Finance and Commerce when the Expert Committee was set up, that the labour would be consulted, this committee did not send the questionnaire to the labour organisations when it was originally despatched on 4th January 1985 to others. It was sent on February 24th or 25th after the meeting with the CITU was scheduled on 4th March 1985 thus leaving no time for answering the questionnaire properly. Besides only half an hour was allotted to our organisation to maintain a facade of hearing. The Committee did not even discuss the problems. The CITU had decided to submit supplementary memorandum on the subject. Now it is seen from Press reports that the Minister has met the Advisory Council on Textile in which the labour has no representation at all. The problem in the textile mills, it appears is not being judged from the angle that this is the most labour intensive industry dealing with the primary needs of the people. The rapacious textile tycoons have already earned profits more than 10 times over their initial capital and have moved out to new pastures for super profits diverting the funds from the textile industry and abandoning the old mills to rot. More than 1.5 lakhs workers are out of employment and hence nationalisation of the industry restoring employment of all those who have been retrenched and setting up industry on its feet is immediately necessary".

## **Book Review**

### **“Panorama of P&T Union Movement”**

by N.J. Iyer

The book written by N.J. Iyer, General Secretary of All India R.M.S. Employees Union, class III begins with a foreword by B.T. Ranadive, President of CITU and contains the history and progress of the trade union movement in P&T from 1945 to 1983. He has meticulously recorded the details of the development of the movements, organisational structures, the growing attacks by the authorities and the internal struggles to meet these attacks unitedly with an ideological-political basis. The book records the events from the time when India was on the threshold of the transfer of power from British imperialism to the Indian big bourgeoisie. The facts narrated by him in the book show that this transfer of power did not change the attitude of the new Government of India towards the workers and their trade unions. It followed the same divide and rule policy to create reformist and “loyal” leaders in the trade union movements to toe the capitalist Governments’ policy of exploitation and splitting the organisations and keep the militant sections under the stamp of authoritarianism. It victimised the militant sections fighting for the interest of the working people and gave recognition to the minority “loyalists” as prize for splitting the organisation. Iyer however has emphatically recorded the fact that the masses of the workers have always been inclined to fight to establish their rights and interests. This inclination to fight was born out of their own experience of the attitude of the Government. Whenever a call for united actions was given the employees responded magnificently and were prepared for the battle. It was the reformist leadership that disappointed them and thereby alienated themselves from the masses. The book narrates the experience of the strikes of 1968 and 1974 and analyses the role of various organisations and individuals. It also describes the splits that took place and the successful efforts for unity with the objective to make the P&T movement an integral part of the all India trade union movement. The book is intended to benefit all the workers and the new entrants to understand the vicissitudes of trade union movement in general and in P&T in particular.

---

#### **Editorial Board**

**P. Ramamurti (Chairman)**

**Manoranjan Roy, Niren Ghosh,  
M.M. Lawrence, P.K. Ganguly**

**M.K. Pandhe**

---

# LRSA Working Committee decides for Agitation

**T**HE Working Committee of the All India Loco Running Staff Association meeting in Delhi on 23rd and 24th March decided to launch a phased programme of campaign and agitation to be culminated in Dharna at Head Quarters of all the Railway Zones.

Earlier the Secretary General, S.K. Dhar addressed a letter to the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi congratulating him on his assumption of office after Parliamentary elections, and expressing his hope for a new deal for labour, specially the Loco Running Staff of Railways. The extended Working Committee in this meeting reviewed the situation only to find the hope belied: not even the slightest indication of any change in the attitude of the authorities in regard to employees' grievances could be noticed.

The working Committee decided to send a deputation to meet the Railway Minister on 26th March to request him once again to take personal initiative to settle their long outstanding grievances. The Committee also decided to seek help of the people's representatives in this matter. In case they fail to elicit response from the authorities the Working Committee decided that the Association will observe a campaign week throughout the country from 1st May and finally stage Dharna in front of all the Zonal Head-quarters of Indian Railways on 31st May to press their outstanding demands.

### **Police Firing on Demonstrators**

When several hundred Railwaymen assembled on 12th March in front of Alipurduar Junction to protest against total inaction of the police in connection with a dacoity which took place at Railway quarter several hours back and demanded immediate steps, the police, most of whom were reportedly in a drunken state, opened fire on the demonstrators killing 3 and injuring five. Next day the entire democratic population was mobilised in support of the railwaymen's cause. 24 hours protest strike was organised by the Local CPI(M) unit with the help of other left parties and mass organisations. A huge procession consisting of railwaymen and non-railway population paraded the streets in the railway colony and the town, and submitted memorandum to the railway and civil authorities demanding judicial enquiry, punishment of police personnel, compensation for the dead and injured, etc. The UCR played a leading role.

### **Enormous Job Redundancy Ahead**

It has been widely publicised that the Indian Railways are going to be computerised in a big way. According to reports, India will have a totally computerised railway system at the end of the 7th plan and it is estimated that at the end of the plan period the Indian Railways will be run by about a half of the present work force. This means the railways will provide employment to only 8.9 lakhs against the present work force of about 17 lakhs.

There will be an enormous shrinkage of employment potential in the country. The process has started. Immediately after the Lok Sabha polls, on 29.12.84 a special meeting of the Railway Board was held at the Chairman's room. The minutes of the meeting reportedly includes the following:

"Board felt that extra staff requirements have to be gone into great detail and would need to be curtailed and any proposals put up have to be very critically examined in the background of modernisation in various facets of Railway working. The freezing of the staff strength should automatically take place and instead of increasing the staff, there would appear to be a strong case for reduction instead. The aspect whether staff available are adequately educated and can be entrusted with sophisticated equipment used in modernisation of the Railway has also to be looked into. The promotion policies also need to be reviewed and wastage of time in various procedures eliminated, 60 per cent of the budget expenditure being on the staff. This particular item needed special attention of all concerned. Proper work study and method study should be carried out to see if the staff could be better utilised with improved efficiency." No further comment is necessary.

### **From "Transport Review" of the British National Union of Railwaymen**

"Indian Rail Board failing to cope with corruption. The train reservation system on Indian Railways continues to suffer the affliction of bribery by those who won't wait their turn, the well-off lot who buy their way through life." "Mr. Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, Delhi, has written to us explaining the situation".

"The main responsibility rests with the Indian Railway Board which is no less authoritarian than the British Railways Board. For example, there has been a three fold growth in passenger kilometreage (non-suburban) from 59,966 millions to 181,142 millions, with average load increasing from 68.8 to 111.4 during the same period. But the number of coaches has only increased from 13,107 to 26,938". "This is the main reason why corruption could overwhelm the railway reservation system."

With rising economic activity there was a substantial increase in the number of rail travellers. "The business community and the rich section of our population found it economic to pay bribes to secure reservations rather than wait in hotels and take their turn. Hence the system of bribes started, "Mr. Chakrabarty tells us" Almost every year in Parliamentary debates on the railway budget the Railway Ministers trot out assurances that "effective measures have been taken to contain irregularities in reservation".

"Mr. Chakrabarty says: "But the situation remains as before, if not sometimes worsens. We are aware of this and are trying to fight out the issue".

# The Budget for Fleecing the People

THE budget presented by Vishwanth Pratap Singh on March 16 was virtually the victory celebration by the Congress (I) Government and a "reward" to the people for having returned the representatives of the monopolists and the landlord class with the brutes majority since independence, defeating the leaders of the working class. The critical post-election analysis made by CITU and other left forces that, a Government proceeding on the capitalist path of development shall not deliver the goods to the people, is now coming true. Having fired the first salvo on March 13 when a load of Rs. 495 crores was unceremoniously released on the people by way of an unparalleled hike in the railway fares and freight, the Government on March 16 in fact formally threw away the veil of "socialistic pattern of society" and declared inauguration of unbridled capitalism in India. Having already hiked the steel prices by 15 per cent and that of cement, it has now increased the prices of almost all daily necessities of life like soap, printing and writing paper, vegetables, cooking gas and even Beedies and Kerosene and other petroleum products. It has now just reversed its all previous pronouncements that in the "mixed economy" the public sector will play a commanding role while the private sector "will also play a role". The Budget has now relegated the public sector to the secondary position and has handed over a significant part of the Indian market to the monopolists and the multinationals which will lead to strengthening the imperialist grip over the Indian economy and fleecing of the people. Surrendering to the pressure of imperialism and the Indian capitalist collaborators who do not mind appeasing imperialists' capital at the expense of the public sector, the Govt on one hand has launched a massive attack on the common people through the inflationary tax-cum-price hikes and deficit financing, and on the other, allowed generous tax concessions and relief to the capitalists, unparalleled since independence.

The basic rate of income tax to the companies has been reduced to 5 percentage points with promise for further reduction and complete abolition of surtax and surcharge on income tax. The exemption limit on wealth tax has been raised and the rates of wealth tax reduced. The rate of income tax on the highest slab has been brought down from 60 per cent to 50 percent. Added to these are a number of indirect tax concessions to the capitalists and removal of export duty on 12 items to swell the profits of the exporters.

The Government has openly admitted that the total public sector outlay will not be higher than the previous year and the emphasis has been shifted towards the private sector. To this end, 25 industries have already been delicensed and the asset limit of the MRTP houses has been raised from Rs. 20 crores to Rs. 100 crores, even beyond the demand of Rs. 50 crores by the monopolists. Simultaneously, liberalisation of a number of imports and move to augment foreign collaboration have been under-

taken at the expense of the public sector like in power equipment, electronics, etc. On the top of this, the deficit proposed to the tune of Rs. 3349 crores, the highest proposed so far will actually be very high and will fleece the people by triggering an inflationary spiral. Above all, with all the tall talks of poverty removal in the rural sector, the total provision for the "special programmes" like IRDP, NREP and RLEGS is Rs. 8 crores less than that of last year.

In the above context of planning for the benefit of the capitalists, the so-called silver lining of relief to the workers, as flashed by the bourgeois press, in the form of raising the bonus ceiling, scrapping of CDS, etc. will vanish in no time by the inflationary squeeze.

The railway budget likewise guillotined the people's hope for a less expensive life and travelling with better amenities. Opposing the budget in Lok Sabha on March 18, Basudev Acharya (CPI-M) said, "there is an unparalleled increase in fares and freights without improving the performance of the railway". "During the 6th plan 14000 km of railway tracks were to be replaced. The achievement is only 50 percent. About 70,000 to 80,000 wagons and 6,000 to 7,000 passenger coaches are overaged...that is why the recurrence of accidents has increased"... "If you see the plan allocation, it has been reduced from 15 to 5 per cent over these years"... "During the debate on Transport Policy Committee Report, it was discussed that there is a crisis in wagon building. The railways have drastically cut down the order and wagons are not available". On introduction of computers in railways, he said, "Three crore youth are unemployed. Introduction of computers with the assistance from World Bank will surely squeeze the employment potentialities in the railways". He also pointed to the victimisation of the locomen, on the abolition of contract system relating to the coal and ash handling workers, on regularisation of the casual workers and absorption of the canteen workers and assailed the Government for going back on the assurances.

Sukomal Sen (CPI-M) likewise in the Rajya Sabha opposed the budget and said that under the conditionalities of the World Bank, the Government has turned the railways as a commercial service and not as an utility service and has made it an instrument for fleecing the people. He said, "like all railway ministers, Bansilal has tried to justify with utter futility the reasons for the hikes. But what about the performance of railways?...Security, Safety and Punctuality was the slogan which was going the other way about in all respects". He said, "with every increase in the fares our experience has been that of deterioration in the conditions".

The CITU secretariat therefore called upon the unions to launch action programmes and observe April 2 in protest against the budgets. (*The CITU statements on both the general and railway budgets are printed hereunder-*)

## Concessions to Big Business with a Populist Stance

**N**RISINGHA Chakrabarty, Secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement on the budget on March 17:

The Budget for 1985-86 in the Lok Sabha on March 16, grants around concessions to the big business under the facade of a populist stance. It is the firm opinion of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions that despite marginal relief to a section of workers due to raising of ceiling for bonus computation and relief on personal income tax, the heavy dose of indirect taxation and deficit financing added to the hefty impost on railway freight and fares would give an inflationary push to the economy and make the life of the common man miserable. The jubilations expressed by the representatives of the corporate sector points out in unmistakable terms that the real beneficiaries of this budget are the monopolies and multinationals.

The CITU points out that the crisis in our economy is apparent as the Central outlay is up only by a negligible 6.6 per cent, when the average rate of inflation had been to the tune of 7.5 per cent in wholesale prices during the period April-December 1984, and the price behaviour in this period leaves much scope for everyone to wonder whether the figures have been manipulated or not.

The Finance Minister has not forgotten the landlord lobby. The crop insurance scheme, in reality, is intended to please the kulaks and landlords who would now be benefited most. This is also an attempt to avoid or limit the direct responsibility of the Union Government to render full aid to the people during crop failure.

It is no satisfaction for the people to note that direct taxation has decreased and indirect taxation had increased, controls have been liberalised, 25 industries have been delicensed, the check in expenditure on advertisement and sales-promotion, (the euphemism for cut-throat marketing tactics which include bribery and corruption) have been removed and above all the public debt had reached a proportion when every child born in 1985-86 would have an amount of Rs. 1243/- as its share of public debt from the date of its birth.

The CITU is happy to note that its demand for stoppage of loans to such of the MRTP houses who render industrial undertakings sick and to consider the workers dues as prior charges have now been accepted by the government though other sterner measures like recovery of the mismanaged funds from the personal assets of the directors have not been accepted yet.

The only silver lining and innovative measure is the social security scheme (accident-insurance) for the rural poor, provided they do not have to pay any premium and the deaths and injuries in the murderous attacks by the landlord class on them are treated as results of accidents. The meagre amount needs upward revision.

The CITU opposes the heavy indirect taxation

and concessions to the affluent and demands suitable changes in the budget proposals so as to increase the purchasing power of the common man, which alone is the guarantee for expansion of our economy.

## CITU Denounces the Anti-People Railway Budget

**N**RISINGHA Chakrabarty, Secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions, has issued the following Statement on March 15:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly denounces the anti-people railway budget presented this year imposing heavy increases both in passenger fare and freight charges. The budget did not spare the items of daily necessities including food grains from this impost which would result in an inflationary trend increasing prices of all commodities and would be a cruel punishment on the common man. The claim of sparing passenger fare upto 50 Km and freight upto 500 Km has no meaning because of the railway's policy of discouraging short distance traffic. Besides the average lead in non-suburban passenger traffic was 121.3 Kms and 734 Kms in goods traffic in 1983-84, which means that only a very few would be spared. The steep hike in Monthly Season Ticket rates adds insult to injury if one takes into account the hardships which the commuters have to undergo in their daily journey. The 500 per cent increase in the occupation ratio during the peak hours, and late return to homes due to late running of trains have been sapping their health. Besides often they have to suffer loss of wages due to failure of the trains to reach destination in time.

The Budget does not provide for much electrification or opening of new lines. It does neither assure speedy rehabilitation of track and bridges nor does it ensure supply of wagons. The Coal India Ltd. has already raised a hue and cry of excessive accumulation of coal and pit heads. Accidents are on the increase. There is two hundred per cent increase in the number of officers (A & B) between 1950-51 and 1983-84 while staff cost as percentage to gross revenue receipt has dropped from 43.22 per cent to 40.12 per cent during the same period. All these show that the railways are in shambles. The fiasco of capitalist planning is manifest.

In matters of industrial relations, the Indian Railways remind one of the colonial rule. It has refused to implement I.L.O. Convention no: 1 concerning Hours of Work (Industry) for railway workers while the question of reducing the existing 48 hours week for other industrial workers has now come on the agenda. It has also gone back on the agreement of 10 hours duty which the Govt. of India had entered into with the Loco Running Staff Association in 1973 and in 1979. Victimisation of the workers continue. The CITU demands withdrawal of the increase in freight and passenger fares and a reversal in the policies.

# AROUND THE STATES

## ANDHRA PRADESH

### Protest Against Lockouts, Closures

Responding to the call given by the A.P. State Committee of CITU, the CITU unions organised protest actions in the industrial centres all over the state on February 4 against closures, lockouts, lay offs and retrenchments. These protest actions were in the form of gate meetings, dharnas, processions and public meetings. Thousands of workers participated in the action programmes. The leaders of CITU addressed the workers in the different centres and called upon them to intensify the united struggles against the policy of the government which was helping the monopolists to mount up the attacks on the workers. The leaders pointed out that the closures and lockouts were anti-social acts. By resorting to closures and lockouts the managements were ruining the industries and causing extreme hardship not only to the workers but also to the people. The workers must mobilise the support of the people through their united struggles and make it a public demand for take over of the closed and locked out units and also be prepared to participate in the management of the industries on equal footing in the interest of the people. Apart from the action programmes, the State Committee published several articles on the subject of closures and lockouts in the Telugu monthly journal Karmikalokam and also an article written by Srihari, the State Secretary of CITU in Prajashakti.

## KARNATAKA

### Worker Loses Arm for Lack of Safety

Recalcitrant attitude of the management towards safety cost the limb of a worker at the Dynamic Rubber and Plastic (P) Ltd., Bangalore on March 11. For the last several years the management was neglecting the safety measures in the factory and the Factory Inspectors too, conniving with the management never enforced the safety measures. This resulted in several injuries including a fatal one. On March 11, one worker, Indera Dev while working in the second shift got trapped in the machine and lost one arm. The Production Manager at the direction of the Managing Director immediately removed the flesh and fingers of the injured worker and threw them into the boiler to suppress the evidence. Instead of stopping the operation, the management asked the agitated workers to clean the machine and continue work. When the workers refused, the management forced them to quit the factory premises and then suspended a number of workers for alleged defiance of the orders of the superiors. In a statement issued to the press, T.S. Anantharam, president

and A M John Vincent, the General Secretary of the Dynamic Rubber and Plastic Worker's Union (CITU) denounced the attitude of the management and demanded enquiry into the safety lags in the factory and full compensation to the victim. They appealed to all sections of workers to join the action programmes with the demand.

## TAMILNADU

### State CITU Meeting

The Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU met at Madras from February 15 to 17 under the Presidency of K. Ramani. The meeting paid homage to Comrades N.V. Bhaskara Rao, Selvapathi Chettiar, P. Balachandra Menon and PM Subramaniam.

R. Umanath, State General Secretary placed his report briefing the current economic and political situation in the country. He also stressed the need for developing peace struggles by the workers in view of the aggressive designs of the US Imperialists for a nuclear war. A K Padmanabhan, the Assistant General Secretary submitted the work report for the last nine months. Having discussed in details the problems faced by the working class, the meeting decided to organise protest actions against the 30 per cent power cut in the state which caused serious problems for the working class and the peasantry. It demanded full compensation to the workers for the loss of wage due to the power cuts.

The meeting noted with serious concern the growing attacks on the trade union rights of the workers, particularly the CITU workers in the state owned establishments. The Tamilnadu Water and Drainage Board had ordered the workers not to join the CITU union, which was stayed by the Madras High Court. The authorities of Hosur Township issued orders to the local body workers to resign from the CITU union. The CITU again approached the High Court and the order was stayed. Mass transfers are being resorted to by the State Electricity Board and other corporations for participation in even the most elementary forms of trade union activities like demonstrations and dharnas even during off time. In this background, the State Committee decided to intensify action programmes and decided to hold a state level convention of these workers at Madras in April.

The meeting also discussed the situation in the textile industry where the managements instead of settling the demands of the unions had placed counter demands and wanted to cut down the existing benefits even. The meeting decided to hold district level conventions of textile workers to step up joint movements in the industry. The handloom workers in the state were also hard pressed because of increase in the price of yarn and non-payment of dues from the government. The growth of unlicensed powerlooms posed a serious challenge to the handloom industry. The

Tamilnadu Handloom Workers' Federation is already conducting a campaign demanding control on the spread of powerlooms and on other issues. The federation had decided to present a memorandum containing thousands of signatures to the State Government and also to hold demonstrations at various centres on March 4. Special conventions explaining the demands are being held. The federation has also decided to organise hunger strikes before the State Secretariat during the state Budget session. The meeting planned joint campaigns with the demands of the sugar industry workers also.

The meeting also discussed about the functioning of the Coordination Committee of Working Women and decided to hold the meeting of the State Coordination Committee of Working Women at Madras in March. The CITU members were directed to cooperate with the Democratic Women's Association to observe the International Women's Day on 8th March. The meeting also decided to increase the circulation of CITU Seithi, the State journal of CITU and Sinthanai, the journal of working women.

## DELHI

### Protest Against Attack on Stone Crushers

Shushil Bhattacharya, General Secretary of the Delhi State Committee which covers the Faridabad area in Haryana, in a statement issued on March 19, has condemned the acts of violence let loose on the stone crushing workers of Faridabad by the managements. The managements denied the workers the minimum wages even defying the Supreme Court order in this respect. On agitations being launched by the workers, the managements deployed hired musclemen to crush their movements. As a result of the brutal attacks on them, two workers were killed and a large number was injured. He also condemned the Haryana Government for refusing to enforce implementation of the minimum wages by the managements and instead, terrorising the workers against agitations. The Delhi State Committee demanded immediate arrest of the culprits and full compensation to the deceased and injured workers. It called upon the workers to intensify their agitations in pursuance of the demands.

## MAHARASHTRA

### Strike Against Lockouts, Closures

Organised under CITU, about 10,000 workers of various factories at Andheri struck work on March 15, in protest against the government's indifferent attitude towards the mounting attack by the employers in the form of closures, lockouts, non-payment of earned wages, etc. Having struck work, the

workers took out a huge procession and marched to the Mantralaya and held a rally. The Universal Luggage Mfg. Co., along with its four sister concerns including the manufacturers of "Aristocrat" had illegally locked out the establishments five months back affecting about 1500 workers. About 1200 workers of Dynacraft Machine Co. and Standard TV have not been paid their earned wages for the last several months. More than 1000 workers of 18 other factories have been affected by lockouts and closures. A delegation led by P. Sarzgiri, General Secretary of the State CITU met the Labour Commissioner and submitted a memorandum to him. The rally was addressed by P. Sanzgiri, K L Bajaj, P R Krishnan, Ashoke Banerjee, Mahendra Singh, P.M. Vartak, etc.

Prior to this strike and morcha, the State CITU and several other employees' unions organised a series of meetings at different parts of Bombay and the suburbs during the visit of Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary of CITU at the end of February. He addressed meetings organised at Ambernath, at Ballard Pier organised by the coordination committee of Central Govt. Employees, he addressed the industrial workers at Kalina and other places. In his address, Samar Mukherjee pointed to the anti-labour and pro-monopolist policy of the Congress (I) government at the centre which refused to delete from the Constitution the clause giving right to the employers to close down the industries and to incorporate a clause giving the right to work to the people. He called upon the workers to build broad based unity and carry forward their struggles against the policies of the government.

## MADHYA PRADESH

### Mass Demonstration by Koyla Shramik Sangh

A massive procession was organised by the Koyla Shramik Sangh (CITU) on February 7 at Dhanpuri Colliery. The procession was joined by SFI and DYFI members also in large numbers. The procession started from the CITU office in the railway colony and marched to the GM's office in the colliery shouting slogans. A delegation from CITU, SFI and DYFI met the Deputy Chief Personnel Manager and submitted two separate memoranda containing the demands of the workers and the general demands of the people, students and the youth. A rally was held thereafter presided over by Tirath Prasad and addressed by Abhoy Pandey, B.N. Mishra, S.C. Jain, Narayan, Mahindra Tripathy and others. The speakers called upon the workers to fight the anti-labour policies of the government. They stressed on maintaining the unity of the workers and the people to defeat the divisive forces and the imperialist conspiracies and also to develop struggle for peace against the nuclear war designs of the US imperialists and their NATO allies.

## RAJASTHAN

### Successful Struggle by Daily Wage Workers

Organised under CITU, the daily workers of Ganganagar Sugar Mills and Distillery compelled the management to arrive at a settlement with the Ganganagar Sugar Mills and Distillery Mazdoor Ekta Samity (CITU) on March 6. The union had placed a 22 point charter of demands to the management on January 25 on behalf of the distillery workers. On refusal of the management to negotiate the demands, the union launched agitational actions. The management thereafter commenced a negotiation on February 52, but broke it unilaterally refusing to accede to the demands. The workers had to step up the action programmes, when the management had to come down and make the settlement. According to the settlement, the daily wages of the workers have been increased from Rs. 13.50 to Rs. 15. Their retirement age has been increased to 60 years. They will be paid Rs. 40 per year for shoes. The management also agreed to put the workers on the next grade whose promotion to the higher grade had been unjustifiably blocked. On the question of house rent at par with other workers the management agreed to make the union a party to the negotiations before the State Labour Minister on behalf of the distillery workers.

## UTTAR PRADESH

### Gangster Attack on CITU Activists

The management of the Kishan Cooperative Sugar Mills Ltd, Anuhshar in Bulandshar, U.P. has made the CITU leaders and activists the target of physical attacks by its hired gangsters. When the workers staged a demonstration against the management on March 9 in protest against its violation of an agreement previously arrived at, a gang of hoodlums attacked the workers with lethal weapons. The Chief Administrator of the mill openly led the attack. Several workers were injured. However, they gallantly fought back and the hoodlums had to beat retreat. On March 10, when the Joint Secretary of the CITU Union, Rai Singh was returning home at night, a group of thugs surrounded him and severely assaulted him. Other workers rushed to the spot and saved him. The same night again, the gangsters attacked the treasurer of the union at his residence. The people of the locality intervened to save him. While running away the gangsters fired shots at the people at random. The Chief Administrator was seen moving with the same gangsters at dead of night near a temple. All representations made to the government by the Kishan Sahakari Chini Mill Krantikari Mazdoor Union (CITU) have been turned a deaf ear to. The union has demanded judicial enquiry into the attacks and called upon the workers to intensify their struggle against the highhandedness of the management.

## CONTRIBUTION TO BRITISH COALMINERS' STRUGGLE

The following CITU unions and individuals contributed to the British Coalminers struggle at the call of CITU:

Engineering Workers Union, Bombay	Rs. 1000.00
National Thermal Power Corporation Workers' Union, Hyderabad	Rs. 115.00
Industrial Estates and General Workers Union, Madras	Rs. 15.00
NLC Labour and Staff Union, Neyveli	Rs. 25.00
S. Subharaman, Neyveli	Rs. 50.00
Mattur General Workers Union, Tamilnadu	Rs. 20.00
Steel Employees Union, Arokhonam, Tamilnadu	Rs. 25.00
Tamilnadu Electricity Board Workers' Union, Madras	Rs. 50.00
Tamilnadu Electricity Board Employees Union, Tirunelveli	Rs. 50.00
TTCU Bhiyarangal Sangam, Trichy	Rs. 10.00
N.P.K. Muthu, CPI(M), Ramnad District, Tamilnadu	Rs. 25.00
Tamilnadu Electricity Workers Union, Madurai	Rs. 100.00
Central Organisation of Tamilnadu Electricity Emp. Union, Madras	Rs. 100.00
South India Viscose Co. Workers Union, Sirumugai	Rs. 25.00
A. Krishnan, Madras	Rs. 20.00
Periyar District Beedi and Cigar Workers Union, Erode	Rs. 5.00
Trichy District Textile Workers Union, Tamilnadu	Rs. 110.00
N.A. District Textile Mill Workers Unions, Tamilnadu	Rs. 25.00
Ramnad District Cement and Quarry Workers Union, Tamilnadu	Rs. 50.00
Bank Employees Federation of India, Tamilnadu Unit	Rs. 500.00
The General Workers' Union, Shivakasi, Tamilnadu	Rs. 10.00
Treepathi Thozhilalar Sangam, Shivakasi, Tamilnadu	Rs. 10.50
R.S. Rajendran Shetty, Dindigul, Tamilnadu	Rs. 100.00
Madras Motor General Workers Union, Madras	Rs. 100.50
Textile Workers Union, Ramnad Dist., Tamilnadu	Rs. 25.03
Secretary, CITU, FRC office, Periyakulam, Madurai	Rs. 112.00
Central Organisation of Tamilnadu Electricity Emp. Udumulpet	Rs. 30.00
Periyar Maratha Katta Dam Udaikkum Thozhilalar Sangam, Erode	Rs. 10.00
Jeena Pakkurathu Thozhilalar Sangam, Erode	Rs. 50.00
Kanyaspin Thozhilalar Sangam Tamilnadu	Rs. 15.00
Tamilnadu Electricity Employees Union, Matturdam. Tamilnadu	Rs. 25.00

### CITU PUBLICATION

*History of Railway Trade Union Movement —  
A Study*

By — Nrisingha Chakrabarty

With a foreword by Com. B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU

Approx. price Rs. 6/- Postage Extra

Book your orders to

CITU Central Office

6, Talkatora Road

New Delhi — 110 001

# Joint Movement by Jute Workers

**MONORANJAN ROY**, General Secretary of West Bengal Committee of CITU, **Bhowani Roy-chowdhury** General Secretary of BPTUC, **Anil Das Chowdhury** of UTUC, **Prosanta Dasgupta** of TUCC, along with **Niren Ghosh** and **Mohammed Amin** of W. Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union, **Tarun Maitra** of Federation of Chatkal Mazdoor Unions, **Kamal Sarkar** of All India Jute Workers Federation, **Arabinda Ghoshal** of Pashchim Banga Chatkal Mazdoor Federation, **Matish Roy** of Bengal Provincial Chatkal Mazdoor Union and **Bibhas Ghosh** of All India Jute Textile Workers Federation have issued the following statement to the press on February 22:

We want to draw the attention of all concerned to the serious situation in the jute industry manifested not only in the unprecedented high price of both raw jute goods but also by untold suffering of the jute workers on the alleged ground of shortage of raw jute. The master speculators in both jute industry and raw jute trade were allowed by the Union Commerce Ministry to push up the price of raw jute from Rs. 472.00 in May 1984 to Rs. 950.00 per quintal in December 1984. Price of jute goods registered an increase from Rs. 740.00 to Rs. 1240.00 for 100 sacking bags during this period. Now the jute barons are using the same plea of shortage to impose lockout and closing down as many as 12 mills involving about 50,000 workmen. 10 to 15 per cent production cut is being sought to be imposed in many mills. To pressurise the workers there are cases where they are not being paid their wages. It is a fact acknowledged by all that at least 85 to 87 lakh bales of jute was available this season including 10 lakh bales of carry over and 3 lakh bales of import by the JCI as against 75 to 78 lakh bales of mill requirement, if the installed capacity is utilised in full, while 6 to 10 mills have always been idle. Allowing 3 lakh bales for domestic uses, at least 5 lakh bales would be left as carry over which might be of some concern early next jute year.

We strongly condemn the Union Commerce and Industry Ministry for lending a deaf ear to our earlier demand for invoking Section 10A of the "Jute (Control and Licensing) Order 1961" to requisition the cornered stock of raw jute, both with the affluent and the speculating traders, for redistribution among the needy mills. The behaviour of jute barons and the jute traders has again proved that nothing short of nationalisation of jute industry and trade in raw jute and jute goods can offer a permanent solution to the problems of this ailing industry. We are reiterating the unanimous demand voiced by the West Bengal State Assembly on two consecutive Sessions in 1980 and 1981 for nationalising the industry.

As a short term solution of the present crisis we demand of the Government of India: (1) That the Jute be declared as an 'essential commodity' and to take immediate measure to unearth the excess stocks and supply to the needy mills under Section 10A of Jute (Control & Licensing) Order, 1961; (2) Re-

opening of closed/locked out mills with immediate effect. If the mills refused to comply, they should be taken over immediately by the Government of India and ultimately be nationalised; (3) The present system of procurement of raw jute should be replaced to prevent artificial shortage, by the monopoly procurement by the Government of India from the actual growers at a remunerative price and distribution direct to the mills according their necessity; (4) Mills must work all the days and there should not be any stoppage of production affecting wage cut and retrenchment of workers reducing the working days/shifts or closing down the mills. We also demand of the employers and their Association, IJMA, full implementation of Tripartite Agreement of April, 1984.

We also call upon the jute workers and their trade unions, irrespective of their affiliation to organise area wise Conventions for preparations of a Central Convention culminating into a "Dharna" before the Parliament to press the burning grievances of lakhs of jute workers and millions of jute growers.

## Unfair Labour Practice by Kala Kendra Management

The 142 day old strike by the artistes of the Shri Ram Bharatiya Kala Kendra was called off on February 22 following a settlement before the Labour Commissioner of Delhi.

Miss Nita Bali, Labour Commissioner, said that a settlement was reached after the management agreed to sympathetically consider the demand that all the suspended workers be taken back. It was also agreed that the workers' demands would be placed before the Industrial Tribunal. The management and the workers had also agreed to negotiate across the table, she said.

Miss. Bali added that as it was found that under the amended labour act, the management was guilty of unfair labour practices, the Labour Commissioner's office would prosecute the management. She said it was an unfair practice to keep workers temporary for a long period.

### CITU Nominations

The CITU Secretariat in its meetings held on March 10 and 23 nominated:

1. P.K. Ganguly, Secretary to attend the May Day celebrations and an international conference on the 40th Anniversary of Victory over Hitlerite Fascism and Japanese Militarism in the Second World War to be held at Moscow, at the invitation of AUCCTU, USSR.

2. Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary to attend the meeting of Central Trade Unions called by the Union Labour Minister at New Delhi on April 9.

3. Vimal Ranadive, Ananda Pathak and Manik Sanyal, Working Committee members to attend the international conference called by TUI of Agricultural, Forestry and Plantation Workers at New Delhi from April 17-19.

# Reception to ACFTU Delegation

THE three member delegation from All China Federation of Trade Unions consisting of Comrades Cai Shixiong Member of Presidium ACFTU, Zhou Cunen, Deputy Director, Institute on Labour Protection and Chu Lin (Interpreter) visited some industrial centres during their stay in India as guests of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions. The delegation came to participate in the International Symposium on Safety and Industrial Environment held in New Delhi on 2nd - 5th February.

The delegation was given warm reception wherever they went. On 4th February the Northern Zone Insurance Employees Association gave them a reception in Constitution House, New Delhi. R.P. Manchanda welcomed the delegation on behalf of the organisation. A three thousand strong reception was organised by the Delhi State Committee of CITU and Faridabad District Committee of CITU at Faridabad 6th February which was presided over by Chacha Shadiram. Mohan Lall, Jogendra Sharma and Susheel Bhattacharya welcomed them. The leader of the delegation replied to the reception. Earlier they visited Gedore Factory and the workers welcomed them.

The delegation went to Dhanbad on 8th February and visited the Indian School of Mines, Directorate General of Mines Safety and the Central Hospital of BCCL. In the afternoon they visited Sudamdih colliery where a grand reception was given to them by the coal workers. S.K. Baksi welcomed the delegation. In the evening a public reception was given to the delegation at the Indian School of Mines auditorium on behalf of Dhanbad District Committee of CITU. The delegation went to Bokaro on 9th February and saw the Bokaro Steel Plant. They had a discussion with Managing Director of the Steel Plant. In the evening there was a well attended public meeting at Vaishali Mode where several organisations welcomed the delegation.

The delegation was received at Howrah Station on 10th February by Prasanta Sur, Minister for Urban Development, Government of West Bengal; Kali Ghosh, Secretary West Bengal State Committee of CITU; K.K. Roy Ganguly, General Secretary, Water Transport Workers Federation of India and several others. They visited Stones (India) Ltd and Britannia Biscuit Co. Ltd. The workers in both the factories gave them warm reception. Prasanta Sur showed them places of interest in Calcutta. In the evening Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister Government of West Bengal received them at the office of West Bengal State Committee of CPI (M). Several ministers of the State Govt. and CITU leaders were present on the occasion. Subhash Chakravarty, Minister of Youth and Sport Affairs gave banquet in honour of the delegation at Great Eastern Hotel.

On 11th February the delegation visited Port and Dock area and saw the living conditions of workers. A reception was given to them by the maritime workers.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU was with the delegation in their visits to various places. The delegation left for China on 11th February afternoon. They were seen off at the airport by several CITU leaders.

## Comrade Parimal Mitra

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the sad demise of Com. Parimal Mitra member of West Bengal State Committee of CPI (M), Minister of Tourism and Forestry, Govt. of West Bengal, Working Committee member of CITU and president of All India Plantation Worker's Federation, on March 1, at the age of 66 at Salboui, Midnapur District, while on official work.

Born on 17th April, 1919, Com. Parimal Mitra was attracted towards the communist movement at an early age. He joined the banned Communist Party of India during the freedom struggle in 1939 and had to go underground in 1941. Since then he became a whole-timer of the party. As a young student he participated in students' movements and was the founder President of the Jalpaiguri District unit of the Students' Federation. Later he participated in the peasant movements particularly in North Bengal and took a leading role in the historic Tebhaga movement. Due to his leading role in the railway workers' movement also, he became the vice-president of Bengal Dooars Railroad Workers' Union and the Bengal-Assam Railroute Workers' Union. From 1952 he devoted his work in organising the tea plantation workers in North Bengal and became the General Secretary of Tea Garden Workers Union. Later on he became the President of the All India Plantation Workers' Federation. He was a member of the Working Committee of CITU since its foundation in 1970 and remained in the post till his death. He was elected to the West Bengal State Assembly from Kranti in Jalpaiguri district both in 1977 and 1982 and was the Minister for Tourism and Forestry in both the terms.

In his death the Communist movement has lost a revolutionary leader and the working-class lost a dedicated worker, organiser and leader. CITU dips its red flag in memory of Com. Parimal Mitra and sends its heart felt condolences to the bereaved members of his family.

# Illegal Activities of Central Coal Limited

Ramnika Gupta

CENTRAL Coal Fields Ltd. authorities are adopting all the nefarious methods of mafia tactics to drive away more than 650 workmen who are working since 1982 on permanent nature of jobs under illegally appointed contractors of CCL in Jayant Project of Singrauli, in Madhya Pradesh. The workers were being paid Rs. 9/- per day per person. Ramnika Gupta, General Secretary, Coalfield Labour Union raised the issue for payment at Rs. 32.95 i.e. as per N.C.W.A. III under supervision of C.C.L. management in 1984. Though the management agreed for same, the Personnel Manager, connived with contractors and gave certificate to Assistant Labour Commissioner, Central Sahdole that the payment is made correctly. At that time contractors had raised it Rs. 20/-, deducting Rs. 5/- for CMPF which they never deposited. In 1985 Coalfield Labour Union raised another dispute before Regional Labour Commissioner, Jabalpur, to departmentalise the labour and a date for conciliation was fixed on 14th March at Sahdole. But the management pasted a notice at work place that since there is no work for contractors, so no work for workmen. The workmen had refused to accept payment unless it was paid at Rs. 32.95. But on 17th March when Ramnika Gupta reached Jayant, the General Manager had given in writing that the arrears of difference of wage will be paid for four weeks within a week deducting the bills of contractors. The management also agreed to extend the contract work till the matter of departmentalisation was decided. But the management betrayed again. The Personnel Manager on the contrary instigated the mafias of the villages to drive the workmen out. However, the villagers of Amjhar and other places resisted and supported the cause of workmen.

Thereafter a delegation consisting of M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, Ramnika Gupta, Murli Uraon, Kanhaya and Ramkishan met the Deputy C.L.C. at Delhi and demanded that all the workers be paid full arrears within 15 days; are marked attendance and given payment slips and measurement slips under statutory provisions; are departmentalised since they work departmental jobs; are given receipts for C.M.P.F. deductions and are not made to work for more than eight hours without overtime. They also demanded that local officials who have violated the law by engaging contract in a prohibited category of work should be prosecuted and punished. It should be probed how licenses were issued to contractors on prohibited categories. It was also demanded that CCL officials and contractors be prosecuted for non-issuance of payment slips and measurement slips to workmen as per provisions of the law. It was also demanded that CCL officials and contractors be prosecuted for non-issuance of payment slips and measurement slips to workmen as per provisions of the law. It was also brought to the notice of authorities that the contract had

actually expired on 31st December 1984 but CCL extended it without fresh tenders and contractors also got their contract licences renewed for 1985 as coal handling plant was not ready.

The Deputy C.L.C. on finding the serious nature of violations of labour laws and safety laws and also seriousness of the case of 650 workmen's livelihood sent a telex message to Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) at Jabalpur to keep the 8th April conciliation meeting on 30th March at Jayant Project so that matter can be inspected, judged and solved on the spot. The workers' morale is very high and they are determined to fight it out and win it at any cost under the leadership of CITU. They are keeping a close watch and not allowing the contractors to remove their machines till their dues are paid.

## No Unanimity on D.A.

S. R. Kulkarni, President, HMS; M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU; R.K. Bhakt, Secretary, BMS and Homi Daji, Vice-President, AITUC issued the following statement to the press, on March 21:

The Tripartite Committee on D.A. for Public Sector Employees constituted on 25th May, 1983 failed to come to any conclusion because of the refusal of the managements and the BPE to accept rock bottom offer made by the representatives of workers. The workers' representatives proposed that there should be no more meetings of the Committee in view of the dilatory tactics adopted by the representatives of the Public Sector managements and the BPE. The Trade Union representatives gave a rock bottom offer of Rs. 1.75 per point rise in Consumer Price Index Numbers, with effect from 1st January, 1983. The Director General of the BPE however adhered to the old proposal of Rs. 1.50 per point. The Union Labour Minister, T. Anjaiah who presided over the meeting did not give any fresh proposal.

Since the managements of public sector undertakings were not prepared to come to any settlement on the reasonable offer given by the workers' representatives, there was no point in continuing the discussion. Hence it was decided to conclude the work of the Committee by submitting two different points of view to the Government of India. As there was no unanimity inspite of best efforts of the workers' representatives they pressed their demand of Rs. 2 per point of rise in the index. They condemned the management of public enterprises and the BPE for their recalcitrant attitude.

We appeal to the two million workers in public sector undertakings to raise their voice of protest against the stand of the Government of this question and press the demand of Rs. 2/- per point of rise in price index. They should be prepared to join countrywide united movement on this issue.

# Conference of SWFI

THE working committee of the Steel Workers Federation of India decided to hold the 2nd Conference of the Federation on 18th to 20th May, 1985. B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU will inaugurate the conference, Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary of CITU and President of the Federation will preside over the conference. The mass rally on 20th May will be addressed among others by Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister, Govt of West Bengal.

M.K. Pandhe, Vice-President of the Federation presided over the meeting, which commenced with passing of a condolence resolution on the passing away of Com. Parimal Mitra, Com. N.V. Bhaskara Rao, Com. N. Sridharan and Com. Kalyan Roy. The meeting considered the job evaluation manual prepared by the Standardisation Committee of the National Joint Committee for Steel Industry (NJCS) and the report of the Committee on the impact of the job evolution on the steel workers all over the country. The study shows that only 11 per cent of the jobs will be upgraded while 43 per cent will be downgraded and the rest will remain static. In terms of actual employment in the industry it appears that it will adversely affect 60 per cent of the workers engaged in the industry. The meeting therefore decided to oppose the job evaluation manual and the members of the Standardisation Committee were advised to take the stand accordingly in the next meeting of Standardisation Committee. The meeting reviewed the non-implementation of the last steel agreement by the steel management regarding pension scheme, construction

of houses, payment of special incentive, review of plant incentive scheme, contract workers, etc., and decided to campaign among the workers on these issues so that the management is forced to implement all the clauses of the agreement before the commencement of the next wage negotiations. Jibon Roy, General Secretary of SWFI gave a report on the case won by the CITU in the Supreme Court regarding the termination of Manas Mukherjee of the Durgapur Steel Plant. The Supreme Court struck down the clause in the standing order providing power to terminate a worker without assigning any reason on the plea that the President of India was pleased to do so. The Supreme Court directed the management to scrap the clause within 15 days of the judgement and awarded Rs. 1,50,000 to Manas Mukherjee as compensation for the loss of past wages and compensation for future loss in earning. Though Manas Mukherjee has been reinstated by the Supreme Court judgement, it said that he should resign after joining the duty.

The meeting also considered the reference of the case of victimised leading activists during the contract workers' strike at Jamshedpur and decided to fight the case.

M.K. Pandhe reported on the Round Table on Steel, Workshop on transfer of technology in steel industry, the report of the D.A. Committee and the issues that are likely to come up in the next wage agreement. The next meeting of the Working Committee would be held at Rourkela on April 17.

## Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	Oct. 1984	Nov. 1984	Dec. 1984								
				<b>Bangalore</b>	650	649	648	<b>Coonoor</b>	648	650	664
				<b>Chikamagalur</b>	594	598	590	<b>Madurai</b>	625	639	638
				<b>Kolar G.F.</b>	601	604	694	<b>U.P.</b>			
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>				<b>Kerala</b>				<b>Kanpur</b>	569	574	558
<b>Gudur</b>	525	540	530	<b>Alleppey</b>	665	676	659	<b>Saharanpur</b>	582	587	582
<b>Guntur</b>	653	648	635	<b>Alwaye</b>	633	638	637	<b>Varanasi</b>	672	677	661
<b>Hyderabad</b>	614	612	603	<b>Mundakayam</b>	582	589	588	<b>West Bengal</b>			
<b>Assam</b>				<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>				<b>Asansol</b>	583	590	576
<b>Digboi</b>	594	588	583	<b>Balaghat</b>	612	615	607	<b>Calcutta</b>	602	599	577
<b>Doom Dooma</b>	490	485	473	<b>Bhopal</b>	624	629	625	<b>Darjeeling</b>	487	501	489
<b>Labac</b>	457	447	465	<b>Bhopal</b>	594	593	584	<b>Howrah</b>	555	549	538
<b>Mariani</b>	511	517	512	<b>Gwalior</b>	605	609	606	<b>Jalpaiguri</b>	489	498	485
<b>Rangapara</b>	536	535	510	<b>Indore</b>				<b>Raniganj</b>	521	530	511
<b>Bihar</b>				<b>Maharashtra</b>				<b>Delhi Territory</b>	608	605	598
<b>Jamshedpur</b>	538	542	529	<b>Bombay</b>	615	618	612	<b>Other Centres</b>			
<b>Jharia</b>	525	536	521	<b>Nagpur</b>	606	614	614	<b>Berhampur ('49)</b>	823	901	861
<b>Kodarma</b>	598	595	584	<b>Sholapur</b>	622	623	625	<b>Cuttack ('49)</b>	769	765	792
<b>Monghyr</b>	587	593	581	<b>Orissa</b>				<b>Jabalpur ('49)</b>	773	781	772
<b>Noamundi</b>	542	528	523	<b>Barbil</b>	553	552	552	<b>Beawar ('51-52)</b>	671	670	681
<b>Gujarat</b>				<b>Sambalpur</b>	606	608	598	<b>Tripura ('61)</b>	534	521	527
<b>Ahmedabad</b>	579	580	573	<b>Punjab</b>				<b>H.P. ('65)</b>	425	425	425
<b>Bhavanagar</b>	590	588	593	<b>Amritsar</b>	591	588	580	<b>Goa ('66)</b>	431	436	438
<b>Haryana</b>				<b>Rajasthan</b>				<b>Bhilai ('66)</b>	394	399	394
<b>Yamunanagar</b>	584	585	578	<b>Ajmer</b>	586	584	581	<b>Bhilwara ('66)</b>	339	340	343
<b>J. &amp; K.</b>				<b>Jaipur</b>	608	607	601	<b>Chhindwara ('66)</b>	306	309	310
<b>Srinagar</b>	643	638	611	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>				<b>Kothagudem ('66)</b>	383	395	392
<b>Karnataka</b>				<b>Madras</b>	584	592	593	<b>Rourkela ('66)</b>	393	394	390
<b>Ammathi</b>	598	619	612	<b>Coimbatore</b>	615	626	639	<b>All India ('60)</b>	592	595	588

(Figures in bracket indicate base year)

# Demand for Nationalisation of Bengal Potteries and National Tannery

A trade union delegation consisting of Shri Lal Bahadur Singh and Shri Pramathes Sen (INTUC), Shri Badal Kar (CITU), Shri Bhajan Dasgupta (HMS) and Shri Mohit Biswas of Officers' Association met Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister on March 19 in connection with nationalisation of Bengal Potteries Ltd and National tanneries Ltd. The delegation was accompanied by Shri Amal Dutta, Chief Whip CPI (M), Lok Sabha, Shri Dipen Ghosh, leader CPI (M) Group in Rajya Sabha and Shri D.P. Roy Member, Rajya Sabha (Indian National Congress).

The delegation had a detailed discussion with the Prime Minister about the nationalisation of Bengal Potteries Ltd. It had for two years, after the management was taken over, maintained its profitability which later on disappeared because of non-supply of raw material and other factors. It has a good market with orders worth of Rs. 4 crores pending on hand. Hence this concern can be made viable if proper inputs are given and workers' participation in management is ensured.

The Prime Minister first stated that the workers should take over the concern through cooperative,

a theme which was initiated by Shri Veerendra Patil, Minister of Industry, when this delegation met him on March 12, last. It was pointed out to the Prime Minister that the Govt. in any case gets involved on the question of supply of raw material, providing working capital and also for export and marketing. Hence it would always be better if the undertaking is nationalised. The Prime Minister agreed to give the question due consideration. In the meanwhile the question of extension of the period of take over would also be considered.

On the question of nationalisation of National Tannery Ltd, the delegation pointed out that the Public Financial Institutions already own over 80 per cent of its equity capital. With expanding market in leather industry, the undertaking can make profit, if it is properly managed. The Prime Minister assured the delegation that he would examine the question of its nationalisation.

The delegation also urged the Prime Minister to reconsider the denotification orders issued in respect of India Rubber Manufacturing Co. and tag the same with the Tyre Corporation of India. The Prime Minister assured the delegation that he would examine the matter.

(from page 6)

at the cost of the teeming millions. The struggles of the workers in protest of such policies are suppressed ruthlessly by resorting to closures, lock-outs and retrenchments to compel them to submit to the dictates of the managements. Lay offs and retrenchments are resorted to on the plea of power shortage also. The Govt. also signify their green signal to closures and such anti-labour acts of the managements. The constitutional right of trade union activities and even the most elementary forms of trade union struggles are curbed. The mass of workers who are the producers are not taken into confidence. The Government is flouting its own scheme of workers' participation in management by denying them an equal footing on it and thereby aggravating the crisis in Indian industries. All these real problems have not found place in the ten point Terms of Reference of the Expert Committee.

12. The CITU therefore suggests the following:

(a) Nationalisation of the entire cotton textile industry is the only remedy in the present situation; but simply nationalisation with bureaucratic management cannot deliver the goods to the people. The mess created by NTC is for everyone to see. Nationalised textile industry has to be managed

with participation of workers with equal status on policy and decision-making; (b) All closed and locked out mills have to be opened and all the retrenched workers are to be reabsorbed. The Government must not give permission to closures, lock-outs, layoffs and retrenchments on any plea; (c) The vast domestic market should be fully utilised by reducing the prices of textiles so as to reach the rural poor and the common people; (d) The drive for foreign markets and dependence on western markets have to be reduced; (e) Excise duty on cotton cloth should be abolished or drastically reduced; (f) The policy of modernisation and import of technology and textile machinery should be halted; (g) The policy of boosting man-made fibres should be reviewed and steps to augment production of cotton to meet the requirement of the mills are to be taken; (h) Remunerative prices have to be given to the cotton growers for their produce, apart from subsidies and inputs. The Government must make it a practice to purchase cotton directly from the growers; (i) Unbalanced development of the power looms to boost the profits of the mill magnets and exploitation of labour has to be stopped; (j) Appropriate incentives for the development of handlooms should be introduced. They should get the yarns at much reduced price. Certain specific items of cloth should be specifically reserved for production in the handlooms only.

## **Greetings by AICCWW**

**T**HE All India Coordination Committee of Working Women greeted the fighting women all over the world on March 8, the International Women's Day, which, this year, marked the 75th Anniversary of International Women's year. It was significant that this day was observed in the midst of the end of the women's decade coming to an end in July 1985. It greeted all the sisters in Socialist countries who had emancipated themselves and were progressing rapidly in all the fields. Women in Soviet Union have been in the fore-front of the struggle for peace. The men and women in Soviet Union had braved the terror of Hitler's regime in the 2nd World War, sacrificing everything to save their country from fascism. The victory at Stalingrad and Moscow from which the soldiers of Hitler were driven back to Berlin changed the whole map of the Europe, the Eastern Europe coming under Socialist system. It was quite appropriate that the World International Democratic Women's Federation called upon women throughout the world to celebrate the memorable 40th Anniversary of the victory over German Fascism.

Women in India were proud of the Vietnamese women who hurled back the strong French and American imperialism with their meagre resources but with the strong will to liberate their country once for all from the imperialist menace. Women in China were taking big strides in the socialist construction of their country.

The AICCWW greeted the fighting women in El Salvador, Nicaragua and other countries in Latin America, very small countries, but virtually liberating their countries by taking up arms against American imperialism who have been helping the reactionaries in their countries for continuing exploitation.

Women in South Africa, celebrated 1984 as the year of women. Their continuous fight is against the Apartheid regime, a rule of minority white Government over the Black majority.

The AIWWCC greeted their sisters in the neighbouring countries especially the brave women in Pakistan. It protest against the despotic, fundamentalist misrule of the military ruler, General Zia, the women teachers, lawyers, employees, housewives etc. were coming out in increasing numbers, fighting against the blatant inequality meted out to them in every sphere and forcing them back to houses making them "sex symbols" only. Under the joint leadership of coordinating committee consisting of more than 14 women's organisations, they continue to fight the military regime of Pakistan. The women and people of Bangladesh also, under the leadership of the two women militants, Sheikh Hasina and Khalida Zia are fighting against the military regime of Ershad for return to democracy. Women in Iran had have to put up a stiff fight to keep the gains

they achieved after the revolution as the Khomeini Government was using religion as a weapon to send them back to the kitchen.

The last two years have seen tremendous enthusiasm and concern among women including those in USA, Britain, France, Germany, Australia and other countries in the fight for peace. The women in Greenham Common in England made history while resisting the cruise missiles to the last minute, entering in the barbed fences to break the police cordon. All over the world women were coming in the fore-front to fight for peace, against the threat of nuclear and chemical war unleashed by the USA demanding "No Nuclear War".

The women in Britain, wives and the families of coal miners set another example as to how the women were making a common cause with the trade union movement for their demands.

While turning to the situation of women in India on the day, one cannot but conclude that the Indian women have still to go a long way to achieve their objectives, while their condition in India is far more wretched. The women job seekers have increased from 22 lakhs in 1981 to 30 lakhs in 1982. Lakhs of women in unorganised sectors have no means of livelihood. The Minimum Wages Act does not apply to these women. Mechanisation in the industries which traditionally employed majority of women, has thrown thousands of women jobless facing starvation. Equal Remuneration Act is not being implemented. Women in services for even more than 30 years are not made permanent. The International Women's Day passed off in India in the midst of increasing crimes against women, especially with atrocities against Harijan and Tribal women and dowry burning.

After the tragic assassination of the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, women have voted massively in the Parliamentary elections for the Congress(I). The Congress rulers have promised to look after the interests of women, give employment, training and so on, for which a special ministry has been set up. But there is a vast difference between promise and practice. During the last 38 years promises were in galore, but never implemented. The ruling party is quite aware that nothing substantial has been done and laws concerning women which had to be passed under the pressure of women's movement are not being implemented.

The experience of the international women's movement all over the world tells us that without unity and struggle nothing can be achieved. On the occasion of International Women's Day, on the 8th March 1985 we reiterate to fight for equal status and equality for the women. At the same time we would fight for Peace which has become essential for the survival of mankind and for development of women.

# International Struggles

## Great Britain

The nearly one year old strike by the two lakh British coalminers — the longest and bitterest in the history of Britain, which commenced on March 12, 1984, came to an end on March 3, 1985. The delegates of the National Union of Mineworkers decided not to prolong the strike when about 50 per cent of the workers had joined, and voted by 98 to 91 to return to work.

But although this return to work apparently meant a "victory" for the Thatcher Government, as flashed by the bourgeois press, it was not so. The NUM decided to return to work without an agreement. The key issue of the closure of 20 pits and retrenchment of 20,000 workers still hangs in balance. The workers can resort to actions on the various issues including the pit closures.

The bitter struggle started and continued against a background of mass unemployment in Britain — about four millions (15 per cent of the adult workforce) were deprived of the right to work. The deep economic and social crisis stemmed from the capitalists' desperate hunt for profits following the deep rooted recession pervading the entire capitalist world. The response of the employers to the crisis was to sack the workers and intensify exploitation of those still in work. The British Government assisted the monopolists by selling off the public owned assets to the private sector and slashing the social and welfare measures. Apart from this the Government had enacted a series of anti-trade union legislations with "codes of conduct" as guidelines as to how the acts should be interpreted by the courts restricting the right to strike. Faced by this onslaught the British trade union movement received some set backs during the last few years. But the miners' undeterred struggle gave the trade union movement a new vitality and a direction to fight against unemployment, for the right to work and save the national industries from the capitalist racketeers. The fall of the Edward Heath Government in 1974 due to the struggle of the same miners was a haunted nightmare to Thatcher. With so much at stake, the Government used full power of the state to crush the struggle. The police, the courts and the media attacked the miners with such viciousness and barbarity that was not seen since 1920s. The assets of the NUM, all contributions and even food packets were seized and the union was heavily fined to starve the workers to destitution. About 10,000 workers were arrested and several killed. Five million pounds a week were spent for the police to unleash repression with the hired thugs. As the strike continued, the police became more brutal. Villages were put under police seize, houses were searched and telephone lines cut off. The police in riot gear, horseback and vans drove into the picket lines and beat up the strikers ruthlessly.

The savage vengeance with which they tried to break the strike could be seen from the fact that in Yorkshire 1000 police in riot gear escorted one strike breaker to work. At Easington 200 police escorted one strike breaker to work. They were not accountable for their actions to anyone. Margaret Simey, Chairwoman of the Merseyside police authority, the local Government authority to which the police are accountable to, told the "Gurdian" that police are out of democratic control. It was reported that the mass scale transfer of the police force to deal with the strike caused shortage of police to fight crime which increased in Manchester and some other places. Even the "Police Review", the police newspaper commented that the police instead of being used to preserve law and order were being used to implement the Government's policy. Even a week before the decision was taken to return to work, the police swooped on thousands of trade union members who converged to Hyde Park, London from all over the country on February 24 and marched to Trafalgar Square for a rally, and beat up even women and children and arrested 120.

But this barbarous repression was resisted by the mine workers for the last one year. The unique feature was the participation of the women workers and the wives of the miners in the struggle. In every aspect of the struggle they played a full part. They joined the picket lines, toured to various places, addressed meetings and collected food and money for the workers. The level of their activity gave a new dimension to the women's movement in Britain, demonstrating a determination to struggle against discrimination, injustice and sexism and refusing to accept a secondary role in labour movement.

The miners thus fought a glorious battle bringing the various trade unions near to the point of class struggle. The attempt to curb the right to strike and right to work proved extremely costly for the Thatcher Government—at the cost of the people. The economic loss was about five billion pounds. The loss of the Electricity Board alone was about two billion pounds for substituting oil for coal. Billions of pounds were added to the public sector borrowings and to the balance of payment deficit. There has been a drastic fall in the value of sterling and rise in international rates. The reduction in economic growth will force the Government to revise its budget now. And still the Prime minister remained adamant not to negotiate and to suppress the struggle in an authoritarian way, whatever may be the economic cost. But this enormous economic cost has been very small as compared to social cost of the confrontation. Britain is more divided today than ever before. The ruthless repression by the police has alienated itself from the people and ripped the fabric of Britain's civil society apart. The cause and determination of the struggle have polarised not only the working class but the British society as a whole.

On March 5 the thousands of workers entered the mines in massive processions shouting slogans with their heads high and banners aloft, denouncing the Government's closure policy. Arthur Scargill, the President of NUM said, "It is upon struggles such as ours that democracy itself depends. Our fight will go on".

### FRG

A huge demonstration was held at Heilbronn recently in protest against the continued deployment of U.S. first strike nuclear missiles in F.R.G. The demonstration was jointly organised by various trade unions, the W. German Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Ecologists Party—Greens and several progressive youth organisations. Representatives of various democratic organisations also took part in the demonstration and signed a "Heilbronn Appeal" calling for a halt to the deployment of U.S. nuclear missiles and dismantling those already sited. The participants, over 12000 in number marched from the city centre to the U.S. military base at Valdhaid where an accident took place on January 11 involving a Pershing II missile, killing several people. They formed a human chair around the base announcing their determination to carry forward the struggle for peace to avert a nuclear

### Portugal

The National Women's Movement Committee in its meeting held recently at Lisbon drew up a broad struggle programme to defend the fundamental rights of the Portugese women. The programme followed from the facts recorded in the meeting that women were the primary victims of the social and economic crisis of price rise and unemployment. Over three lakhs of women were jobless comprising 50 percent of the unemployed. Apart from this about six lakhs of them were only temporary or part time workers and were threatened with unemployment. The meeting also recorded that the women were also being discriminated against not only in jobs, but also in social and political life.

### Canada

Organised by the Quebec Labour Federation over 2000 trade union activists held a rally at Montreal, the industrial centre of Quebec Province to protest against the provincial Government's anti-worker legislation aimed at curbing the right to strike. The trade unions resolved to step up the struggle till the Government was compelled to withdraw the move.

### South Korea

Over 500 coal miners and their wives seized con-

### Hunger in America

"Hunger in U.S.A. has reached epidemic proportions and is getting worse", according to the report by the Physicians' Task Force on Hunger, conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health. The report said that 20 millions of Americans are hungry some time each month. Lines in Soup Kitchens are growing, there is an upsurge in infant mortality and malnutrition is widespread among the elderly and the unemployed. The report added that lack of food is not the reason, but it is due to the effects of recession combined with Reagan administration's drive for arms race and cutbacks in the programmes for the disadvantaged. By increasing the annual federal food programmes just by the amount spent on two nuclear aircraft carriers, hunger could be eliminated in America, the report said.

holocaust. Lotta Hunter of the W. German Communist Party said that since 1983 when the struggle was started to declare the city a nuclear free zone, the ranks had swollen considerably and a large number of the citizens had signed the Heilbronn Appeal.

### Japan

The recently held Congress of SOHYO, the largest trade union centre of Japan resolved to fight during the traditional spring struggles, against the intensified attacks on the workers' rights by Government and the big business and against the policy of the Government toeing the line of Washington in stepping up war preparations. It denounced the Government for increasing military spending and freezing the social spending which has led to mass unemployment, which has reached four millions now. The Congress also adopted a document calling upon the workers to step up struggles against the deployment of U.S. medium range nuclear missiles in Western Europe and the Pacific and against the star war plans of the Reagan administration.

trol of South Korea's biggest coal mine near Changsong, about 175 km from Seol on March 6. The militant workers denounced the anti-labour and repressive policy of the pro-American Government and denounced the pro-Government union leadership and demanded direct election of their leaders by them. Production was totally suspended in the mine.

### South Africa

More than a hundred of the black miners were injured when the Apartheid Government police fired on the gold miners on February 15 in Driefrontein gold mines near Johannesburg. Over 25,000 black workers are on strike in the gold mines in and around Johannesburg region demanding improvement of their working and service conditions and for abolishing corporal punishment which is still a normal practice by the minority white regime of South Africa. At Dreifontein only, the owners sacked 12,000 black miners for participating in the strike. Braving the murders, brutal repression, torture and forced deportation and banishment, the black workers of the gold mines have waged a grim battle for the end of the white rule.