



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

March to Parliament—April 18

IN pursuance of the decisions of the August 21 Convention held at New Delhi and further reiterated in the January 20 Convention against lockouts, closures and retrenchments, the National Campaign Committee in its meeting held on March 15 set the final seal on the programme of March to Parliament on April 18. The enthusiasm of all the constituents of the N.C.C. for the success of the united programme to raise it to higher forms was fully reflected by the large participation of the representatives in the meeting. The meeting was presided over by A.P. Chakravarty of TUCC and attend by Indrajit Gupta, Parvati Krishnan, T.N. Siddhanta, Y.D. Sharma (AITUC); M.K. Pandhe, Nrisingha Chakraborty, P.K. Ganguly (CITU); O.P. Aghi, R.K. Bhakt (BMS); Brij Mohan Toofan, Vireshwar Tyagi (HMS); Pratul Chowdhury (UTUC); Pritish Chandra, Gyan Singh (UTUC-LS) and J.S. Dara (ITUC).

The enthusiasm of the constituents of the NCC to make the programme successful was obviously the reflection of the urge of the working class to unite and demonstrate their opposition to the anti-labour, anti-people and pro-monopolist, pro-feudal and pro-multi-national policies of the Government of India, through still higher forms of struggles. This urge was truly focused in the August 21 Convention. While the Bombay Convention of June 4, 1981 made the first dent at the anti-labour and fiscal policies of the Government, the Delhi Convention not only doubled up the representations, but deliberated on a much wider spectrum of offensives launched by the Government and the employers, against the divisive forces and on the dangers created by the capitalist crisis including the threat of a nuclear war looming large in the international arena. The correct path of united struggles by all sections of the working people was further given a concrete shape in the January 20 convention by the resolution to fight against the new offensive of lockouts, closures and denotifications by new and higher forms of struggle. Systematically following the guidelines of the two conventions, the state Campaign Committees held various conventions at state levels and district levels both, apart from gate meetings and rallies held by the various unions

and observance of a week of campaign from March 19 to 25 to mobilise all sections of the working people — the private sector workers, the Government employees and the public sector workers and the workers affected by closures and lockouts — to culminate at the first phase of movement on April 18 at New Delhi.

Apart from the demands raised by the Bombay Convention, the April 18 March will focus on the following demands also:

(a) Effective price control of essential commodities, their public distribution and take over of wholesale trade in food grains and other necessities of daily consumption; (b) nationalisation of the key industries like jute, tea sugar, drugs, textiles, etc; (c) stop taking loan from IMF, World Bank and foreign commercial banks; (d) curb the activities of the multi-nationals, curtail import of technology and achieve self-sufficiency; (e) right to work to be incorporated as a fundamental right in the constitution and unemployment allowance for the unemployed; (f) ban on retrenchments, lockouts and closures; (g) stop denotification and take over of the sick industries; (h) need based minimum wage; (i) remunerative prices to the peasants; (j) a central legislation for the agricultural workers and higher minimum wages; (k) recognition of trade unions through secret ballots and guarantee of collective bargaining and trade union rights; (l) job security and opportunities to working women; (m) repeal of NSA, ESMA and other anti-trade union legislations.

Since the anti-labour and pro-monopolist policies of the Government have further been accentuated by the conditionalities of the IMF loan and the virulent form of lockouts, closures, industrial sickness and retrenchments have created a holocaust jobs of the workers, there is no doubt that the anger of the working class and their growing hatred against the Government's policies, will give the March a militant form surpassing all previous records of united movements launched by the National Campaign Committee.

OBSERVE PEACE DAY ON APRIL 13

Walk Out Strike by LIC Employees

ABOUT 45,000 LIC employees staged a 2-hour walk out strike on March 14 all over India protesting against the retrograde wage packet offered by the Government. The call for the strike was jointly given by the four national organisations of the LIC employees, viz, All India Insurance Employees Association, All India LIC Employees Federation, All India Life Insurance Employees' Association and the National Organisation of Insurance Workers.

It is to be noted that since long the Government have made the LIC employees a special target of attack. While their right to collective bargaining has constantly been under attack and there is the move to spilt the LIC into five divisions to scuttle the organisational unity of the employees and their capacity to fight, there has been no settlement of their demands since 1974, whereas a number of settlements have been arrived at during the period in several comparable public sector undertakings. After dilly dallying all these years, the Government ultimately offered them a wage package during negotiations on March 8 and 9, which revises the wages downwards, inflicts drastic wage cuts, imposes wage freeze and exposes the employees to the vagaries of price rise more than ever before. The package seeks to drastically depress the scales of basic pay at all levels from the minimum to the maximum. It introduces the element of fixed D.A., and replaces the linkage of basic pay with variable D.A., which is in vogue for the last 22 years. It further withdraws the existing special pay and stagnation increments and makes no mention of bonus. In one stroke the package sought to reduce to shambles whatever remnants so far had survived of the settlement of 1974.

In a joint letter addressed to Finance Minister on March 10, the leaders of four organisations rejected the package lock, stock and barrel and said that such a package can never provide the basis of any negotiation. The package gave a cheating blow to the hard labour of the LIC employees which was the basis of the ever increasing productivity of the LIC.

Having walked out in strike, the LIC employees all over the country held mass meetings in front of the offices. In the main office at Delhi, a massive gate meeting was held which attended by the leaders of the four organisations who came from Chandigarh and other places. P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU addressed the meeting among others. The National Campaign Committee in its meeting held on March 15 extended full support to the struggle of the LIC employees. In pursuance of the action programmes a series of one hour walkout strikes are to be observed on March 20, 22, 27, 30, and April 4 and 6.

Meeting on Production in Steel Industry

THE sixteenth meeting of steel production was held in New Delhi on 12th March. The Chairman of SAIL observed that the last year started with major infrastructural difficulties such as inadequate power, bad quality of coal and heavy stock of steel. He mentioned about the target for the next year for SAIL which was 7.14 million tons of ingot steel, 5.44 million tons of saleable steel and 1.32 million tons of pig iron. He expressed concern at the growing "wild cat" strikes, movements of contract workers, so called restrictive practices by the workers, etc.

M.K. Pandhe Secretary, CITU speaking in the meeting said that the target fixed this year was even less than during 1976-77 indicating the stagnant production. He criticised the Govt's policy of import of steel when stocks were lying unsold in steel stockyards. Referring to Alloy steel industry he attacked the policy of importing alloy steel scrap for the private sector to enable them to sell at lesser price than the public sector. The Govt. decision to go slow in further development of steel industry also came in for sharp criticism.

When the chairman referred to the spontaneous strike in Rourkela steel plant after the death of a worker, N.K. Mohanti pointed out that the worker concerned was cut into 3 pieces when he was run over by a loco. The management's representative made a statement that his son would not be given job since his one son was already in the employment. The agitated workers therefore stopped work and demonstrated before the office. Ultimately the management had to assure that the deceased worker's son would be provided with a job.

In Durgapur steel plant the repair work of blast furnace was done through contract workers and the demand for their regularisation was not accepted by the management. This naturally caused delay in the repair work. The CITU pointed out that if the work was done departmently the delay could be automatically avoided. The Govt had not sanctioned the sintering plant in IISCO which also was responsible for bad performance of IISCO. The CITU representatives pointed out that the agreements of contractor workers were signed with the recognised unions for the plant bypassing the unions having strength among the contract workers. Swapan Bose criticised the management of Alloy Steel Plant for causing inter-union rivalry for its purposes affecting the industrial relations in the plant. The trade union representatives pointed out that the decision of the Govt. not to make fresh investment towards replacement of IISCO would seriously affect its working. They also demanded quicker drive for import substitution so that import of steel is stopped altogether. The next meeting of the committee was fixed on 16th May, which would discuss the issues in further details.

Jute Strike Enters Third Month

THE jute workers' strike has entered the third month, surpassing the previous record of 50 days' strike in 1979. But the Government of India is still sitting pretty while the jute industry is tumbling. The fallacy of the Government's so-called "productivity year" has again been exposed. It was seen in the Bombay textile workers' strike, and now in jute — another pioneer and core industry of India — so vital for the economy of the country and the eastern India in particular. The question was raised in the Rajya Sabha on March 6 by Sukomal Sen (CPI-M), Kalyan Roy (CPI), Rameshwar Singh (Lok Dal), Ashwini Kumar (BJP), Sahabuddin (Janata), S.W. Dhabe (Cong-S) and also by N.K. Bhatt (Cong-I), the President of INTUC, N.R. Laskar, the Minister of State for Commerce, while again rejecting the question of nationalisation of the jute industry, admitted that the country is losing 2.15 crores of rupees daily due to jute strike apart from a daily production loss of 3,500 tonnes of jute goods. This is the national interest the Government of India is championing for, but in reality, refusing to intervene and standing as a watch dog to protect the interests of the 5-6 jute barons who are misappropriating the enormous public fund to divert in other industries like sugar, cement and others in other states to run away with windfall profits and kill the jute industry. The Government says that it is watching the developments — as it was watching the developments in the Bombay textile strike and ultimately turned the machines into old junks and then took over a few mills. But the Government does not realise the reality in the jute strike that it has become a people's demand to nationalise the entire jute industry, with all the parties including the Congress(I) in W. Bengal and all the fourteen unions including the INTUC making the demand. This was to be obvious because of the racketeering by the few jute barons who threw into winds all norms of the 1979 agreement even after being defeated in the Supreme Court, kept 15-20 mills under rotational lockouts, affecting about 65,000 workers, retrenched another 45,000 workers prior to this, imposed inhuman workload on the workers increasing the production from 9 lakh tonnes to 14 lakh tonnes and made run away profits at the cost of lakhs of workers and million of jute growers. All these years the Government had been watching the phenomena — the phenomena of the camouflage of "crisis" raised by the monopolists which ultimately laid bare the reality — fortune for the barons and destitution for the workers and the growers and ruination of the industry.

Struggle Continues

The workers however, are united and determined. Despite all manouvrings by the Government and despite IJMA's hectic lobbying at New Delhi, the strike continues. In West Bengal, it is total. At

Katihar in Bihar despite vandalism by the Congress (I) hoodlums, the workers are on strike in two mills, while the third one is under lockout. Defying Section 144, massive gate meetings are being at Katihar with the support of all other sections of workers. In Andhra Pradesh, the eleven jute mills observed token strike for the second time on March 2 and are preparing for an indefinite strike. In Uttar Pradesh although the Congress (I) Government clamped ESMA, the workers observed a solidarity strike and are preparing for further actions. At Raigarh in Madhya Pradesh, the workers are on strike. In Assam, while the workers went on solidarity strike in one mill, the owner of the other one at Silghat declared closure from February 25. In Meghalaya, the workers of the mill went on solidarity strike and are preparing for continuous action. In Tripura, the workers went on solidarity strike.

Solidarity Actions

The strike has evoked widespread sympathy and solidarity actions from all mass organisations and democratic people. This is obviously because of the history of determined struggle by the jute workers not only for the interest of the workers and the growers, but for the interest of the people at large. Apart from the previous record of 50 day's struggle in 1979, they struggled for 33 days from January 14 in 1974, for 26 days from January 6 in 1975, for 20 days from December 7 in 1970, and for 8 days from August 4 in 1969. These struggles were apart from a number of one day strikes since 1953. People and workers are convinced of the genuine cause. Various mass meetings have been addressed by leaders like Samar Mukherjee, Niren Ghosh, Manoranjan Roy, and others. International trade unions like TUI of Textiles, WFTU, Textile Workers' Trade Unions, Japan, etc, have also extended their support. The Bengal Assembly has again adopted an unanimous resolution on March 8, supporting the strike and demanding nationalisation of the industry.

Negotiations

While the Government of India is still watching, the left front Government of W. Bengal is making serious efforts to bring the strike to a constructive conclusion which will meet the legitimate demands of the workers. But since the jute barons led by IJMA have lost all credibilities before the workers, the unions have made it clear during the last round of tripartite talks on March 6 that the question of ending the strike will not be considered until and unless the IJMA made their position clear on the implementation of the 1979 agreement and a final and lasting victory is achieved.

Indefinite Strike by Port & Dock Workers

THREE lakh port and dock workers in all the ten major ports of India went on indefinite strike from the midnight of March 15. The call for the strike was given jointly by the four federations of the port and dock workers, viz, All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation (HMS), Water Transport Workers' Federation of India (CITU), Port Dock and Waterfront Workers' Federation of India (AITUC) and Indian National Port and Dock Workers' Federation (INTUC). The strike was launched consequent to the refusal of the Union Minister of Shipping and Transport to accept the most reasonable demands of the federations for parity in wages with the other public sector workers.

The Common Charter of Demands was submitted six months ago, the present agreement expiring on December, 1983, and a number of negotiations were held during the period. Ultimately the Minister was informed of the decision for the indefinite strike on February 23 and notices were served by the affiliated unions of all the federations to the major ports and the Government on February 29. However, in an effort to arrive at an amicable settlement, the federations held another round of discussion with the Shipping Minister on March 12 and further on March 13 with the Labour Minister. But both the Ministers spurned all efforts by the federations for an amicable settlement leaving them with no alternative than to launch the strike.

Wages Among the Lowest

The emoluments of the port and dock workers are among the lowest in the public sectors. During the last few years, while there has been a steady decline in the work force in port and docks, the increase in productivity has been phenomenal. While cargo handling increased from 75 million tonnes to 100 million tonnes, widespread containerisation of cargo and automation and computerisation of the port operations are bound reduce the workforce further.

Hypocrisy of the Government

The Major Ports Commission had recommended that the port charges on the cargo handled can be hiked upto 3 percent of the value of the cargo, which is now a mere one hundredth of 1 per cent of the value of the cargo passing through the ports. But the Government has not hiked it on the plea of compulsions of international trade. But in fact, the Government keeps the port charges far below the minimum required level and thereby losing valuable foreign exchange, only because it feels compulsion to help the international shipping monopolies to have a "gay time" in India. So the Indian port and dock workers had to launch the strike to make the Government feel the compulsion to increase their wages.

The demands of the port and dock workers were

simple. Originally their demands aimed at achieving a need based minimum wage which was termed by the Shipping Minister as "unrealistic". In order to help reaching an early settlement they considerably scaled down the demands to seek parity with other public sectors like in steel which would involve only about Rs. 70 crores. But this was also "unrealistic" to the Shipping Minister who offered a mere Rs. 32 crores which fell far short of that in steel industry. And, with this paltry amount he made an "appeal" to the federations to withdraw the strike notice and then charged them for the refusal. The Labour Minister who was apparently sleeping during the entire period, suddenly woke up from his slumber and then convened the meeting at the eleventh hour, i.e., on March 13 and then "appealed" for one week's time. This was the height of hypocrisy shown by the Government that works. Negotiations were continuing for the last six months, then the decision of the strike was conveyed to the Government on February 23 and then the notice was served on February 29, and then the Labour Minister wanted one week's time. It was the typical hypocrisy being shown by the Government in all the strikes by the workers. The diabolical idea was to drag on and drag on only to disrupt the strike. Having failed in their attempts to disrupt the strike the Government cooked up a statement that the strike was illegal as it commenced during pendency of "conciliations". This further exposed the mala-fide character of the Government forcing confrontation with the workers.

Success of the strike

All the ten major ports have been paralysed. Cargo handling has come to a halt. More than 150 ships have been immobilised at the ten ports. In Bombay, 70,000 workers are involved in the strike. In Madras where over 15,000 workers are involved, the strike commenced with a massive rally. In Calcutta 42 ships including 10 at Haldia have been affected. Over one lakh tonnes of cargo have been held up at Calcutta. Similar reports have been received from Cochin, Kandla, Paradip, Vishakhapatnam, Panaji and other ports.

The para military force has been inducted by the Government. The notorious CISF are standing in guard. The Navy has been alerted. But the Government fails to realise that it is only the workers and none else who can make the ports vibrate again.

Support to the strike

In a statement CITU has extended full support to the strike and called upon all affiliated unions to demonstrate solidarity to the strike. The National Campaign Committee also issued a statement calling upon all sections of the workers to express solidarity with the strike. Similar statements were issued by AITUC, INTUC and HMS also.

Hollow Claims in General Budget Thoroughly Exposed

THE statistical manipulations and jugglery of figures which the Finance Minister resorted to while presenting the general budget this year (everyone called it a pre-election budget) were torn to pieces by Sunil Maitra, M.P. (CPI-M) in Lok Sabha on March 8 and 12. He indicted the Govt. for its total failure quoting official data and opposed the budget proposals.

Contesting the claim of the Minister that the agricultural production "is convincing testimony of the soundness of our agricultural strategy", he said that "the average food production between 1980 and 1984 was 133.29 million tonnes. If you take the average of the decade, between 1974-75 and 1983-84, it is still less, it is 123.32 million tonnes". Then quoting the World Development Report, 1983 he said that "between 1960 and 1981, the growth in agricultural production was stagnant at 1.9 per cent. Because you have produced 142 million tonnes of foodgrains this year, from this fact you cannot conclude that your strategy has proved that it was successful or that it is convincing enough. If in the course of the last twenty years your agricultural growth was standing at 1.9 per cent, that is the significance of your strategy? Then again if you see the daily per capita availability of cereals and pulses, between 1961-70 it was 447.56 grams; between 1971-80 it was reduced to 442.22 grams and in your period, i.e., between 1980 and 1984 it has still gone down to 437.02 grams. Therefore, your strategy met with complete failure". He suggested remedies in the following words "the basic thing for the agricultural growth as we have been maintaining in the House for the last so many years, is land reforms. Unless and until you go in for these land reforms, it will not be possible for you to increase the production. There should be some incentive for the producers to produce. For example the present support price of the wheat between 1980-81 and 1984-85 registered 29.9 per cent i.e. from Rs. 117 per quintal to Rs. 152 per quintal. But how has the cost of inputs gone up? The fertiliser price between 1980-84 has gone up by 48 per cent; the diesel price in the same period has gone up by more than 200 per cent and the seed price have also increased. You must give some incentive to the producers. And only then it will be possible for you to go in for the increase in the agricultural production".

Hollow Claim of Industrial Production

About the claim of 5 per cent increase in industrial production, he said: "Even 5 per cent is a niggardly increase according to his own admission, compared to the targetted annual production of 3 per cent in the Sixth Five-Year Plan. If we take the growth of the last four years as per the calendar year, it comes to 4.6 per cent and if you take the growth on the basis of the fiscal year, it comes to 5.2 per cent. Therefore, how should we describe it? It is only because to enable the Finance Minister to make

the claim on the floor of the House that the rate of industrial production was more than 5 per cent, the basis was changed from calendar year to fiscal year? If you take the span of 20 years from 1960, between 1960 and 1970 the rate of industrial growth in our country was 5.4 per cent, between 1970-81 the World Bank says it had gone down from 5.4 per cent to 4.4 per cent. What is the condition actually of a very vital portion of our industrial production with which the ordinary people of this country are vitally concerned, i.e., the production of consumer goods industries? Here is the Reserve Bank of India bulletin of October, 1983. In March 1983 the consumer goods industries production was 170.3; April 169.6, May 156.4; June 151.5 and in July 146.5."

Reason—Market Recession

He furnished the reasons as follows: "The Reserve Bank of India says that of 28350 factories/industries closed in June 1982, 23 per cent factories were closed down because of the demand recession. We call it market recession. Therefore, one of the reasons for the slower growth in our industrial production is market recession. Another thing which has been discussed in this House and over which I am not going to dilate is the import liberalisation. Multi-nationals are dumping their goods in the market. Production of our industries is being curtailed and our industries are being forced to close down."

Monopolies Driving Out Others

He continued "If you take into account the increase in total assets of 100 giants in the private corporate sector, then only you will realise the seriousness of the situation. The total assets of top 100 industrial giants in 1980-81 was Rs. 9150, 99,00,000. In 1981-82 it has gone up to Rs. 11345,45,00,000. That means, in a matter of one year, the total assets of the 100 top industrial joint-ventures went up by more than Rs. 2,000 crores. This only focusses light on one aspect of the matter that because of the concessions given to these MRTP companies and these multi-nationals, they are squeezing small business and small industry and the medium industry out of the market."

20-Point Programme — Land Reform

Answering the question — what is the remedy, he said that "In order to boost the industrial growth in this country, the *sine qua non* is the expansion of the internal market. The expansion of the internal market is not possible unless and until you inject purchasing capacity in the hands of 70 per cent of the people of this country who belong to the rural areas, those who are peasants, and you cannot increase the purchasing capacity of the peasants, unless and until you go in for drastic land reforms. But it has been relegated to the last position. Would you care to reply to one point? The West Bengal

Assembly passed two land reforms Bills in the year 1981. One was the Land Acquisition (West Bengal) Amendment Bill, 1981. The Bill was received by the Centre on 21st May, 1981 and they say that the Bill is under consideration of the Union Government. For more than 3 years, the Bill is under the consideration of the Central Government. The other Bill, the West Bengal Land Reforms Amendment Bill, 1981, was received by the Centre on 1st July, 1981 and, on 15th January, 1984 suddenly the Govt. of India, the Central Government, woke up and made some queries to the Government of West Bengal”.

Rampant Inflation

Referring to the claim that inflation has been brought down he asked the Finance Minister, “Will you please tell the country that when you brought down inflation from 21 per cent to 16 per cent, actually it was 37 per cent rise; when you again brought it down to 6 per cent, it was 43 per cent rise when it was brought down to 2 per cent, it was 45 per cent rise over 1978-79 and when again it has gone upto more than 10 per cent, it is 55 per cent rise over 1978-79”? Referring to the so-called remedial measures he said “The remedial measures taken were that the cash reserve ratio was increased from 7 per cent to 9 per cent in three stages, that is, you cut the plan at the end of the fiscal year by 3 per cent; you cut down the non-plan expenditure by 5 per cent and you stopped the recruitment of the people. And still today you have not paid five instalments of D.A., that are payable to the Central Government employees. Notwithstanding all these measures, today the rate of inflation is more than 10 per cent and it seems that nothing is going to stop the inflation”.

Reasons for Price Increase

He said that a new policy — the policy of increasing administered prices has now been introduced over and above the policy of taxation, excise duty, custom duty, monopolists jacking up prices and deficit financing which has resulted in the price-increase. Between 1980 and 1983 petroleum prices were increased by 5,500 crores. Railway fares have been increased apart from an increase of Rs. 815.84. One metric ton of coal at pithead which had cost Rs. 101.18 has been priced at Rs. 183.00 on 9-1-84.

Balance of Payment Gap

Refuting the claim of improvement in balance of payment position, which was Rs. 5813 crores, Rs. 5868 crores and Rupees 5467 crores in 1980-81, 81-82 and 82-83 and in 1983-84 is expected to be a little more than Rs. 5000 crores but less than 82-83, he said that it was achieved through less import and more export of crude. He questioned the wisdom of the such export in the following words: “Petroleum is a non-renewable energy and today the way you have been exporting petroleum, is it really in the interest of the health of the economy? If it is non-

renewable, then at the speed at which you go on exporting your crude, very soon your entire stock will be exhausted. When the entire world is trying to preserve its stock, preserve its mineral wealth, here India presents a different picture. We are exporting our crude in order to earn foreign exchange so that we can show to the people of this country that our balance of payments position is very happy”. Referring to the protectionist policies of the advanced capitalist countries he said, “It is next to impossible for you to go on increasing exports to any substantial extent.”

Debt Trap—Reagan’s Ronalds and Donalds

The attempt by the Minister to seek credit for not going in for the third instalment of the I.M.F. loan, on the ground that balance of payment position is comfortable, did not succeed as the Deputy Governor or Reserve Bank indicated that it was not taken because it would be hard to meet repayment obligations. On the other hand he warned of the debt trap in the following words “Now, sir, with the IDA loan being reduced from 40 per cent to 28 per cent and is likely to be reduced further from 28 per cent to 20 per cent, it is very likely that India would be forced to buy Reagan’s both Ronalds and Donalds and go in for the massive borrowings in the commercial market. If this thing happens which the World Bank’s report on India apprehends, then it is too early for the Finance Minister to claim that “the Government of India had gone with eyes open and have come out with head high so far as IMF loan is concerned”.

No Relief for the People

He said that the total relief of Rs. 189.33 crores in excise duty would not reach the end users. He further said: “So far as income-tax relief is concerned, with the consumer price index registering a rise 13 per cent, barely 5 per cent relief to the income-payers will not mean much of a concession. Instead, had the Government given real relief in the form of CDS exemption, if the Government had exempted income-tax payers from making payment towards the CDS, I think, the salaried middle class would have benefited much more. But they have not touched the CDS because it goes to the Central kitty. They have given relief only so far as income-tax and excise duty are concerned. Out of income-tax receipts, 90 per cent goes to the states and, out of the basic excise duty, 40 per cent goes to the States. So, they are indulging in charity, practising charity, at the expense of the States, not at the expense of the Central Government. The total resources transfer to the States in this year’s Budget is Rs. 13,542 crores as against Rs. 13,382 crores in the revised estimates. That means barely a sum of Rs. 116 crores has been increased in this year’s Budget. Whereas the rate of inflation is more than 10 per cent, Rs. 116 crores nominal increase in real terms means actual reduction in the transfer of resources to the States. The States are charged with the responsibility of development work which con-

cerns the day-to-day life of the people, for example, agriculture, special area programme, irrigation and flood control, social services, education, health, housing, water supply and sanitation, etc. These are the subjects which concern the day-to-day life of the people. But if this niggardly transfer of resources to the States takes place every year, in this form, how, do you expect that the States will do any better”?

Over Drafts of the States

Characterising the Minister's statement as 'highly objectionable' and 'extremely provocative', he said that "You talk of the overdrafts of the States. But what about you? Between 1980 and 1984, to the extent of more than Rs. 9,089 crores, you have indulged in deficit financing. The difference between you and the states is that the states draw their overdrafts from the Reserve Bank of India and the Centre draws its overdraft from the Nasik Printing Press. This is the difference”.

With this warning he concluded by opposing the budget proposals lock stock and barrel.

Defence Employees to go on Indefinite Strike

THE Fifth Conference of the All India Defence Employee's Federation, held at Ichapur, West Bengal from February 22 to 24, decided to launch indefinite strike from April 17 demanding implementation of the Third Pay Commission. The Government of India accepted the award of the Third Pay Commission but did not implement the same despite various agitational actions conducted by the federation for the last several years. Now, instead of implementing the award of the Third Pay Commission, the Government has imposed the Fourth Pay Commission on the workers which is a great injustice and breach of faith. So the main issue before the conference was preparation for a continuous trike for implementation of the award of the Third Pay Commission.

The Conference which was presided over by S.M. Banerjee, unanimously adopted the General Secretary's report placed by K.M. Mathew, calling to launch the strike from April 17. The conference was addressed among other by Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary CITU, Homi Daji (AITUC), Raji Hans (HMS), etc. The open rally was held on February 24, which was attended by a massive gathering of nearly 50 thousand workers. Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of West Bengal and Vice President of CITU addressed the rally which was presided over by S.M. Banerjee. Among others who addressed were Samar Mukherjee, K.M. Mathew, Indrajit Gupta, General Secretary of AITUC and Raj Hans. Earlier the conference elected a new committee with S.M. Banerjee as President and K.M. Mathew as General Secretary.

BANK EMPLOYEES STRUGGLE

Strike by State Bank Employees: More than six thousand employees of the State Bank of India went on one day's token strike demanding bonus. The call for the strike was given by the All India Bank Staff Federation. The Government of India had constituted a national tribunal to go into the question of bonus to the State Bank employees. The tribunal gave awards recommending two month's salary as bonus to the employees. But the Government did not implement the award. The strike was observed in pursuance of the demand for implementation of the award.

SBT Staff Union Formed: A substantial number of members resigned from the State Bank of Travancore Employees' Union affiliated to AIBEA and formed a new union, viz, State Bank of Travancore Staff Union and held its foundation conference at Trivandrum on March 11 and 12. Delegates from all parts of Kerala attended the conference. The conference criticised the reformist and collaborationist line of the leadership of the erstwhile union which lacked democratic functioning and indulged in trade union bureaucracy. It signed the suicidal agreement with the Indian Banks Association sabotaging the interest of the employees. The new union vowed to function democratically in the interest of the employees on the basis of class struggle.

Syndicate Bank Staff Union Affiliates with BEFI: In its conference held at Bangalore in January, the Syndicate Bank Staff Union disaffiliated itself from the NCBE and resolved to affiliate with the Bank Employees' Federation of India. In the resolution the conference condemned the recent agreement arrived at by NCBE with the IBA allowing computerisation in the banks and decided to struggle for the repeal of the agreement under the banner of the BEFI.

Strike by UBI Employees: At the call of the United Bank of India Joint Co-ordination Committee, the UBI employees all over India observed one day's strike on March 14. The strike was called demanding withdrawal of all suspensions, chargesheets, penal wage cuts, maiafide transfers and against arbitrary declarations rendering sections of employees as surplus.

Rural Bank Employees on Struggle: In their second phase of movement in pursuance of their various demands the All India Regional Rural Bank Employees Association in its meeting of the Review Sub-Committee held under the presidentship of Ashis Sen at Calcutta on February 2, decided to launch the following programmes: relay hunger strike from March 19 to 24; procession and rally at H.O. on March 24; mass rally by customers to District Magistrate on April 11; signature campaign from May 21 to 31 and non submission of reports and returns from June 15 to July 31.

Bengal Women Donate Blood

THE International Women's Day was observed throughout West Bengal on March 8 under the banner of All India Democratic Women's Association. Apart from observing the day for the emancipation of women and with the demands of working women, the special feature this year was the support extended by the women to the struggle of the jute workers by donation of blood. The money realised through the blood donation was contributed to the jute workers' strike fund. As per doctors' advice 53 women donated blood although over 150 offered the same.

Before the commencement of the blood donation ceremony at Calcutta, in her opening speech, Kamal Sengupta, the District Secretary said that last year the women donated blood for drought relief while this year they are donating to express their solidarity with the jute struggle. Mohd. Amin, General Secretary of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union, expressing his gratitude, said that the democratic women have not kept the blood donation as a mere slogan only, but they have practically strengthened the fraternity with the jute workers through blood donation. This demonstration of unbreakable comradeship would certainly accelerate the process of the victory of the jute workers and ultimate nationalisation of the jute industry.

Demands Day by State Govt. Employees

AT the call of the All India State Government Employees' Federation, over 50 lakh State Government employees observed Demands Day all over

Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	Oct. 1983	Nov. 1983	Dec. 1983	State/Centre	Oct. 1983	Nov. 1983	Dec. 1983
Andhra Pradesh				Nagpur	576	575	569
Gudur	471	480	486	Sholapur	589	595	607
Guntur	577	589	595	Orissa			
Hyderabad	551	564	558	Barbil	540	514	519
Assam				Sambalpur	592	575	572
Digboi	535	547	537	Punjab			
Doom Dooma	483	479	467	Amritsar	548	549	540
Labac	470	446	431	Rajasthan			
Mariani	504	495	484	Ajmer	538	540	543
Rangapara	471	457	456	Jaipur	566	570	570
Bihar				Tamil Nadu			
Jamshedpur	534	535	526	Madras	549	559	562
Jharia	549	554	527	Coimbatore	586	598	606
Kodarma	614	616	584	Coonoor	607	622	630
Monghyr	598	604	570	Madurai	605	629	646
Noamundi	545	539	542	U.P.			
Gujarat				Kanpur	548	547	536
Ahmedabad	555	556	557	Saharanpur	543	544	547
Bhavanagar	566	558	566	Varanasi	641	640	629
Haryana				West Bengal			
Yamunanagar	563	568	558	Asansol	538	546	540
J. & K.				Calcutta	526	532	525
Srinagar	578	599	579	Darjeeling	471	470	469
Karnataka				Howrah	505	508	501
Ammathi	581	551	567	Jalpaiguri	462	447	430
Bangalore	601	615	625	Raniganj	539	539	526
Chikamagalur	571	568	570	Delhi Territory	565	563	561
Kolar G.F.	532	527	539	Other Centres			
Kerala				Berhampur ('49)	791	780	775
Alleppey	607	611	634	Cuttack ('49)	714	725	726
Alway	599	606	614	Jabalpur ('49)	719	732	751
Mundakayam	555	569	577	Beawar ('51-52)	628	636	638
Madhya Pradesh				Tripura ('61)	473	469	474
Balaghat	568	570	574	Goa ('66)	387	390	389
Bhopal	599	603	598	H.P. ('65)	395	396	398
Gwalior	546	555	551	Bhilai ('66)	367	362	398
Indore	573	581	588	Chhindawara ('66)	296	301	302
Maharashtra				Bhilwara ('66)	330	326	329
Bombay	566	566	569	Kothagudem ('66)	357	352	349
				Rourkela ('66)	381	378	370
				All India ('49)	678	682	679
				All India ('60)	558	561	559

(Figures in bracket indicate base year)

the country on March 6 in pursuance of their demands for bonus and interim relief. In all the State capitals, districts and at Block levels rallies, processions and demonstrations were held demanding of the Central Government to accept responsibility of providing funds to the states for disbursement of bonus to the state employees. Before this the federation organised bonus conventions in various states in February.

In West Bengal the day was observed jointly by the State Coordination Committee, Joint Committee and the Joint Council

of the Health Organisations. In a huge mass meeting at Calcutta, presided over by Shantimoy Bhattacharjee, the main resolution was moved by Ajay Mukherjee, General Secretary of the State Coordination Committee. Others who spoke were Hiren Sanyal, Jt. Secretary of the Committee, Sanjit Das Gupta of the Joint Council and Dasu Roy, General Secretary of the Jt. Committee. At Agartala in Tripura another huge procession and rally was held, addressed by Ajoy Bishwas. The future course of action will be taken by the federation in the next meeting of the National Executive.

Samar Mukherjee on President's Address

(Abridged Speech in Lok Sabha on February 27 on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address)

THE President, in the course of his speech, has claimed that the economy has made impressive recovery and progress, over coming the adverse effects of widespread failure of rains. His claim of the impressive recovery and progress of the economy is a false presentation of the actual reality. I draw your attention to the speech made by the same President last time. In the same para 2 of his last year's speech, he said: "In the midst of inflationary pressures in several countries we can take legitimate pride in our success in containing inflation". Here in this year's speech the President has admitted that the price situation has caused us anxiety. On 7 January 7, 1984, the annual rate of inflation reached 10.4 per cent. That is why, the claim of completely containing inflation last year and now admitting that inflation has reached 10.4 per cent within one year — does it reflect the truth of the state of economy in our country? Last time I told, you are creating an illusion in the country. So, these two speeches prove how false an impression you are presenting before the whole country. So, the point is that economy should not be considered in this ad hoc way. In September the price went down, So, you claim that the general tendency is of going down, In October, it starts rising. You say it is because of some unnatural thing.s

So far as agriculture is concerned, they have claimed that this is the highest record. You are expecting 143 million tonnes. My point is, may be this target is fulfilled. Is it to your credit or is it due to good monsoon? When there is growth in production, you claim credit. When there is fall in production, you blame nature. Production has increased or is increasing. Price is also increasing. This is the peculiar feature or phenomenon of your economy. Your slogan is more production. By more production who is gaining? It is those who are the owners of land, who are the possessors of the crop, and those who are the real tillers do not get the proper price. All these stocks go to the black market. The growers are forced to sell at a distress price when there is more production, and immediately the price crashes. They do not get the benefit. Are the consumers getting benefit when the issue price increases? After this higher production you have increased issue price of foodgrains by 20 per cent. So, this is the policy of the Govt. to provide benefits to the hoarders, to the traders at the cost of the producers, the cultivators and the consumers. But the poor people are the worst suffers.

In the speech of Rashtrapati, it has also been told that there is sufficient procurement. But if there is sufficient procurement, why is there not supply? When foodgrain production has increased you have decided to import foodgrains from foreign countries. Why is this contradictory position?

Generally, when there is deficit, there may be import. But when there is more production and you are claiming credit for that, you have also announced there will be imports. Is it because you are to give supply to the ration shops by importing wheat or foodgrains? So, this shows that the entire economy is not in the grip of the Govt. but in the grip of other forces who are the main dominant forces to direct the economy. They are the big businessmen, hoarders, traders, speculators and all others.

Now, you claim that the economy has recovered. I am giving some figures. According to Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the average rate of net national product, or national income in real term has been 2.2 per cent per year between 1978-79 and 1982-83 which is nowhere near 5 per cent, a figure often trotted out by the Planning Commission as well as Pranab Mukherjee's Ministry. The national income stood at Rs. 50,486 crores in 1982-83, an increase of just Rs. 4,000 crores in 4 years. Since during this period, population has gone up by 2.2 per cent per year, per capita incomes have not gone up at all and have remained frozen at 1978-79 level. So, if you do not admit to these realities, then you do not feel the need to change the policy which is leading to crisis and chaos in your economy. In today's editorial of the Times of India, it said: "The main objectives of the Government's industrial policies have been to speed up economic growth, to increase gainful employment, and to curb the concentration of economic power. The last two decades, however have seen the industrial growth rate slump from nearly nine to just over four per cent, the increase in factory employment in the organised sector reduced to a trickle, and the concentration of economic power increase manifold! So, your economy is helping the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few. That is why, there is economic polarisation. Repeatedly, we have raised this question that the rich is becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer. This has now become evident. This is the net result of the economy which you are pursuing. Interestingly, this is the socialism which you are now building up in India. I have got a copy of the resolution on economy passed in your Calcutta Plenary Session last December. In that resolution, it is stated: "Socialism is our goal in economic and social fields." That is very good, we welcome it. It further says: "The Congress recalls that it was in 1936 that Jawaharlal Nehru proclaimed that socialism was the only way of ending the grossest forms of social and economic inequality. Since then, the Congress-I has steadily advanced socialist society. Under Shrimati Indira Gandhi's leadership, the Constitution of the Republic was amended to give the highest political expression of the national commitment to socialist order".

Now, I will tell you how socialism is being built

up in India. I am going to give you the figures. In reply to one of the Questions in the Rajya Sabha on 21st November, 1983, during the last session, this is the statement given by the Minister indicating how the assets of 10 large industrial houses have increased.

Take for instance, the Tatas:

1972	—	Rs. 641.93	Crores
1973	—	Rs. 924.41	Crores
1976	—	Rs. 980.77	Crores
1977	—	Rs. 1069.28	Crores
1978	—	Rs. 1102.11	Crores
1979	—	Rs. 1309.38	Crores
1980	—	Rs. 1538.97	Crores
1981	—	Rs. 1840.16	Crores

Now, I come to the Birlas:

1972	—	Rs. 529.42	Crores
1973	—	Rs. 905.03	Crores
1976	—	Rs. 974.63	Crores
1977	—	Rs. 1070.20	Crores
1978	—	Rs. 1171.15	Crores
1979	—	Rs. 1509.99	Crores
1980	—	Rs. 1431.99	Crores
1981	—	Rs. 1691.69	Crores

Then I come to Mafatlals:

1972	—	Rs. 183.74	Crores
1973	—	Rs. 244.23	Crores
1976	—	Rs. 256.54	Crores
1977	—	Rs. 285.63	Crores
1978	—	Rs. 317.86	Crores
1979	—	Rs. 371.06	Crores
1980	—	Rs. 427.54	Crores
1981	—	Rs. 535.12	Crores

This is how socialism is being built up. If I call it socialism of the Tatas and the Birlas, am I wrong?

This is one side. I am now coming to the other side. About the industrial workers — factories after factories are being closed; there are lock-outs and lay-offs. The total number of sick units in the country increased from 22,366 in December, 1979, to 28,428 in June, 1982, indicating a rise of 27 per cent. As regards the bank advances to the sick units, they have increased from Rs. 1,623 crores to Rs. 2,299 crores during the same period. Now the bank advances have further increased to Rs. 3,500 crores. Banks are being used as the instruments of the State to give advances and to finance all the monopoly houses. The monopolists are making the industries sick, robbing all the money of the State and then looting the profits earned

amongst themselves. The Reserve Bank of India has conducted a Survey to find out the real causes of industrial sickness. The petty usual and familiar argument advanced for industrial sickness by the Govt. is that it is all due to labour trouble. But the survey of the Reserve Bank of India has revealed the truth. 53 per cent of the Units became sick due to mismanagement including diversion of funds, infighting and lack of marketing strategy, 14 per cent of the Units became sick due to faulty initial planning and other technical drawbacks and 9 per cent of the Units became sick due to power failures and shortages of raw materials and 23 per cent of the Units were closed due to market recession and the industries which are closed due to labour troubles or industrial disputes are only 2 per cent. The present trend and health of the economy in country is such that all big monopoly houses are gaining more and more profits. The poor people, the industrial workers are losing their jobs and unemployment is rampant. Industrial sickness is on the increase. Cost of living index is shooting up day by day and the poor people bear the brunt of economic starvation and are groaning under poverty.

With 1970-71 as the base year, the wholesale price index stood at 318.17 during the fortnight ending 24th December, 1983. The year, 1970-71 was the year when our Prime Minister gave the country the slogan of "Garibi Hatao". And that year has been regarded as the base year to measure whole-sale price index. The result is that by December, 1983 the wholesale price index has gone up more than three times. Therefore, your pet argument that the price rise is due to the Janata Raj no longer can deceive the people.

Consumer Prices have gone up by more than 60 per cent during the last five years. The wholesale price index has shot up from 186 in 1978-79 to 320 last week and the consumer price index has risen from 331 to 565 with 1960-61 as the base year. That means now the consumer prices have risen by more than five and half times. When the consumer price index rises, the worst affected and the worst sufferers are the poor people. But the rich are not affected by the price rise. They, on the other hand, gain from the price rise. The big business people, the monopolists, the big industrialists, call the regime responsible for the price rise as Ram Rajya. If this is the socialism that you profess to build for this country, I must say that your socialism is anti-people. This socialism is nothing but State Monopoly Capitalism. Under this socialism the ties of the State with the monopolists, the capitalists and the big businessmen are becoming stronger and stronger day by day. The entire policies of the Govt. the economic policy, the financial policy, the Five Year Plan, all are directed to help them earn huge profits at the cost of the common people. What is your taxation policy? You have drastically reduced direct taxation and heavily increased indirect taxation. That means, you are giving concession after concession to the monopoly houses.

When the British left India, the direct taxation was 40 per cent and indirect taxation 60 per cent. Now the direct taxation is only 17 per cent and indirect taxation is 83 per cent. Indirect taxation means it has to be paid by the common masses because through excise and various other taxes you are increasing the burden of the common masses. That is why, if this policy is continued people are bound to become poorer and poorer, and at the cost of the millions of people, a few rich will become far richer. This is your policy of mobilising resources.

Another policy is deficit financing. Inflation means robbing the pockets of the poor masses to enrich the big men, the businessmen. This is common economics which an ordinary man can understand. Through deficit financing, indirect taxation and various other methods, you are forcing the people to pay a higher cost for their standard of living. That is why the purchasing power of the people is going down. On the other hand your slogan is 'more production', and when the increased production comes in the market there is no purchaser. So, there is accumulation of stocks. Then the employer declares the factory to be sick because if the products are not sold, if the products are not bringing profits to the employers, they would not continue the factories.

Apart from that, you are introducing a new technology, rationalisation, without providing alternative jobs to the workers. In a capitalist system where guarantee of job is not there, if you introduce a new technology either in factories or in offices by computers, you throw the thousands who are now regularly employed, out of jobs because machine takes the place of annual labour. The situation has come where you cannot change the basic framework of your economic policies. You are committed to monopoly capitalism and you are committed to defend these exploiting classes. Your whole economic theories and philosophies your political activities, contribution to your election fund, everything is coming from them and that is why you cannot change this. So, there is no other alternative for the people than to come into the streets with an alternative policy and force you to change and if you do not change, they will force you to go out of power and they will come into power and implement all those alternative policies. That is the only alternative left. I am placing some of the alternative programmes already placed before the masses. You know in last January there was a conclave in Calcutta. There 17 political parties were present. They discussed about the grim economic situation in the country and unanimously they have passed a resolution demanding alternative measures so that people can get immediate relief. What is the resolution? "The Union Govt. should guarantee adequate supply of essential commodities to the consumers at reasonable prices by drastically curbing the profits of wholesalers and organising a comprehensive net work of the public distribution system". These demands we have raised long before.

So the demand has been that all essential com-

modities should be brought outside the purview of the wholesalers. The Govt. should take over the responsibility of the entire wholesale trade as well as the entire distribution. This calls for a change in the priorities of production in favour of mass consumption goods needed by the poor and the middle class people and for the subsidised supply of such commodities as major foodgrains, pulses, edible oils, salt, sugar, domestic coal, kerosene common cloth, paper, life-saving drugs, match boxes, etc. And the excise levies on all such goods need to be drastically reduced and their movement given top priority. You complained that we criticise the Govt. only negatively and destructively. These are positive demands and positive suggestions. Every time we have raised these demands in this House. But now, because it falls on deaf ears—we know that you are committed to other things — we have to go to the people, mobilise them and force the Govt. to accept or you will be forced to leave your gaddi.

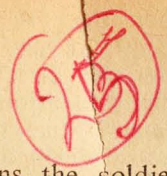
The Congress Govt. has itself unleashed forces responsible for this rampant price inflation. It has been raising the administrative prices of basic commodities, one after another. You have raised the coal prices more than four times. About the coal workers, I tell you that they have been given an increase of 22/1-2 per cent of their wages. But, during this period, the price rise is more than sixty per cent. But, how much is being compensated? Their wage rise is far too low. Their real wages have gone down. Earlier, when there was a demand for wage increase, Govt. adopted a device to put a restriction by forming the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE). The BPE put a condition that the wage increase should not be more than 10 per cent. It was only the sustained struggle of the workers that had forced the Govt. to the increase of wages by 22.5 per cent.

Coming to the demands, I quote: "The food for work programme be revived and expanded; the existing land reform legislations be speedily implemented after plugging the loopholes and immediate assent be accorded to land reform Bills passed by State Legislatures; ensure cheap credit and supply of farm inputs to the peasantry; energetic measures be introduced to put an end to the continuing economic injustice and physical attacks on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, religions minorities, women and other weaker sections of the society". They have also demanded: "A total restructuring of economic policies with a view to increasing the production of mass consumption goods and expanding employment opportunities for all sections, including small artisans and craftsmen; the right to work be included as one of the fundamental rights in the Constitution; the national policy of economic self-reliance be restored, and fiscal, monetary and investment policies which encourage the big monopoly houses and multi-national corporations at the expense of the interests of the poor and the working classes, be abandoned; the anti-labour policies of the Union Govt. be reversed and obnoxious measures

(Contd. on page 16)

The Peace Convention

B.T. Ranadive



THE peace convention which met in Delhi on 8th and 9th March expressed the urgent and the growing desire of the Indian people to fight the danger of nuclear war. It was called by eight political parties. Twenty four mass organisations — trade unions, student and youth organisations, kisan and agricultural workers organisations and women's organisations participated in the Convention bringing support of the masses behind them for the sacred task of defending world peace. The CITU was an active participant and it was led by Com. P. Ramamurti, Vice President.

Never before perhaps was there such a widespread mobilisation of political parties and mass organisation, to protest against the imperialist plans to plunge the world into a destructive war. Earlier the left parties had organised a massive demonstration in the capital. Following it the CITU and AITUC responding to the call of the World Federation of Trade Unions succeeded in mobilising rallies of workers in all states, West Bengal and Kerala witnessing huge mobilisations. But the March Convention extended the fight for peace beyond the workers and their organisations. The CITU and its unions must warmly greet the decision of peace convention and do every thing to carry them forward. The working class shares a special responsibility to oppose war and defend peace. It is international in its outlook. Its war cry is solidarity and unity of the workers of the world. War sets workers of one country against another and massacres their unity and solidarity.

But the fight for peace cannot be carried on effectively by the working class alone. To be effective and successful it must become the common concern of the entire Indian People and this is what the decision of the Convention and their sponsoring by the political parties will help in achieving.

In India the fight against war is not taken seriously by a major part of the Trade Union movement. Even the CITU and the AITUC which have a common working class outlook to the problem can not say that they have discharged their task to their satisfaction. In this situation the initiative taken by several political parties should help them to strengthen the fight for peace.

The Declaration adopted in the convention correctly states: "The World faces the grim threat of nuclear war endangering the very existence of humanity, a war which wherever it starts will soon engulf the whole globe including our country.

Nuclear weapons, if unleashed, will in minutes destroy cities like Washington, Moscow, Calcutta, Delhi & Bombay. Never was a more destructive war diabolically planned by the imperialists.

It is a war which not only threatens the soldiers, active combatants as the earlier wars did, it threatens wholesale destruction of civilian population — the worker in the factory, peasant ploughing his field, housewife doing her house chores and the children playing in the parks, or attending schools. It is these which are its targets along with factories and workshops, houses and buildings.

The Declaration therefore correctly stresses "If nuclear war breaks out, no country can remain safe, as it will completely upset the climate, ecology and the living conditions of humanity ... the whole earth will be enveloped by a radio-active cloud, temperature of our planet will sharply come down, protective layer of ozone will be destroyed, making our planet uninhabitable for human beings and any kind of life".

There can be no neutrals, none can take a complacent attitude saying the war will be fought in Europe, far a way from us. Atom Bombs exploded in Europe will kill lakhs in India by polluting the atmosphere and making India unfit for human existence.

The speakers at the Convention, coming from various political parties, placed responsibility for the war danger on the U.S. administration. Not one used the phrase dear to the ruling party — two super powers. Most ridiculed and lambasted it. Shri Jagjivan Ram, Shri Sharad Pawar, and others stated, it was wrong to equate the U.S.S.R. with the U.S.A.

None but the dishonest and the hypocrite can talk of two super powers where one country stands for peace and the Govt. of other stands for war and produces nuclear weapons, unendingly.

The grave situation have arisen because, as the declaration says, "In defiance of world public opinion including the countries of the Western Europe and U.S. itself, and rejecting all constructive proposals of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact Countries, Reagan Administration in collaboration with its NATO allies has installed Pershing and Cruise missiles in West Germany, Italy and Great Britain. These missiles can reach targets in the Soviet Union and Socialist Countries of Europe in few minutes' time".

The missiles have been brought on the door steps of the U.S.S.R. not for purpose of peace but for aggressive war. U.S. imperialists do not conceal that they seek to destroy socialism — the achievement of the working class over the last hundred years, destroy working class states that have abolished crises and unemployment in their country. Simultaneously the U.S. imperialists seek to reenslave newly liberated

countries and establish their domination over the world.

The U.S.A. launched a cowardly attack on Grenada, it is preparing for an attack on Nicaragua. In Lebanon it has directly intervened with its marines and naval might and nearer to our country it is intervening in the Persian gulf. In contrast the Soviet Union stands for the freedom and Sovereignty of all nations and supports them in their struggle against aggression. The joint Soviet-Syrian communique issued on March 13th said "Internal settlement in Lebanon is only possible on the basis of preservation of the unity, territorial integrity, independence and Sovereignty of the Country".

The Declaration points out "our own national security is in great peril, as a result of massive arming of military regime of Pakistan, building up military bases on Pakistan territory, increasing militarisation of the Indian ocean and placing of nuclear arms in the Diego Garcia base".

While the imperialists plan for a human genocide, the U.S.S.R. puts forward proposals for peace to avoid the danger of destruction of humanity. The U.S.S.R. made several proposals to ease the situation. It made a unilateral declaration that it would not be the first to use the nuclear strike. But the U.S.A. and the Governments of Europe made no response.

Besides, the U.S.S.R. made concrete proposals to scale down armaments gradually and proposed to solve problems through negotiation. It made an offer to scale down its missiles in Europe provided other side also agreed to an equal reduction. Deployment of U.S. missiles like Pershing and Cruise in Europe, it said was nothing but an attempt to establish military superiority and it would not allow it. It again offered to agree to mutual reduction of missiles if new missiles were not deployed in Europe. But the imperialists refused to respond.

In October last year, the U.S.S.R. placed in the 38th Session of U.N. Assembly two resolutions — one for condemning nuclear war and the other advocating nuclear freeze.

This is how a socialist country — socialist system, fights for peace, for saving of the working class and peoples of the world from the horrors of war.

Finding that the U.S. imperialists were determined to pursue the path of nuclear aggression, the Soviet Govt last May declared that in case new missiles are deployed in Europe, it will have to take retaliatory measures, to carry out measures for deploying additional weapons for counter balance to the growing nuclear weapons of the USA and other NATO countries in Europe, take measures with the view of the territory of the US itself.

This of course was necessary and fully justified. The working class and progressive forces of the

world felt assured by this declaration which showed that the imperialists cannot cow down the socialist world.

Our Working Class and trade unions must realise the grave situation and play their role in countering the danger to humanity, freedom and socialism. The working class of other countries, of Europe, the USA, is already in the field mobilising millions of people in the struggle for peace. The peace movement today is the biggest solidarity movement of the international working class and of the peoples of world.

The CITU, its trade unions and the mass of workers must hail the initiative of the convention to take the question of peace to the millions of our people. This is what required in India, so that our people play their role in these times critical for the destiny of human race. The working class efforts to protect peace will now get immense strength and the trade unions should throw their full weight to approach and rouse the people.

The national convention pledged to build up a most powerful campaign through out the length and breadth of our country, through mass mobilisation, demonstration and convention to demand: halt to the nuclear arms race, give up the policy of generating tensions and unleashing military confrontation in various parts of the world.

The CITU, its State Committees and its unions must support this programme and take a lead in ensuring its success. The full strength of the working class in cities must be mobilised in its support.

The National Convention has decided to observe 13th April throughout the country in defence of peace. All CITU unions with their mass following must participate with others to make this a grand day expressing the decisive voice of the Indian People in disapproval of nuclear war.

The Delhi Declaration

We address this appeal to the people of India, irrespective of their political and religious beliefs, to all those who want peace and defence of the country.

In defiance of world public opinion, including of the countries of Western Europe and the US itself, and rejecting all constructive proposals of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries, the Reagan administration, in collaboration with its NATO allies has installed Pershing-II and Cruise missiles in West Germany, Italy and Great Britain. These missiles can reach targets in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries of Europe in a few minutes' time. This has forced the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries to take appropriate counter measures to protect themselves. It is a qualitatively new dangerous situation, the world being pushed to the brink of a nuclear war. The world faces the grim threat of a nuclear war, endangering the very existence of

humanity—a war which, wherever it starts, will soon engulf the whole globe, including our own country. It needs to be realised that if a nuclear war breaks out, no country can remain safe as it will completely upset the climate, ecology and the living conditions of humanity. Scientists have stated that even if a part of the present stock of nuclear weapons are exploded the whole earth will be enveloped by radioactive cloud, the temperature of our planet will sharply come down and the protective layer of ozone will be destroyed, making our planet uninhabitable for human beings and any kind of life. Is humanity doomed to this terrible fate? Is such a war inevitable? No, not at all.

The responsibility for dragging the world to the brink of a nuclear war rests solely on the Reagan administration and its NATO allies. The Soviet Union, the non-aligned movement and the Warsaw Pact countries have been consistently pursuing a policy of peace and peaceful co-existence. They have been offering proposals to curb the arms race. The Soviet Union has even declared that it would not be the first to use the nuclear weapon.

The US administration, on the other hand, has refused to heed the voice of reason and has refused to give the promise not to be the first to use nuclear arms. In fact, it is even preparing to make outer-space an arena of nuclear conflict, as also preparing for a biological and chemical warfare.

Over six hundred thousand crores of rupees are being wasted on the manufacture of nuclear and other armaments, while hundreds of crores of people in the underdeveloped countries are afflicted with undernourishment, poverty and disease. Moreover, in the advanced countries themselves, including in the USA, social welfare schemes are being cut in order to enhance the expenditure on nuclear arms. Even if 10 per cent of this military expenditure is cut down, it will go a long way in helping the needy people in the underdeveloped world. Hence, it is all the more necessary to fight against the arms race.

The US imperialists have simultaneously stepped up their aggressive activities and military conflicts, including direct military intervention, in various parts of the world. This is seen in their invasion of Grenada and their constant threat to invade democratic Nicaragua and Socialist Cuba and directly intervening in El Salvador to subvert the popular resistance movement against the fascist regime. Along with Zionist Israel, with whom the Reagan administration has established a new strategic alliance, the US imperialists are actively intervening in Lebanon with the ultimate aim of liquidating it as a viable entity by partitioning it, as well as attacking the Syrian positions and threatening it with dire consequences. The imperialists have a firm strategic alliance with the white-racist regime of South Africa, directed against the heroic freedom struggle of Namibia, as well as against the progressive regimes in Angola and Mozambique and other front-line states of the Southern part of Africa.

Our own national security is in grave peril, as the result of massive arming of the military regime of Pakistan, building up of military bases on Pakistan territory, increasing militarisation of the Indian Ocean, placing of nuclear arms in the Diego Garcia base, bolstering up of reactionary regimes around our country, building up of the Rapid Deployment Force for direct US military intervention against the countries of this region and setting up of a Central Command for the region. The US imperialists are thereby trying to blackmail India into giving up its policy of non-alignment, peace and anti-imperialism.

Thus, the US imperialists and their allies are not only threatening world peace, but also the security of our own country which is playing a very important role in the worldwide struggle for peace and against war.

In this critical situation, the anti-imperialist and democratic movements of Pakistan and Bangladesh are of great significance. The victory of these movements will not only restore democracy in those countries, but also ensure our own security as the leaders of these movements stand for friendship with our country.

This Convention hails the fact that the desire for peace is universal, even within countries which themselves produce nuclear weapons and in those where they are deployed. It is a matter of great hope that people in Europe and the US, in fact all over the world, irrespective of political and religious beliefs and opinions, are manifesting in huge demonstrations against war and for peace.

In our own country, mass rallies and demonstrations, meetings and conventions are taking place in various forms in different states to highlight the danger emanating from the aggressive designs of the imperialists headed by the Reagan administration.

In such an extremely grave situation for humanity and our own country, let us all rise to the occasion and firmly strengthen our bonds of common solidarity with all the peace-loving forces the world over — to bridle the imperialists and save our beautiful world from a nuclear holocaust.

India, with its powerful anti-imperialist and democratic traditions, has a special responsibility in the present dangerous situation for the world and for our own country.

Therefore, we urge upon the Government of India to stand firm against the aggressive global strategy of US imperialism and its allies for world domination and for the preservation of peace and protection of our country's security.

In such an extremely grave situation for humanity, this National Convention pledges to build up a most powerful campaign throughout the length and breadth of our country, through mass mobilisation, demonstrations and conventions to demand: Halt to nuclear

arms race; give up the policy of generating tensions and unleashing of military conflicts in various parts of the world.

The National Convention decides to observe a day throughout the country in defence of peace and national security and for solidarity with the people fighting against imperialist aggression.

Let us act NOW!

- * Ban Nuclear Arms! Save Humanity from Nuclear Destruction!
- * Defeat US Aggression Against Countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America!
- * Down with the Racist Aggressive Regime of South Africa!
- * Down with the Israeli-US Imperialist Aggression Against the Arab Peoples!
- * Make the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace!
- * We Shall Defend Our Country's Security and Integrity!
- * Extend Solidarity with People of Pakistan, Bangladesh Fighting for Restoration of Democracy!
- * Unite with People of the World Fighting for Peace!

Report of the Convention

The convention which was jointly organised by the eight left and opposition parties, viz, CPI(M), CPI, RSP, Forward Block, DSP, Congress(S), Congress (J), and Janawadi Party, was also participated by a number of mass organisations of workers, peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth and women. Also present in the conference were Romesh Chandra, President of World Peace Council, Herbert Fischer, the former Ambassador of GDR in India representing the Peace Committee of GDR, as well as the Ambassadors or the senior diplomats of USSR, Czechoslovakia, Vietnam, GDR, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Syria, Mongolia, Laos, and representatives of African National Congress and South West African People's Organisation. Messages were received from the Peace Movements from USSR, Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia.

The convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of E.M.S. Namboodiripad (CPI-M), C. Rajeshwar Rao (CPI), Syed Mir Qasim (DSP), Sarad Pawar (Cong. S), Jagjivan Ram (Cong.-J), Tridib Chowdhury (RSP), Chitta Basu (FB), and Chandrajit Yadav (Janawadi). E.M.S. was the chairman on the first day. In his opening address EMS briefed the background of the convention which was the culmination of the activities of the trade unions with the observance of Septem-

ber 1 and the campaign conducted by the eight parties. March 8 being the International Women's Day, EMS also greeted the militant struggle of the international women for peace to avert the nuclear war. After EMS's opening address the presidium moved a condolence resolution on the death of Yuri Andropov and the delegates stood in silence for two minutes. Thereafter, the draft declaration was placed by C. Rajeshwar Rao who explained the dangerous international situation created by the Reagan administration with its totally negative attitude towards the peace proposals of the USSR. Sarad Pawar and Jagjivan Ram supported Soviet Union's stand that it will not be the first to strike nuclear weapons and said that the danger would not have been heightened if USA had responded to it.

BTR's speech: Speaking on behalf of CPI(M) BTR said that the convention was an extra-ordinary event as several political parties and mass organisations have turned attention from their usual problems to the struggle against danger of war and for peace. He said that the real reasons for the massive arms build up lay in the socio-economic system that nourishes war — the poisonous system existing in USA cannot carry on without a war. The military-industrial monopolists there cannot continue without huge profits through massive arms buildup. Reagan has his political motives. He is haunted by socialism everywhere. He is convinced that the paradise of imperialism cannot be regained unless the paradise of the working class — socialism is lost. Denouncing the so-called two super power theory, he said that it is the foul game of neutrality. He laid bare the difference of the two "super powers". While the Soviet Union was consistently calling for a nuclear freeze and a total ban, the USA was initiating ever new manufacturers and deployments of missiles. While the Soviet Union declared that it will not be the first to strike, the Pentagon has rejected the idea. Explaining the reasons for this difference BTR said that it is because of the two different systems. While socialism thrives on peace and development, imperialism thrives on war and destruction. He also referred to the machinations of USA to surround India by arming the military ruler of Pakistan and forming bases at Diago Garcia, Trincomalee and Chittagong. Concluding his speech BTR said that the supreme power belongs to the people. By waging a determined fight for peace the people can thwart the danger of war.

After the speeches of the leaders of the opposition parties, representatives of the mass organisations spoke. Among those who spoke were P. Ramamurti (CITU), H.S.K. Surjit (AIKS), Susheela Gopalan (AIDWA), P.K. Kunjachan (AIAWU), Hannan Mollah (DYFI), Sitaram (SFI), Chaturanan Mishra (AITUC), Vimla Farooqui (NFIW), Amarjeet Kaur (AISF), etc. Apart from adopting the declaration unanimously the convention also adopted a resolution appealing for peace and harmony in Punjab and Haryana.

CITU's Greetings to BMS Conference

THE conference of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh which was held at Hyderabad from January 9 to 11 was attended by M.M. Lawrence, M.P., Secretary of CITU on invitation. Greeting the conference, M.M. Lawrence emphasised on trade union unity which was the dire necessity of the time when all sections of the working people were confronted with an authoritarian drive from the Congress (I) Government. He said that both CITU and BMS as important constituents of the National Campaign Committee were pledged to fight the anti-labour and pro-monopolist, pro-fudal and pro-multinational policies of the Government of India. The working class of the country was faced with the acute problem due to closures, lockouts and retrenchments which were being imposed by the monopolists as new offensives. Over 30,000 units have been closed. The Govt. was denotifying the units already taken over. The crisis was so deep that without nationalisation the workers can no longer be protected. It was for this that all the unions had come together to demand nationalisation of the jute industry. Under the context he explained the significance of the convention against lockouts and closures organised by N.C.C. on January 20. He also pointed to the growing danger of a nuclear war which would exterminate humanity and urged for united working class movement for peace. He also referred to the growth of the divisive forces which sought to tear apart the unity of the working class achieved through struggles, on the basis of caste,

creed and community. He said that the organisations which talked for working class unity but at the same time raised divisive slogans must be condemned.

Concluding his speech, M.M. Lawrence reiterated the call of CITU for the formation of a confederation as a forum to discuss and formulate alternate policies on the basis of which broader and broader sections of the working class could unitedly struggle on various issues confronting them. CITU has given the slogan of confederation knowing fully well that divergent views exist. But the crisis in economy of the present system demands that the working class should formulate its own policies and act in unison. The National Campaign Committee was functioning on the basis of agreed decisions on specific issues. The idea of the confederation was still higher where all issues could be referred and debated upon. He wished the conference to discuss the matter.

(from page 11)

such as the NSA and the ESMA be scrapped and the demands formulated by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions be accepted and effective steps be taken to prevent industrial closures and lock-outs".

The Govt. has admitted that 53 per cent of the mandays lost in 1982 were due to lock-outs and lay-offs. These attacks must be immediately stopped. Now, the Govt. has taken a decision to de-notify those factories which they took over earlier and the slogan is unless a unit is viable it should not be taken over by the Govt. and neither should it be nationalised. In this connection the suggestion given by the National Campaign Committee is that Govt. should meet the trade union leaders in a conference immediately to find out for which reason these factories are being closed and Govt. should defend the workers' interests and not employers' interests. They have also raised the demand that till jobs are provided by opening these factories unemployment benefit be provided to all. There should be a fundamental guarantee for jobs to all and bring this right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution.

Lastly, the parochial and communal forces are raising their head. Our stand on this matter is well known. But my point is that the economic situation that you are creating in the country is bringing dissatisfaction and dis-contentment among all sections of the people and the soil is becoming favourable for these divisive and communal forces to utilise this discontent. So, unless you solve the basic problems of the people, namely, poverty, unemployment and terrible exploitation, the solution becomes very much difficult and it is our repeated accusation against the ruling party that you refuse to solve the political problems politically. It is a serious challenge which has come to the country and all secular and democratic forces must stand up and come in the open to face these divisive and communal forces politically. By administrative action you cannot solve these things because your entire administration is poisoned by the communal virus. With these words I oppose this motion.

Form IV

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|--|---|
| 1. Place of publication: | 6-Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110 001 |
| 2. Periodicity of publication | Monthly |
| 3. Printer's Name Whether Citizen of India? Address | Yes
6-Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110 001 |
| 4. Publisher's Name Whether Citizen of India? Address | M.K. Pandhe
Yes
6-Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110 001 |
| 5. Editor's Name Whether Citizen of India? | M.K. Pandhe
Yes |
| 6. Name and Addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital. | Centre of Indian Trade Unions, 6, Talkatora Road, New Delhi-110 001 |

I, M.K. Pandhe, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: February 28, 1984.

Sd/- M.K. Pandhe
Publisher

(Form IV could not be published in the March issue due to inadvertence although the matter was ready for the press.)

CITU Secretariat Meeting

A meeting of the CITU Secretariat was held at the Central office on March 7. The meeting was presided over by B.T. Ranadive and attended by Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, P. Ramamurti, Mohd. Ismail and Har Sahay Singh, Vice-Presidents; Nrisingha Chakravarty, P.K. Ganguly M.M. Lawrence, Secretaries.

Regarding the March to Parliament programme of April 18, after hearing the reports from Nrisingha Chakravarty and P.K. Ganguly, the meeting decided to implement the plans successfully as would be finalised by the National Campaign Committee in its meeting to be held on March 15. Regarding the provisions for the camp it was decided that the charge of Rs. 10/- would not be taken from those workers who would not avail of the camp facilities. The concerned State Committees should however contribute towards setting up of the camp.

On the question of verification on which the Government was proceeding unilaterally, it was reported that in view of the protest letter given by the National Campaign Committee, the Labour Minister might call a meeting of the constituents of the NCC by March 20. It was decided that while CITU in principle sought the procedure to be adopted through secret ballot, efforts are to be made so that the National Campaign Committee should furnish an unified alternative procedure to the Government.

Nrisingha Chakravarty reported that the Government has constituted a tripartite committee to consider the problems of the brick-kiln industry especially the question of a separate legislation. P.K. Ganguly reported that according to press reports the President of the all India organisation of brick-kiln owners had claimed that the Labour Minister had agreed to the demand of the brick-kiln owners for exemption from implementing the labour laws. The meeting decided that CITU would oppose any such attempt. A press statement was issued in this respect. Nrisingha Chakravarty was nominated to represent CITU in the tripartite committee.

P.K. Ganguly reported that the Government had convened a tripartite meeting on March 24 to consider extension of the Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Service) Act, 1976, to 11 more industries. The Act was presently applicable only to the pharmaceutical industry. FMRAI had been moving for extension of the Act in all industries as a large number of members of the various affiliated unions of FMRAI belonged to other industries than pharmaceutical. The meeting decided that efforts should be made so that the Act is extended to all

the industries so that all the sales promotion employees are covered by the Act. Since P.K. Ganguly would be away to Calcutta during the time to attend the conference of AICAPEF, the meeting nominated Nrisingha Chakravarty to attend the tripartite meeting.

The meeting discussed the question of deputing five representatives to a training programme for rural trade union workers to be conducted by the National Labour Institute at Delhi from March 20 to 27. In consultation with the All India Agricultural Workers' Union, the following comrades were nominated: P. Krishnaraj Babu, Tamilnadu; P.K. Kumaran, Kerala; Ambika Prasad Mishra, U.P.; Sukhvinder Singh, Punjab and Suren Hembram, West Bengal.

Regarding the Second Conference of the Road Transport Workers' Federation, the meeting decided that the dates should be finalised by the federation in consultation with the Tamilnadu State Committee which has offered to host the conference.

Regarding the recent resolution of the Government on workers' participation in management, the meeting advised P.K. Ganguly to prepare a note for approval of the secretariat and circulation. P.K. Ganguly also raised the question of submission of a memorandum by CITU to the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations, a questionnaire on which has been received by CITU. Nrisingha Chakravarty was given the responsibility to prepare the note.

Samar Mukherjee raised the question of holding the General Council meeting. As reported by Nrisingha Chakravarty, Rajasthan State Committee was prepared to host it at Kota. The meeting may be tentatively held in July-August. It was decided to finalise the proposal from the Rajasthan State Committee.

The next Secretariat meeting would be held on March 29.

Editorial Board

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Sudhin Kumar, M.M. Lawrence,

P.K. Ganguly

M.K.Pandhe (*Editor*)

**Delhi Convention of Opposition
parties on April 17.**

Railwaymen Express Their Resentment

THERE is growing discontentment among the railway workers, particularly those categories in whose case the cadre restructuring has not been done. The signal & Tele Com. Staff, The Ticket Checking Staff and the Guards, under their respective associations which are affiliated to AIREC held Dharnas before the residence of the Railway Minister in the first week of March '84. The commercial clerks and the Loco Mechanical Staff, other two constituents of AIREC would hold Dharnas and relay hunger strike on April 17, and from April 19 respectively. The Loco Mechanical Staff have said that they may be forced to turn this into indefinite hunger strike if no steps are taken for amelioration of their grievances.

It has to be noted that the demand for restructuring of pay in most cases is just because there had been technological updating and changes in the pattern of working. For the Loco Mechanical staff, they are faced with the problem of closure of loco-sheds due to storing of overaged steam engines and expansion of dieselisation and electrification. The Govt is, however, pursuing a policy of showing patronage to divide the workers. For example the Guards Council received some patronage because the Railway Minister attended their Dharna and said that he has already referred the matter to the Fourth Pay Commission, which he compared to a "Post-dated cheque" while in reality it was nothing but a hoax.

NCCR Calls for United Observance of 8th May

In a meeting held on March 4, the NCCR gave a call for unitedly observing the 10th anniversary of the historic railway, strike on May '74 on May 8 this year through a "Day-long Dharna" and mass meetings where such dharna is not possible.

It also gave a call for setting up NCCR bodies in all zonal and Divisional level where it has not been constituted so far, by 31st May '84.

It had set up a two tier organisation at the national level to conduct the organisational work with a "Standing Committee" consisting of Three Joint Convenors, 4 representatives each from these three organisations and one representative each from all other all-India organisations which will meet from time to time to guide the work and a "General Council" which will consist of the standing committee and one representative each from all zonal organisations of the all India organisations, and also of unaffiliated organisations including production including production units which will meet once in six months.

NCCR Demands Another Instalment of Interim Relief

In a resolution adopted in this meeting the NCCR

has demanded that the Fourth Pay Commission should submit its report on wage parity by July '84, grant another instalment of Rs. 100 as interim relief and then proceed with other work. It also demanded that 4 instalments of D.A. which have fallen due (it is 5 instalments now) should be released without any further delay.

Blatant Discrimination Opposed

In another resolution, the NCCR has opposed the discriminatory treatment meted out to the 'C' and 'D' category staff of N. F. Rly. whose age-old facilities granted to them for working in the NE Region have been withdrawn without payment of 25 per cent of their pay as special pay which has been granted to 'A' & 'B' category staff of this railway. K.C. Haldar(CPI-M) M.P. also raised the issue in Lok Sabha while speaking on railway budget.

Agitations, Meetings and Conferences

Vijayawada Divisional Convention of NCCR was held at Rotary Club on February 8 which was attended by 314 delegates from 12 organisations. The convention finalised a memorandum which was presented to the Divisional authorities (ADRM Shri Nata Rajan) through a mass deputation.

In a meeting held on February 11 at Sullurpeta (Southern Rly.) a new branch of DREU was opened. Another Branch was opened at Perambur on February 29 by DREU which indicates that the influence of DREU which is functioning without recognition for over 35 years is on the increase.

When the S.C. Rly. authorities wanted to retrench 300 casual labour of BPP division the S.C. Rly. Employees Union (CITU) and Samar Mukherjee M.P. General Secretary, CITU, took up the issue while the workers conducted dharnas, meetings etc. One of the recognised unions (Mazdoor Union) on the other hand tried to collect Rs. 200 from each retrenched worker for instituting cases. When the General Manager decided the issue, they calimed that at their intervention the General Manager has cancelled the retrenchment order and held a meeting on the same day when SCREU had called for a meeting. The workers responded en-masse to the meeting of SCREU while only a handful joined the Mazdoor union meeting.

The workers of the pantry car service of Tinsukia Mail observed a one-trip token strike in February '84 in furtherance of their demands warning the contractor that if their grievances are not ameliorated, they would be forced to go into an indefinite strike.

AROUND THE STATES

TAMILNADU

Solidarity with Jute Workers: Organised by the state CITU, thousands of workers, including women participated in statewide dharnas on March 5 to express solidarity with the 2.5 lakh jute workers' indefinite strike, demanding nationalisation of the jute industry. The dharnas also demanded take over of all the closed units in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. The B & C Mills in Madras is lying idle since January 15 affecting 8000 workers. The Anglo-French textile mill in Pondicherry has imposed an undeclared closure affecting 7000 workers, a number of whom have started dharna at Boat Club, New Delhi. CITU Centre has demanded immediate take over of the mill. Kanak Mukherjee and Arabindo Ghosh raised questions in the Parliament. Three other textile mills are also lying closed at Coimbatore for a long time. Several Engineering units are also lying closed in the state. Jeevanlal Aluminium factory has also declared closure. At Pondicherry two bundhs were organised jointly by CITU and other unions apart from rail roko, raste roko and picketing in Government offices demanding nationalisation of the Anglo-French Textile Mill. The dharnas were preceded by mass meetings and distribution of lakhs of pamphlets.

Simposon Workers Resume Work: Over ten thousand workers of the Sympson group of companies resumed work after their 4 month long strike. The strike was launched demanding reinstatement of the 15 leading trade union functionaries, and other demands. The strike was withdrawn after the Chief Minister intervened and assured to decide the case of reinstatement within three months and granted interim relief to the workers pending final settlement of the charter of demands.

Plantation Workers: 3000 workars of the private rubber plantations also resumed work after four months of strike demanding payment of DA. The strike was withdrawn after the Government passed orders to pay DA as per the expired settlement pending adjudication of the new charter.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Bank Employees: 400 bank employees staged a demonstration before the District Collector of Eluru and submitted a memorandum for his intervention to settle their various demands. The demonstration was organised by the Hyderabad Bank Employees' Federation.

Handloom Workers: Handloom and Heat Setting Plant workers of Machalipatnam started a relay hunger strike from January 17 in pursuance of their various demands. A large number of women

workers are participating in the hunger strike. All other trade unions of Machalipatnam have extended full support to the struggle.

Locoshed Workers: Loco shed workers of Bitragunta went on a relay hunger strike from January 28 protesting against mass transfer orders and ultimately compelled the authorities to withdraw the same.

Textile Workers: The workers of Arun Pathi and Ginning Mills of Adoni in Kurnool district are on indefinite strike demanding bonus and upward revision of wages. Trade in the cotton market has come to a standstill due the strike.

ILTD Workers: Organised under the ILD workers' Federation, the workers of ITC Ltd. launched agitational programmes protesting against the decision of the management to reduce the Holi wage. The management had to withdraw the notice. Apart from this an agreement was also arrived at in the conciliation meeting to increase the wages of the workers by Rs. 112,400 daily rated workers were also made monthly rated.

Demands Day: Industrial workers participated in the All India Demands Day programme on February 13 in pursuance of the call of the 17 opposition parties. Processions and meetings were held at Vijayawada, Vishakhapatnam, Khammam, Eluru, Ongole, Kurnool, Nellore, Rajahmundry, Warangal, Suryapet, Ananthapur, Mahaboobnagar, etc. Leaders of CITU like N. Prasada Rao, P. Satyanarayana and G. Balaji Dad addressed meetings at Warangal, Vishakhapatnam and Rajahmundry.

GUJARAT

Meeting of CITU State Committee: The Gujarat State Committee met at Ahmedabad on February 18 and 19. H.K. Shah, the General Secretary placed the work report and Subodh Mehta initiated discussions on the danger of the nuclear war. Comrades from the various units reported about the activities at the respective areas. The Ahmedabad unit was struggling hard for a joint movement for the reopening of the seven textile mills which were under closure. Baroda unit reported about the preparations for the state conference of the contract workers held on March 5 and addressed by Samar Mukherjee. It was noted that the membership of CITU was fast increasing particularly at Ahmedabad and Baroda. Ahmedabad unit was entrusted with the responsibility to publish a booklet on the present situation in the textile industry. As per decisions of the meeting February 26 was observed in all units to highlight the problems of the closed textile mills of Ahmedabad and Baroda. The meeting decided to make a campaign for one lakh signatures in a memorandum during March 19 to 25 to be submitted to the State Government demanding nationalisation of all the closed mills. It also decided to hold a state conference against lockouts and closures in March and also

on minimum wage. A meeting of active women workers in the state would also be called discuss the formation of a coordination committee of working women. The meeting further decided to open new units at Ankleshwar and Udhna. It also decided to hold the secretariat meeting once in every month.

UTTAR PRADESH

Attack on CITU activists: To contain the growth of CITU, the management of Diwan Rubber Factory, Meerut has started deploying hired goondas to physically assault the activists of Rubber Udyog Mazdoor Sangh (CITU). After their several attempts were frustrated by the workers, the management accompanied by 15 hoodlums entered the premises of Bharat Rubber industries on the night of February 26 and beat up the workers. Next, they entered the Diwan Rubber industries and repeated the assaults and injured 12 workers. When the workers staged a mass protest, the hoodlums entered the same premises again on March 3 with revolvers and started firing at random, seriously injuring 20 workers. All the dastardly attacks were launched despite strong protest actions staged by the trade unions before the District Magistrate on February 12 and 13. The undeterred workers however fought back and staged another massive protest action with a procession of 1500 workers. CITU has demanded immediate arrest of the culprits and security to the workers.

Similarly threat of physical assault is being given by the management of Willard Ltd. at Sikandrabad to the workers organised under Willard Employees Union (CITU) which is fighting for the settlement of its charter of demands. The management called a meeting of the employers in the industrial area to take retaliatory measures to curb the influence of the union.

Dharna at Assembly: The State CITU organised a dharna before the Assembly at Lucknow on March 2, demanding take over of J.K. Rayons and other closed factories, demanding Rs. 500/- as minimum wage, etc. About 250 workers including 44 women and 80 children staged the dharna. The police swooped on the workers and arrested about 90 workers including 28 women and 44 children. The struggle however is continuing. The matter was raised in the Assembly. But the Government is still refusing to take over the factory.

RAJASTHAN

CITU leader attacked by Dhanda group: R.K. Swami, Secretary, Kota Divisional Committee of CITU and State Committee member of CPI(M) was brutally assaulted on March 16 by the Dhanda group of hoodlums of Punamia in connivance with the management of J.K. Synthetics. Swami is lying in hospital in a serious condition. One Babu Singh

among the hoodlums has been arrested.

District conference: The State Campaign Committee held the first District Conference at Udaipur on March 11. About 300 delegates from various private and public sectors, Government employees and women attended the conference. Among others who addressed the conference, were P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU, Prem Krishan Sharma, General Secretary of the State CITU, Mahesh Sharma of AITUC, Pradeep Paliwal of BMS, Khamani of HMS, etc.

BIHAR

Karl Marx Death Centenary: Organised by the Marx Death Centenary Committee, the Death Centenary of Karl Marx was observed at Patna from March 10 to 12. The programme was inaugurated by Dr. R.K. Poddar, former Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University. On the first day P. Ramamurti delivered a lecture on Marxist philosophy. On the second day, E.M.S. Namboodiripad spoke on Marx and the relevance of Marxism in India. The programme concluded on March 12 with thought provoking lectures by B.T. Ranadive, and Prof. Irfan Habib. Thousands of workers, peasants, students, youth, women and intellectuals from all over the state attended the programme all the three days. Explaining the relevance of Marxism in India, EMS said that Marxism is omni potent because it is true. It is relevant to all the countries all the time. On the basis of this, he called upon the workers, peasants and all the have-nots to struggle unitedly against the ruling classes in India. Making a scathing attack on the "Indira brand of socialism", P. Ramamurti cautioned the people of the growing danger of authoritarianism by the Congress(I) under the garb of that brand. Explaining the Marxist science, he said that scientific socialism as discovered by Marx and developed by Lenin was the only way which can solve the sufferings of the Indian masses and humanity.

Speaking on Marxism and the working class, B.T. Ranadive called upon the workers to free themselves from the exclusiveness of trade union struggles of economism and enter the mainstream of politics. He said, the working class must march forward to play its historic role as the vanguard of the people's struggle against the exploiting classes. He said, of all the philosophers, it was only Marx who explained the scientific significance of class struggle and the historic role of the working class to change the society. They have to organise their own political party, distinctly opposed to all bourgeois parties for effecting the change.

The Karl Marx Death Centenary was also observed at Gaya on February 26 by the District Co-ordination Committee of Trade Unions. The programme was addressed by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, State Secretary of (CPI-M), Yogeshwar Gope, State President of CITU, Ayodhya Singh and others.

15th Congress of Cuban Trade Unions

— Nrisingha Chakraborty

THE 15th Congress of the Central Organisation of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC) held at Havana on February 20-24, 1984 was marked for the tremendous enthusiasm that had generated among the working class of Cuba, as it coincided with the 25th anniversary of the triumph of Cuban revolution.

During my stay at Moscow on way to Havana to attend the congress as a fraternal delegate from CITU, the representative of AUCCTU, informed me that this time, the CTC, has invited a very large delegation from abroad. On my arrival, I could see that the CTC has prepared for the congress in a big way on the central slogan of "Congress for Production and Defence".

Between the 14th congress of CTC which was held in 1978 i.e. 6 years ago and this one, the leadership of the CTC had undertaken a drive for literacy, particularly adult literacy, a drive for identification of problems, economic, social and political and finding their solutions, a drive for socialist emulation through ideological and political education.

During this period 50,000 assemblies of workers were held in which 2 million workers had participated in a debate on the problems and their solutions. There had also been a movement of innovators and rationalisers who were grouped in 5200 committees with more than 60,200 members who had contributed 400 million pesos worth of spare parts and innovations. This movement was considered to be significant, as the CTC opened an Exhibition by the National Association of Innovators and Rationalisers in the afternoon of February 19 in which the fraternal delegates from abroad also took part. On the same night another exhibition on the 45th anniversary of CTC was also opened.

The mass of workers' delegates who attended the 15th congress, showed their enthusiasm and support from the first day of the congress, through slogans, applause and ovations and came out almost dancing at the end of the congress. Their active participation in the congress was really notable. Com Fidel Castro, in his summing up speech after the congress commented on this.

Participation in the Congress

At the beginning of the congress, after the Presidium was elected, the credential committee placed its report which showed that out of 2194 delegates, 2180 representing 99.3 per cent of the total were taking part in the congress, of whom 591, constituting 27 per cent were women. There were 7 young representatives of special brigades who were working in Cuba, present as special guests. Some of the delegates were internationalist construction

workers. The oldest delegates was 77 and the youngest 10 years old. There were 184 fraternal delegates representing 86 countries who were seated in 8 rows after the presidium on the stage. Com. Castro was all along present in the congress attending all the sessions punctually as scheduled. A printed programme and agenda was circulated among the delegates which was approved after the conference was declared open by Com. Rosario Fernandes Perera a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Presentation of the Report

Comrade Roberto Veiga Menendez, presented a 63 page report to the congress, which was read out slowly covering the entire morning session. In the evening session of the first day, only Com Shelayev, President AUCCTU-USSR, Comrade Ibrahim Zakaraia, Secretary General of WFTU and a comrade from Nicaragua addressed the congress as Fraternal delegates.

The report dealt with figures of production as well as saving together with the steps taken about increase in wages, bonus, material incentives and social security etc. It stated that the social security available in Cuba is not only the best among all third world countries but also better than some of the advanced capitalist countries in some respects. It identified several problems and suggestions. One of the suggestion given by the workers was lowering down of retiring age for women. While turning the same down on the ground that the women cannot be treated as incapacitated at the age of 50 now especially because the life expectancy of people which was 60 in 1959 has reached 74 now, the report pointed out that such immediate lowering down the age of retirement will incapacitate several branches of production due to large-scale exodus of skilled workers, while it is necessary for the country to increase production. There were several other problems, claims for wages etc referred to in the report, some of which had already been debated and sent to commissions. Some of which were accepted and implemented and some rejected. But at the end the report called upon the delegates to have a free discussion on all points with their right to disagree and seek a vote as was ensured under trade union democracy.

For about three days i.e. from the afternoon session of February 20 till morning session of February 23, there were discussions on these points. Com. Veiga conducted the discussions sometimes calling upon the leadership of a particular union to answer the points of criticism leveled by the delegates and sometimes 3 or 4 members discussed a particular point almost like a debate each answer-

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Secret Circular by B.P.E.

A secret circular No. 16(1)/84-BPE (GM) dated January 6, 1984 from the Ministry of Finance has been issued by C. Venkataraman, Special Secretary and Director General of the BPE to the Chairman and Managing Directors of all the public sector undertakings which will have the following serious implications.

1. The restrictions on disbursement of non plan account will only mean the further curtailment of programmes which will only cause delay in their implementation. Some projects are likely to be left half completed also. This going slow on plan programme will create difficulties for the workers working on the projects. The construction workers and contract workers are also likely to be hit adversely.

2. The restrictions on financing the losses of undertakings will only increase in the pressure on the management to intensify the workload on the workers. Instead of taking steps against bungling by the managements the method of stopping additional funds will create serious problems of cash flow for the public sector workers. In some units even the payment dues of the workers in time will be affected by such directive.

3. In the name of revising the plan on a realistic basis attempts are likely to be made for further reduction of plan targets. This will lead to decline in the rate of growth of the public sector undertakings.

4. While any attempt to introduce cut in extravagant expenditure will be welcomed by the workers, the public sector management may continue with the wasteful expenditure and the 3 per cent of the revenue cut will be sought to be implemented at the cost of workers' demands. The managements' rigidity in sorting out the pending issues could be clearly seen as sequel of this directive.

5. The existing vacancies which are not filled in are likely to remain unfilled. The ban on creation of new posts for 9 months is likely to be extended further. The vacancies arising out of retirement, resignations, etc. are also not likely to be filled.

Several public sector managements are backing out from the commitments made in the agreement. The trade union movement will have to study the implication of this circular so that whatever impact it creates against the interest of the workers would

“May issue of The Working Class will be a special issue. Please send your orders for extra copies early.”

be resisted through the united movement of the workers.

The Circular

Subject: Economy in Plan and Non-Plan Expenditure

In the context of the present need for economy in expenditure, the Government has decided as follows:—

(a) In framing the Plan size for the public sector enterprises for the year 1984-85 any deterioration in revenue position would have to be accommodated by cutting down the plan size. On the non-plan account or in the payment of interest or loans to Govt., any deterioration will be automatically adjusted by reducing disbursements on plan accounts;

(b) For the year-1983-84 no further financial allocation would be made for financing losses of public sector enterprises, including the National Textile Corporation, beyond amounts already approved. Ministries would have to take effective measures to improve the performance of these enterprises if they are to continue in operation;

(c) There should be a ban on new starts as well as on expansion of existing activities except where there is a substantial element of external funding. The annual plan 1984-85 would also need to be finalised on realistic basis keeping in view the likely resource position.

(d) All public sector enterprises must observe the utmost economy in revenue expenditure. All ostentatious expenditure and entertainments etc. must be severely restricted. A 3 per cent cut in the revenue expenditure for 1983-84 as a whole must be effected in the last quarter of the current year;

(e) Except in the most exceptional circumstances, no new posts should be created in the public sector enterprises for the next nine months. Existing vacancies where action for recruitment has not been initiated should not be filled up.

2. Instructions may kindly be issued to all concerned for the strict observance of the above.

The Value of Rupee

1960-61	70.42	paise
1976-77	23.92	”
1979-80	20.00	”
1983 (December)	12.89	”

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ing the other. The opinion of the women delegates was specially sought on the question of retiring age and all of them claimed equality with men in all respects including retiring age. Every issue was separately voted upon before the entire report was adopted.

On February 21, a representative from ILO, from the Standing Congress of the Unity of Latin American Workers (CPUSTAL) and from Angola greeted the congress. On the same night after dinner, a separate session was held in the International Conference Centre, to express solidarity with Latin American workers which was addressed by representatives from Nicaragua, AUCCTU-USSR, Angola, CGT-France, CITU India, El Salvador, CPUSTAL and International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions.

On February 23 (evening) and 24 (morning) while the session continued to transact other business like approval of finance, changes in constitution and election of new leadership, some of the fraternal delegates from abroad were taken to various work centres where they were requested to address the workers. I was grouped with the representatives of Mozambique (Africa) and El Salvador (Latin America) and all of us were taken to the Central Orthopedic hospital in Havana and we addressed the workers there. In the afternoon of February 24 the result of the voting was announced and the newly elected leadership was introduced to the delegates. Com. Veigo was re-elected as secretary general. Then Com. Fidel Castro, summed up the discussion. He was present on the dais throughout the session and except on one occasion he patiently listened to the discussion in which over 100 delegates partici-

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To raise the voice of protest, the Council of Finnish Food Workers' Trade Union called for strike actions on the days. Responding to the call, tens of thousands of workers in different industries throughout the country downed their tools to demonstrate solidarity. Hundreds of workers from all over the country flocked the court room. Demonstrations were organised at Helsinki, Tahti, Turku, Tampere, Oulu and Rovaniemi. Responding to the appeal of the trade unions, the workers made a boycott of the products of the Mallasjuoma Company, which sued the leaders, dropping the sale of its soft drinks and beer by 10 percent.

Spain

Hundreds of thousands of workers took part in a protest strike on February 3 against plans of the Government to cut productions and jobs. The strikers held mass meetings at Madrid, Galicia, Asturias and other industrial centres demanding of the Government to take effective measures for creation of jobs.

Italy

A massive strike called jointly by the CGIL, CISL

and UIL against the Government's policies to cut jobs brought the region of Calabre to a complete stand still. 2 lakh workers were out of a job in this backward region following the Government's cut-in-job policy. Huge demonstrations were held in several towns demanding creation of new jobs.

The entire delegation came out of the hall shouting slogans, singing and dancing on the streets. The women in particular seemed to be happy at the outcome of the congress.

In the night Com Fidel Castro gave a reception at the Cubanacan Protocol Hall, which was attended by the Foreign delegates, some Ambassadors, the newly elected leadership and also ordinary delegates. The fraternal delegates from abroad had to be sent back in groups which started from 25th itself and continued till 29th Feb. as sufficient accommodation was not available in the regular air service. I could get accommodation only on 28th February and returned back on 1st March '84.

The warmth with which all the fraternal delegates were received at Havana and cared during our stay was remarkable. We were taken to mechanised agricultural firms, factories educational institutions; etc during this period which showed that despite economic blockade imposed by the U.S. imperialists, the Cuban working class has made great strides in production and are consolidating their defence.

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Portugal

Thousands of workers in different industrial centres staged demonstrations and mass rallies in the factories and the streets in 21 towns of the country after downing their tools from January 26 to 28. The strike call was given by the CGTP-IN in protest against "axing the social package" practised by the Government and against constant blocking of collective bargaining talks.

Japan

Trade unions have denounced the decision of the Association of Japanese Employers' Federation to block wage rise of workers in 1984. The council of united struggle of spring, 1984 comprising of over 9 million workers has called upon all to launch determined struggle against the wage freeze brought in under the guise of combating inflation and recession.

International Struggles

Great Britain

An "industrial bundh" was observed in Britain on February 28 as a national protest day against the anti-labour and war mongering policies of the Thatcher Government and attack on the trade union rights of the workers. Lakhs of workers in various industrial centres in the country struck work and came out on the streets in innumerable processions.

France

Thirty thousand workers from all industries in the Provence-Alpines' Cote d'Azur region downed their tools on February 7 and took over the main avenue of Marseille, La Cannebiere for several hours to demand jobs and more wages to maintain their purchasing power. The call for the action was given by the CGT regional branch. The demonstrators marched through the street with posters and banners reading, "No to sacking" "Work to all", "More wages", etc. Shoulder to Shoulder, the miners, ship builders, white collar workers, aerospace workers, manual workers, hospital ancillary workers, post

office employees, teachers and building workers demonstrated their determination to struggle unitedly to save their jobs and hard won gains.

Grenada

After the invasion of Grenada to transform the island into a permanent military base of U.S.A. to increase its pressure against Nicaragua and El Salvador, Reagan administration is now trying to place Grenada's finance under the total control of the U.S. banks. While the revolutionary Government of Maurice Bishop had reduced unemployment from about 50 per cent in 1979 to 14 per cent in 1982, within three months of U.S. occupation 2,000 people out of a population of 1,10,000 have lost their jobs.

Finland

The Central Union of Employers of Finland has stepped up their attacks on trade union rights of the workers, even imposing fines on the leaders for calling an industrial strike in June 1983. The labour tribunal met on October 5 and December 21 to hear the cases.

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Military Spending by Capitalist Countries

	U.S.A. (Thousand Million dollars)	JAPAN (Million Million Yen)	FRG. (Thousand Million DMs)	FRANCE (Thousand Million FFs.)	GREAT BRITAIN (Thousand Million Pounds)	ITALY (Million Million Lires)
1980	144.0	2250	48.5	111.7	11,503	8,203
1981	170.0	2429	52.2	129.7	12,418	9,868
1982	198.5	2586	54.6	145.2	14,186	12,066

(Source: Main Economic Indicators, Paris; Japan Statistical Year Book, 1982; SIPRI Year Book, 1982, Stockholm.)

Military Spending Costs Jobs

One billion dollars on military spending creates 75,710 jobs. But one billion dollars spent on:
 Mass Transit, creates 92,071 jobs,
 Construction, creates 100,072 jobs,
 Health Care, creates 138,939 jobs,
 Education, creates 187,299 jobs.

(Source: Marta Daniels-Jobs, Security and Arms in Connecticut.)

Cost of Reaganism

- * The number of workers suffering one or more episodes of unemployment in U.S.A. during 1981 to 1983 of Reagan's regime was 30 millions.
- * The average mean duration of unemployment rose from 14 weeks in 1981 to 20 weeks in '83.
- * The average gross earnings lost by the jobless workers rose from 3,315 dollars in 1981 to 4,005 dollars in 1982 to 5,620 dollars in 1983.
- * The value of loss in productions due to unemployment rose from 180 billion dollars in 1981 to 380 billion dollars in 1983.
- * 10.7 million workers lost health coverages due to unemployment.
- * During three years of Reagan's rule cuts in social programmes amounted to 110.2 billion dollars, which included 28 per cent cut in child nutrition programmes; 27 per cent in higher education; 22 per cent in health programmes; 35 per cent in job training for the handicapped; 13 per cent in aid to families with dependants;