



THE WORKING CLASS

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MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Against the Black Ordinance

Massive Countrywide Protests

The Working Class demonstrated its total opposition to and demanded withdrawal of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance banning strikes. As reports come pouring in, in all the states, every nook and corner of the country, reverberated on August 17 with joint rallies, demonstrations, wearing of black badges and meetings demanding withdrawal of this black Ordinance. This also shows the urge for unity among the workers in defence of their right to strike.

In Bombay the Central Trade Unions and other Federations organised a massive rally of nearly One Lakh workers drawn from various sections. In Calcutta the entire traffic stood still for three minutes to mark the protest. All workers, office-goers, students, youth and women wore black badges and held big rallies and demonstrations before and after office hours and during lunch time. At Srinagar a big rally was held demanding withdrawal of the Ordinance. The Assam Govt. refused to give permission for Central Rally.

The entire country echoed the slogan "Down with the Black Ordinance". Thousands of workers in Delhi and the adjoining industrial belt defying the sweltering heat marched from Ferozeshah Kotla Ground to Boat Club, where the rally was addressed by leaders of eight Central Trade Unions, viz. CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, BMS, UTUC(LS), TUCC and INTUC(Dara). Determination was writ large amongst the wor-

kers to unitedly fight the authoritarian measure to curb the fundamental rights of the people which reminded the Rowlatt Act of the British regime which authorised even the police constables to arrest any person on suspicion only. The Junior doctors of Delhi also joined the mainstream of the struggle by wearing black badges. Loco-Running Staff Association observed a day-long dharna at the Boat Club.

The Central Trade Union leaders called upon the working class to forge strong alliance with the peasantry and the agricultural workers to carry forward the struggle as programmed in the Bombay Convention and prepare for the Winter March to Parliament and the All India Strike. Later, a delegation of the Central Trade Unions submitted a memorandum to the speaker of Lok Sabha demanding withdrawal of the Ordinance. The voice of the people was powerfully raised in the Lok-Sabha also and the entire opposition walked out demanding withdrawal of the Ordinance when it was forcefully attempted to be tabled.

Strike in Kerala

CITU, AITUC, UTUC, HMS and INTUC (U) jointly gave a call for general strike in Kerala on September 3 against the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance banning strikes. The call was given in a State Convention held on Aug. 9 at Tagore Centenary Hall, Trivandrum, sponsored by the Central Trade Unions and other Federations.

The resolution for the general strike against the Ordinance was moved by K.A. Rajan, M.P. (AITUC) and unanimously passed with slogans "Down with the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance."

The second Resolution for the All India strike in all industries and establishments, as decided by the Bombay Convention of June 4, was moved by E. BALANANDAN

[On Page four]

15 August—

Our Pledge

The 15th of August, India's Day of Independence. Haloed with the glory of two hundred years' unceasing struggle of the common people....shining with the blood and sacrifice of the countless martyrs.

15th of August is committed to that struggle and sacrifice.... to establish people's right to shape their own destiny,to make possible a social system, free of exploitation, established on the solid foundation of equal rights for all nationalities, tribes, races, communities and classes.

India is a free country now. But that commitment still remains unfulfilled. Millions of toiling people are determined to fulfil their cherished objective—to defeat the conspiracy of the vested interests trying to subvert that sacred commitment to the people. They do not care for the democratic rights of the masses. They want to trample the people's indomitable desire to shape their destiny under the steamroller of secessionism. They want to shatter the dream of an exploitation-free social system by perpetuating a reign of authoritarianism.

The unrepayable debt of blood and tears to those immortal martyrs and fighters for freedom has never been disowned by the people of the State. They are determined to redeem the pledge of 15th August through glorious and long-lasting struggle against oppression and tyranny on all fronts.

The Left-Front Government is a partner in the people's glorious struggle. It is determined to stand by the commitment of 15th August. Over the last four years this determination is writ large on the expansive grain-fields, is echoed by the resounding roar of the wheels of the industry, and is heard loud and clear in the voices of millions of people.

Today, when the dark conspiracies heighten, when authoritarian and separatist forces are overbusy in subversive activities, let the unity of the indomitable people be unbreakable; let the fond dreams of the freedom-fighters and the immortal martyrs come true-soon.

That's the pledge of 15th August. And may this pledge be proclaimed by the flutter of the Flag of the Independence Day.

Government of West Bengal

Antulay Government's Brutal Assault

The Maharashtra police made a brutal assault on the workers of Bombay Tyres International Ltd., a subsidiary of the American Multinational Firestone on July 24, when they protested against the death of a worker, who was forced to work in a defective mould. T/1
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On July 22 at 2 A.M. Dhondiba D. Zanzad was compelled by the management to work in a defective mould inspite of his protests. Further the mould was meant for curing small tyres. But the management forced Zanzad to cure a heavy duty tyre (900-20 B 251) which could not be fit inside the mould. In the process, the upper lid of the mould weighing more than a tonne, collapsed and fell on the neck of Zanzad with his head caught inside the mould in a temperature of about 350 degree Centigrade.

Zanzad died instantaneously. The accident siren was rung, but the management had no arrangements to attend the emergency siren calls. When the workers protested to the Managing Director, R.L. Shennetz, he sought time till July 24, 3 P.M. When the workers went to see the Managing Director at the specified time, a battallion of police force entered the factory premises. An unprecedented army of 9 lorry loads of S.R.P., 5 lorry loads of police constables and 5 jeep loads of police officers lathi-charged the workers, chased them inside the factory, the canteen and on to the roads, beat them unconscious and arrested 67 of them. The management thereupon issued notice suspending the operations and illegal lockout, asking the workers not to enter the factory premises.

Since 1966, the workers had been protesting against the defective moulds and other machineries, demanding of the management to observe safety rules and labour-laws. But no heed was taken of the same either by the management or by the Government.

Labour Laws, Factory Acts and safety rules are openly flouted by the employers in collusion with the Govt. officials. The recent collapse of Shantinath Silk Mill at Surat is another eye-opener. Having no sympathy for the deceased worker or his family, the vandalism of the Cong.(I) Govt. truly revealed its authoritarian character to discipline the workers at the call of the American multi-national.

The All India Firestone Employees Federation resolved to hold an All India Delegates meeting to take further decisions on the matter.

Massive Morcha And Courting Arrest By Delhi Women

Thanks to the economic policies and authoritarian measures of Congress (I) Government, for the first time Delhi witnessed a joint morcha and courting arrest by women against these policies, organised by twelve organisations.

The massive 1,000 strong morcha marched from Gurdwara Rakabganj to Vijay Chowk under heavy down-pour to submit memorandum to the Union Finance Minister. The demands included withdrawal of the price hike of petroleum products and other essential commodities and the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance banning strikes. It demanded take over of wholesale trade in food grains and supply of all essential commodities through ration shops.

The morcha broke two police cordons, when they were physically stopped and taken to the waiting vans by the police women. Over 400 women courted arrest.

The call for the protest action was jointly given by All India Democratic Women's Association, All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women, National Federation of Indian Women, Mahila Dakshata Samity, Delhi State Mahila Federation, Delhi Kamgarh Mahila Samity, Congress(U) Mahila Front, Mahila Wing of Lok Dal, Janawadi Mahila Samity, Delhi, Janata Mahila Vibhag and the Indian Federation of Consumer organisations.

Amongst those who spoke in the rally, included Susheela Gopalan, Pramila Dandavate, Gyatri Devi, Vimal Ranadive, Ambika Soni and Vimla Farooqi.

Struggle Continues in J.K. Rayon

J.K. Rayon Workers' Union (CITU), Kanpur, the recognised union, continues its struggle against lay-off of 1800 workers and other demands. Bypassing the recognised CITU Union, the management foisted a non-existent INTUC Union and tried to impose the "Settlement" on the workers. The Cong. (I) Government connived with the management and a reign of terror was let loose on the workers. While a large number of fire-arms were found at the INTUC Union's Office, 125 workers of the recognised CITU Union were arrested. All efforts for a tripartite settlement failed because of the management's refusal to attend the meetings. A two-man-delegation consisting of Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary, CITU, and Daulatram, General Secretary, U.P. State Committee of CITU, and President of the Union met N.D. Tiwari, the Union Labour Minister, at New Delhi.

Attempt to Murder Com. Ajeya Rout

A dastardly attempt was made to murder Ajeya Rout, General Secretary of Orissa State Committee of CITU and President of Jharsuguda Industrial Mazdoor Union (CITU) on July 22, by an organised gang of 200 armed Cong(I) hoodlums at the instance of the management and their contractors.

About 2,700 workers employed in Bhaskar Textile Mill were previously under the two unions of INTUC and AITUC, the latter was the recognised one. But later on, on the formation of the CITU union, the majority of the workers joined CITU led Industrial Mazdoor Union, which ultimately got the recognition also. About 2,500 workers are organised under the CITU union. Through a glorious struggle the Industrial Mazdoor Union settled a charter of demands to the full satisfaction of the workers. By virtue of the agreement the contract system was abolished and all the contract labour were absorbed as regular workers in the mill.

The contractors connived with a section of the management who got their share from them and the INTUC hoodlums attacked the CITU office at Jharsuguda on July 22, at 3-30 P. M.

The front door of the office was broken and keeping guards at all the entrances one group went inside with daggers, knives and lathis. Five Union leaders inside the office were beaten severely, bleeding profusely. The right hand of one leader was fractured and another was hit at his spinal cord. Thinking another one as dead, he was thrown on the roof-top and covered with a mat. Then the group made for Com. Ajeya Rout who was in an interior room of the office. Having failed to break open the door, they climbed on the roof and started breaking the asbestos top of the room. Another group

attacked Com. Sribacha Samal, Secretary of the union and threw him in a nearby drain unconscious. The entire office was ransacked in the process. In the mean time, hearing an alert, the gang escaped. The operation continued for full one hour. All the injured activists are lying in serious conditions in the hospital. Even on information, the police did not come. Names of the goondas who led the attack were submitted to the police. But instead of taking any steps against them, the

police arrested 13 injured workers of the union. The local Cong(I) M.L.A. who was behind the scene, planned another on July, 27, but it was frustrated due to the vigilance of the organised workers.

Leaders of five opposition parties have condemned this ghastly attack in a joint statement and demanded of the Chief Minister to bring the culprits to book.

The President of Orissa State Committee of CITU, Com. Shivaji Patnaik has appealed to all mass organisations and political parties opposed to Cong(I) to unitedly resist the dastardly attack on the democratic rights of the workers by the ruling party.

Com. C. Govindarajan Stabbed

A motivated attempt to murder Com. C. Govindarajan, Secretary of Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU and President of E. I. D. Parry Sugar Factory Labour Union was made by the anti-CITU gangsters on August 5. He was stabbed in the stomach when he was returning home after attending a meeting of the recognised labour union.

Since long, the anti-CITU gangster elements were trying to capture the union. In the meantime a large number of employees left the recognised non-CITU staff union and joined the Staff Union led by CITU.

A few months before the gangsters attacked CITU Labour Union and ransacked the office. Having failed in their attempts to intimidate the workers, they made this frantic bid to kill Com. Govindarajan. Police took no action and the goondas are absconding.

All the workers of EID Parry immediately struck work. There was a complete hartal on August

6 at the Nellikuppam area as protest against such dastardly attack on Com. Govindarajan.

The Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU has demanded of the State Government to bring the culprits to book immediately and stop such attacks on the democratic and trade union rights of the workers.

[From Front Page]

M.P.(CITU) and passed unanimously. The exact date of the strike to be held in the third week of November would be decided by the National Campaign Committee. The Convention which was attended by 3000 delegates began with a condolence resolution on the death of Com. Bhupesh Gupta. At the end of the Convention the workers marched to the Raj Bhawan and submitted a Memorandum to the Governor demanding withdrawal of the Ordinance. The gathering before Raj Bhawan was addressed by E. Balanandan.

Jute Workers Observe Total Strike

Two lakhs fifty thousand workers in the jute industry in West Bengal struck work on August 10 demanding implementation of the grades and scale of pay award.

After a complete 50 days' continuous strike in 1979 the Jute Mill employees and I.J. & M.A. entered into a settlement with the unions in the industry, principally agreeing to introduce grades and scales of pay. Accordingly, the Bhattacharjee Committee was set up and as per the terms of settlement, the Labour Minister gave his award to introduce grades and scales in pay as recommended by the Committee. But the employers and I.J.M.A. instead of implementing the award, violated the terms of settlement and went to court to stall it. Even the mills under Public Sector Undertaking NJMC, toed the line of IJMA. All representations having failed, the call for the strike was given by all the Central Trade Unions in the industry, viz CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC and TUCC.

Niren Ghosh, President and Kamal Sarkar, General Secretary of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU), in a press statement congratulated the workers on the successful strike.

The Central Trade Union leaders said that the August 10 strike was only a warning and called upon the workers to prepare for higher trade union action in case the employers and I.J.M.A. refused to honour the

settlement.

The August 10 Strike of the Jute Workers was the first major strike in the country after the Essential Services Ordinance. Even though the Jute industry does not come under the purview of the Ordinance, it will boost up the morale of the entire working class to resist the authoritarian measures of the Cong. (I) Government and prepare for an All India Strike in all industries as decided upon by the Bombay Convention of June 4.

Attack on CITU Union in Tamil Nadu

Severe repression has been let loose on the rubber plantation workers organised under Estate Workers' Union (CITU) at Valliyor (Tirunelveli District). The police ransacked the Union office and looted the cash. The workers were assaulted and arrested including the General Secretary.

Similarly, in Kanyakumari District also, 50 rubber plantation workers were arrested. Petition to the Chief Minister by the Union has brought no result.

In protest against such high handedness of the police a 2,000 strong procession marched from Kulasekaram convent Junction to Arasamoodu Junction on July 25, where a public meeting was held.

The All India Plantation Workers' Federation has sent protest telegram to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Kerala Tea Estates lock-out :

The estates of Talapoya, Nenie, Cherakkara and Tattamale, employing about 3,500 workers did not pay the wages from April to October, 1980. The management agreed to the Kerala Plantation Labour Federation to pay the arrears within June, 30, 1981. Later on, the management demanded Rs 3.00 per worker per day to make their running capital for payment of the arrears, which the workers refused. Now the management have locked out the estates from June, 23.

All India Demands Day by C.G. Employees

The recalcitrant attitude of the Government of India to the long pending demands of the Central Government Employees has compelled them to take the path of agitation. The Govt. has arbitrarily postponed the meeting of Joint Consultative Machinery indefinitely and thus drawn a curtain on any scope of negotiation or settlement of their long pending demands like grant of Rs. 150/- as interim relief pending wage revision, Bonus as deferred wage, upward revision of C.C.A. and H.R.A. and upgrading of new cities for C.C.A. and H.R.A. in terms of

1981 Census, grant of two slabs of D.A. already overdue and merger of D.A. up to 344 points of G.P.I. with basic pay.

The National Executive Committee of the Confederation of Central Government Employees and workers in its meeting of August 1, condemned the Government's arbitrary action of postponing the meeting of J.C.M. It also denounced the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance to ban strikes and decided to observe September 10 as All India Negotiation and Settlement Demands Day.

Editorial Board

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

Samar Mukherjee Indicts Railway Board for Accidents

The following is the text of letter dated July 30 from Samar Mukherjee M.P. to Smt. Indira Gandhi.

I am forwarding herewith a letter dated 27.7.81 from the Secy. General, AILRSA together with copies of letters, addressed by him to you and Shri Kedar Pandey and also a copy of my letter to Shri Pandey, for your special attention.

Before I received this letter from AILRSA, I met Shri Kedar Pandey on 27.7.81 and apprised him about violation of safety norms in Indian Railways about which certain irrefutable facts were also handed over to him. It appears that trains are being run without Guards, without proper brake power and vacuum brakes and by non-designated drivers or even by Fireman working as Driver in Mail, Express or Super-fast trains. Whatever may be the official position taken by the Railway Ministry such wholesale violation of safety rules, some of which are statutory in character cannot take place unless the officers at lower levels are given tacit approval by those in Railway Board. The essential question, therefore is, can any officer violate the statutory safety rules playing havoc with the lives of innocent travelling public and railwaymen? I hope you would cause a special enquiry on the subject and take appropriate steps.

The second question is the labour relations in Indian Railways. Every one would be shocked to know that three loco running staff one of them top leader in LRSA are still detained without trial under National Security Act. I would like to

draw your attention to repeated disapprovals by the Committee on Freedom of Association duly approved by the Governing Body of I.L.O. on the subject. This shows the type of labour relations that is existing in Indian Railways. Besides I have forwarded innumerable copies of letters, circulars etc. which show that those organised in unrecognised unions and associations do not have the elementary right to

Dharna by Loco Running Staff

Over one thousand Loco Running Staff held a Dharna before Parliament (Boat Club) on August 17, in accordance with the decision taken earlier by AILRSA in protest against violation of agreements reached with them about maximum duty hours, restructuring of pay and allowances and channel of communication. They focussed that they are being forced to work in violation of safety rules and any one protesting against this is being victimised. They also protested against victimisation. To observe this day as "Black Day" they wore black badges.

Samar Mukherjee M.P., Treasurer CITU, greeted the workers and explained to them the talks he had with the Railway Minister on their grievances. Parvati Krishnan from AITUC and Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary CITU also expressed solidarity with their struggle.

Meetings and Conferences

The Annual General Meeting of All India Railway Ministerial Staff Association was held at Madras on August 13-15.

hold meetings or to lead mass deputations or conduct dharnas even after they have taken leave for the same. During our talks Shri Pandey could not defend these actions which relegate the railwaymen to the category of bonded labour or worse. This aspect also needs your immediate intervention.

I would, therefore, request you to take appropriate action for release of those who are still detained under NSA, observance of safety rules and improvement of labour relations. I shall be thankful if you please let me know the steps taken in the matter.

A meeting of the All India Engineering Staff Association, Northern Railway was held at Ghaziabad on July 26-27. On July 28, representatives of Engineering Staff from Eastern, North Eastern and NF Railways met together and decided to finalise a charter of demands to be popularised in all railways.

JUST PUBLISHED

Build up A Formidable Force

Documents of the National Trade Union Convention against Price-Rise and Anti-Working Class Policies of the Government held at Bombay on June 4, 1981.

**Foreword by
B.T. Ranadive**
President, CITU

Price : 75 Paise

Available at :

CITU Office,
6, Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-110001

CITU General Council Reiterates the Call for Confederation

The CITU General Council, which met at Belur-Howrah, on August 21-24, ended with an appeal for formation of a Confederation of all Central Trade Unions and National Federations, which could, on the basis of agreed decisions, act promptly and intervene throwing the united might of the Working Class against the drive towards one-party authoritarian rule. A detailed analysis of the Sixth Five Year Plan, the growing crisis in our economy, the promulgation of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance to ban strikes and the world situation in general made by the General Council, demands this and the General Council directed that vigorous efforts be made in this regard.

The compound, in which the meeting was held, was named "Dinen Nagar" in memory of comrade Dinen Bhattacharya M. P., a veteran trade union leader and a member of CITU Working Committee who passed away last year. The place of the meeting and the area 20 kilometres round were decorated in the tradition of West Bengal, with huge gates in memory of the martyrs and welcoming the members of the General Council.

After a brief meeting of the Working Committee to decide on the agenda and schedule of the meeting, the flag of the CITU was hoisted by B.T. Ranadive, President, who then placed wreath on the Martyrs Column followed by all General Council members and others who placed red roses. 198 members and 22 observers attended the meeting. A large number of members from Kerala could not attend the session as they were busy for preparation of the General strike in Kerala against ESMO on September 3. Resolutions paying homage to martyrs and condolence resolutions on Alexi Kosygin, Soong Ching Ling, Bhupesh Gupta, Dinesh Mazumdar, P.C. Joshi, S. Venkatram and Bal Dandavate were moved by the Chair and the members passed the resolutions standing in silence for one minute for each resolution. Patit Paban Pathak, Chairman Reception Committee

welcomed the General Council members.

B.T. Ranadive then addressed the General Council (Full text published as supplement). This being the inaugural session was open to Press and the public and a fully packed hall listened in rapt attention the masterly analysis of the present situation. Then P. Ramamurti, General Secretary placed his report (excerpts published elsewhere in this issue) highlighting the need for reviewing the organisational position which is very much necessary to carry forward the task of uniting the working class and the people.

On behalf of the Working Committee M.K. Pandhe proposed the Resolution Sub Committee with Nrisingha Chakrabarty (Convenor), N. Prasada Rao, P.K. Kurane, K.N. Ravindranath, Shanti Ghatak, Sunil Basu Roy and Madan Phadnis. He also proposed Credential Committee with A. Nallasivan (Convenor), S. Suryanarayana Rao, Chandi Prasad, Kali Ghosh and T.N. Nambirajan. The General Council approved these proposals. He also proposed the agenda and time table for the meeting which were also approved.

He then placed the Work Report, detailing the industry wise steps taken by the CITU Centre. The report highlighted

the developing struggles and growing influence of CITU. It also showed how discrimination was being made against the CITU unions and the increased attacks on the unions. It showed how the Govt. is openly patronising the INTUC and all consultations have become a mere formality to be observed. Citing instances, he stated, how the CITU nominees are fighting hard in statutory bodies so that the discussions become meaningful and beneficial to the workers. He also reported the growth of friendly relations with Trade Union Centres of various countries including USSR and China.

Biren Roy placed his experience in Czechoslovakia Seminar. P.R. Krishnan, Sudhin Kumar, Nrisingha Chakrabarty and S. Suryanarayana Rao apprised the members about their experience. It was decided that the Secretariat should discuss the position.

The General Council co-opted P.K. Ganguly as a member in one of the two vacancies from Centre.

Abul Basar, presented bound volumes of the union records about the struggle of tailors and bidi workers to CITU Centre, which were acknowledged with thanks by B.T. Ranadive.

Discussion on the ESI Scheme was initiated by M.K. Pandhe in
On Page Eleven

Strengthen Organisation— Build up United Struggle

P. Ramamurti, General Secretary, CITU, in his report to the General Council meeting held at Bally. Howrah paid tribute to the memory of Bhupesh Gupta, S. Venkat Ram and Bal Dandavate. After making pointed reference to the various aspects like crisis of Indian economy, mounting attacks on the trade union and democratic movements, the attempts of the divisive forces and above all the imperialist conspiracies which have been dealt in detail in the speech of B.T. Ranadive, President, he emphasised the importance of the decisions of the Bombay Convention on June 4, in the following words :

1. The question of rising prices has been placed in the forefront and the Trade Union movement has been directed to take up the issue as one affecting the entire working people.
2. Remunerative Prices for the peasants and minimum wages, for agricultural workers have been highlighted, and the Trade Union movement has been directed to make common cause with these exploited sections of the country.
3. The ugly nature of the anti-working class policy of the Cong. (I) Government, and the ferocious attacks it makes on the working class and the Trade Union movement have been detailed.
4. The basic economic policies of the Congress (I) Government—Pro-monopolist, Pro-landlord and dependent upon multinationals and

foreign loans—have been squarely placed as the root of these policies.

5. The ever deepening crisis of the Indian economy as a result of these policies, and the determined effort to shift the burdens to the working class and the common people have been sharply pointed out.
6. The rising mass resistance to these attacks by all sections of the working people has been pointed out.
7. The inexorable political attacks on the Trade Union and Democratic Rights of the people and the drive to authoritarianism on the part of the Congress (I) Government have been shown to be the direct outcome of all the above factors.
8. The attempts to divide the ranks of the fighting masses on the basis of religion, community, language, and region with the same aim of meeting this resistance of the masses has also been pointed out.

Explaining the programme of action adopted in terms of the Convention, he exhorted the members to realise that thus for the first time there is unanimity of opinion among all the Trade Union Centres and Industrial Federations on a wide range of problems before the working class and the common people.

The biggest opportunity has, therefore, been created for carrying on the widest propaganda among the mass of workers of all these basic issues from the

Joint Platforms.

To the extent we propagate these ideas, to that extent the consciousness of the mass of workers will be roused and only to that extent will the programme of mass rally in Delhi and the One-day All India Strike in all industries and undertakings be successful

This understanding must be carried to all the state committees, to all the Trade Union affiliates and to the thousands of activists and militants in unions of the CITU.

(See Page 9)

A Message

“The Working Class” has completed ten years and enters the eleventh year of publication with this issue. Reflecting policy of the CITU, acting as a communication channel between the State Centres and hundreds of unions and enlightening the workers with the latest developments in the trade union field, “The Working Class” has simultaneously propagated for and carried forward the banner of trade union unity—that urgent necessity for our movement in face of growing authoritarian attacks. It has steadfastly upheld the cause of democracy and roused the workers against the danger of authoritarian rule.

Aided by “CITU Mazdoor” it is a source of inspiration to our Unions and workers. The comrades who have shared the responsibility for bringing it out deserve our warm thanks and congratulations. Let all unions do every thing to increase its circulation and carry its message to wider sections.

B. T. Ranadive

(President, CITU)

Grasp United Front Tactics

Analysing the problems of united front and joint actions he said various problems are coming up during the course of developing such united actions, and, experience has shown that where our comrades have approached the workers of all unions, on the basis of the accepted programme of action such vacillations have been overcome.

The point to be grasped is, that once a united action is agreed upon, it is our responsibility to so enthuse our activists and militants and through them the mass of workers in our unions to fraternise with all workers. It is this mass fraternisation that will break all vacillations and bring about the strongest unity in such united struggles.

But in bringing about this mass fraternisation care must be taken that our approach is positive and completely free from reproaches of the leaders of other unions who have agreed to the common struggle.

There have been instances, where the leaders of other unions, while agreeing to united struggles, insist that in the course of the struggles there should be only joint meetings no single union should have meetings on its own. Our comrades have pointed out that in such cases, joint meetings are rarely held. This results in non-activation of the workers during the struggle.

Our comrades should not, as a rule, agree to such conditions. But, where it becomes inevitable, ways must be found for holding meetings daily and enthusing the workers who are in struggles.

Stressing upon the importance of independent activities

of the CITU, he said such independent activity assumes particular urgency, because we have to rouse the working class against the U.S. attempts to create tension in the Indian Sub-continent by arming Pakistan, and its preparation for a World War.

Referring to the growing attacks on the trade union movement in general and the CITU unions in particular, he underlined the need for solidarity actions. Giving references to some of the struggles, he said, in all such cases solidarity protest actions by the workers throughout the state can go a long way to checkmate this trend. At any rate, such solidarity protest actions—involving the mass of workers and not mere passing of resolutions by union executives—will help to rouse the anger of the workers against the policies of the Government and raise the level of their consciousness.

But no attempt at such protest solidarity actions seems to have been done.

Even when all the central trade unions and industrial federations gave a call for a day's protest strike against the attempt of the Central Government to suppress the 80 days' strike of one lakh ten thousand workers of the Bangalore-based Public Sector Undertakings, it does not seem to have been seriously pursued by many of the state committees.

Overcome Weaknesses

Inviting discussion on this issue, he also stressed the need of reviewing struggles in the following words and invited discussion.

Not reviewing the struggles—both major and others—has been

the general rule. In the absence of such detailed reviews, which should include the various tactics adopted to meet different situations, the CITU Centre and the state committees, are in no position to draw generalised conclusions and lessons, and make them the property of the entire workers, or at least the activists and militants in the unions affiliated to the CITU. This becomes all the more important today, when new militants and activists are being thrown up in the struggles. The equipment of these militants and activists is of utmost importance, if they are not to repeat the mistakes.

Referring to another shortcoming of the trade union movement which "have been mainly on the economic plane", he said that raising of the level of consciousness of the workers has suffered because the policies of the Government and their vital bearing on the working class and Trade Union movement which have been dealt with in detail, have not been carried down even to the activists and militants, let alone the mass of workers.

This has resulted in the level of consciousness of the working class remaining low to the level of economic consciousness—and not raising the level to that of socialist consciousness.

The disastrous result of this state of affairs was seen when the state of Emergency was clamped in 1975. The working class did not play any worthwhile role in fighting or even in protest actions against the deprivation of all Trade Union Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

It is necessary, while conducting struggles, to do propaganda among the workers in struggle

linking up the issues on which they are fighting with the basic policies of the Government.

Strengthen Organisation

This task assumes all the greater importance and urgency today, if the working class has to play its historic role of rebuffing the vicious attacks and to halt and reverse the march towards authoritarianism.

He drew pointed attention to the fact that today the mass of workers look at the CITU as the most militant and doughty champion of the working class and as such we must make a serious drive to overcome the major weaknesses. He said this can be successfully done only by practising the widest democracy in our Trade Unions.

Democracy in Trade Union functioning does not mean only holding regular meetings of Executive Committees.

It requires the drawing in of the mass of workers in the day to day activity of the organisation and involving them in the decision-making.

Such real democracy is only possible, if the militants and

activists are organised in factory committees, and other types of organisations appropriate to the industry or undertaking. By activating these committees alone who in their turn will be in the closest contact with the mass of workers can we ensure the widest democracy.

This in its turn will enable every worker being approached and enrolled as a member of the union.

If such practices are not restored, this will lead to bureaucratism on the part of the leaders of the union.

Citing the reference of the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union, which has organised the entire jute workers in a single union, he said that formation of such industrial unions and functioning them democratically will raise the consciousness of the workers and would also enable our comrades to concentrate on big and key industries instead of getting sunk in day to day activities of small union.

He raised the question of women's participation in the

trade union movement in the following words.

The development of the working women's movement, under the auspices of the Co-ordination Committee of Working Women has helped in raising the consciousness of working women. If the State Committees and the Trade Unions take a proper attitude, many of the women workers can be enrolled into the appropriate trade unions and also become trade union activists.

The drawing of women in the Executive Committees and of functions of T.Uns. is of vital importance if the Trade Union movement has to get a big sweep.

Neglect of this task betrays a feudal attitude of male domination on the part of our T.U. comrades. A consistent struggle against this must be waged.

He concluded his report by stating that a consistent struggle must be launched to build up a revolutionary trade union movement.

Successful T.U. Convention in Maharashtra

As a follow-up of June 4, Bombay Convention, a state-wide Joint Trade Union Convention was held in Pune on August 13. From more than 22 Districts of Maharashtra, 3500 delegates, representing all the Central Trade Unions and industrial federations participated. The Convention opened a little after noon in a huge shamiana overflowed with delegates conscious of the larger danger faced today by the working people of India as a whole.

The main resolution was drafted on the line of the All India Convention and additionally it took into account some of the specific features of the political situation in Maharashtra and corresponding demands, Viz withdrawal of the Government hike in milk prices announced recently, withdrawal of the impending rise in State transport and City transport bus rates, full compensation to all those whose huts were demolished in Bombay recently and

an assurance that such a cruel eviction would not be repeated again by the Antulay Govt. and so on. There is also the important demand for a minimum wage of Rs 500 to unorganised labour linked to cost of living index, and Rs. 300 to agricultural labour. A call was given to make the August 17 morcha a massive one.

The resolution was moved by Jagannath Jadhav (HMS), and was seconded by S.Y. Kolhatkar (CITU), G. V. Chitnis (A.I.T.U.C), Raman Shah (BMS), Yashwant Chavan (SSS), Pushpa Mehta (UTUC), Janardhan Gunde (Samant Unions), Acharekar (State Govt. Employees), Ramachandran (Central Govt Employees), Bhat (LIC), G.M.V. Nayak (Banks) and others.

This Convention was preceded by many regional Conventions and meetings.

07

A Supplement to the Working Class September 1981 issue

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

6, Talkatora Road, New Delhi-110 001.

PRESEDENTIAL ADDRESS

by

Com. B. T. Ranadive

President

GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

BALLY-HOWRAH

August 21-24, 1981



Comrades,

I pay my homage to our martyrs, to those who in recent struggles have laid their lives for the working class. Some of our colleagues and comrades are no longer with us. We cherish their memory and remember their devotion to the common cause. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Bhupesh Gupta—outstanding parliamentarian and leader of the CPI. His death is a loss to the left forces of India. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Bal Dandvate—President of our sister organisation HMS. He was an ardent advocate of trade union unity and his passing away is a great loss to our common struggle for unity. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Dinesh Mazumdar and Com P. C. Joshi.

Comrades, a number of important developments have taken place since we met last in Cannanore. Among them the most outstanding are the successful struggle of the Left Front Government against Congress(I) attempts to destabilise them and the proclamation of the notorious Essential Services Ordinance. These contradictory developments are part of the same political reality—the intense struggle between the authoritarian and democratic forces that dominates the political and economic scene.

The continued existence of the three Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala is itself a victory of the democratic forces because it announces the failure of the ruling party to isolate them from the people. This victory is enhanced by the three big defeats inflicted on a desperate Congress(I) in West Bengal.

The working class and the people of West Bengal inflicted an ignominious defeat on the Congress (I)

party and its followers from the underworld when the 2nd April bandh flopped and its sponsors resorted to raw violence to intimidate the people. The working class kept the wheels of industry running. Praiseworthy courageous and inspiring was the role of our tramway and state transport workers who rebuffed the bandh arsonists by running the trams and buses. We all must honour the memory of the workers who sacrificed their lives in this grim struggle. The CITU raises its banner in honour of our proletarian heroes who knew that they were fighting a battle on behalf of the people, for democracy. The Congress(I) frightened by the indignation of the people over its black deeds on 3rd April ran away from the Municipal elections and got its second defeat. It was again routed in the byelections to the Parliament and Assembly. These victories under the leadership of the left forces headed by the CPI(M) stand in sharp contrast to the defeat of the opposition parties in neighbouring states. Low polling, rigging, malpractices no doubt played their role in those Congress(I) successes. Yet it cannot be denied that the opposition parties neither presented a united electoral opposition nor were able to inspire the confidence of the people with an alternative policy in the interest of the people.

These developments show that the left forces aided by the working class and the people have played an outstanding role in rebuffing the advance of the authoritarian forces and served the cause of democracy in India.

Comrades, we cannot rest on our laurels. The Central Government intends to replace the West

Bengal Governor by a nominee of its heart to relaunch an attack for destabilisation. A desperate Government cannot be credited with any norms of behaviour.

DRIVE TOWARDS AUTHORITARIAN RULE

The Central Government elated by its electoral victory in recent bye-elections in other States has launched its counter offensive in the shape of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance.

The Ordinance carries forward the attack against fundamental rights initiated by the NSA. The provision for preventive detention is now accompanied by conviction and imprisonment for legitimate economic activities. The right to organise is now attacked openly. Emergency is now being introduced piecemeal to lull the vigilance of the people.

The attacks on the judiciary, preparations for a Presidential form of Government, the NSA and now the prohibition of strikes—these are the successive steps of Indira Gandhi towards the installation of a full authoritarian rule.

This is an assault which demands the united resistance of all trade union organisations and political parties.

I extend my warm greetings to the Chief Ministers of the three Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura for their forthright condemnation of this monstrosity of a legislation. The West Bengal Government has earned the applause and approbation of the entire working class by demanding the withdrawal of the Ordinance.

WHAT THE ORDINANCE CONTAINS ?

Under the Ordinance the Central Government is authorised to prohibit strikes in any essential service. The prohibition may initially be in force for six months, but it may be extended by another six months.

“Notwithstanding anything, contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure all offences under this Ordinance shall be tried in a summary way by any Metropolitan Magistrate.”

Police officer here means any policeman. And Summary trial means a police dominated trial with guarantee of conviction. The convicted person can be safely locked up for two years because he has no right of appeal.

Comrades, the introduction of summary trial in trade union disputes constitutes a totalitarian measure. Even the British regime never thought of putting such a measure on the statute book to curb strikes. The Congress(I) Government is outdoing the British and has introduced a measure which has no precedents in our country.

The definition of strike is now made flexible to suit the plans for increased exploitation of workers and increased workload. Strike under the Ordinance includes “refusal to work overtime when such work is necessary for the maintenance of any essential service. It also includes “any other conduct which is likely to result in, or results in cessation or substantial retardation of work in any essential service.” Such are the arbitrary restrictive and prohibitive provisions of the ordinance, placing the workers and their leaders at the mercy of police officials and summary courts.

The essential services under the Ordinance include Postal, Telegraphs and Telephones, Railways and other transport Services by land and water loading and unloading at ports, services connected with operation and maintenance of aerodromes, services connected with the safety of employees of industry in Scheduled Industries, services connected with purchase supply storage and distribution of foodgrains by Government Undertakings, services connected with public conservancy system, hospitals etc. in union territory; services connected with banking, oilfield, refinery, mint, Security press etc. It also includes any other service connected with matters with respect to which Parliament has the right to make laws and which the Central Government being of opinion that the strikes there in would prejudicially affect the maintenance of any public utility service...

Such is the wide scope of essential service. It includes almost every industrial activity, every industrial concern and the Government has arrogated to itself powers to ban and prohibit strikes wherever it chooses to do so.

This monstrosity of a legislation has met with universal condemnation. Only the big capitalists and the Congress(I) sychophants nurtured and trained in treachery to the people have welcomed it. This widespread attack on the trade union movement, on the workers' basic right to fight against exploitation, is nothing but declaration of the hated emergency in relation to labour. What has occasioned it? It cannot be said that last year was a year full of strikes. On the other hand in 1980 the strike figure had gone down with Government spokesmen expressing satisfaction over industrial relations and peace. The measure is not due to “irresponsible wild cat strikes”. What is its urgency for the ruling party then?

REASONS FOR THIS MONSTROUS ATTACK

The Congress(I) Government in face of the urgent need to pass on the burdens of inflation and economic crisis to the working class, had already

announced its policy of wage-freeze in the Sixth Five Year Plan document. But this is not sufficient. It is in need of direct attack on the existing wages. It has therefore started resiling from earlier agreements the agreement with the Loco workers was broken and they were forced to go on strike. The agreements with the LIC employees was broken and the Supreme Court had to intervene. The Bangalore strike, the Loco strike met with severe repression. Mr. Stephen the Communication Minister had gone back on his word promising certain concessions to the P & T workers. And further with the rise in the prices, the cost of living index rises, and raises the question of dearness allowance. The wage bill of the Government goes on mounting and Government wants to go back on the agreed rate of D. A. There are also plans to start massive retrenchment in many industries-coal, Government departments etc. and other industries

A direct attack on the wages, on D.A., on the existing living standards and jobs is being planned. But the Government knows that it has to deal with organised workers and employees who are bound to resist such attack.

The ordinance is proclaimed to crush their legitimate agitation and give the Government and the private employers the right to impose arbitrary working conditions of the workers. The Ordinance has the same objective as the recent LIC legislation which puts an end to all collective bargaining.

The Ordinance places the entire trade union movement at the mercy of the police; makes workers' struggles a law and order question and makes it a criminal offence to fight for decent wages, resist erosion of wage through Government Policies.

RESIST THIS ONSLAUGHT

All trade union centres have condemned it. The entire trade union movement should start a campaign for unitedly resisting it and compelling the Government to withdraw it. All political parties worth their salt must fight this black legislation on the floor of the Parliament and their fight should be supported from outside by huge mass mobilisation.

It is time that all trade union centres and federations unitedly appeal to the international trade union centres, to the WFTU and others to raise their voice in protest against this suppression of workers' rights.

The Ordinance shows the utter desperation of the Indira Government in dealing with the economic situation, its bizarre failure to control inflation and prices. It is bound to be followed by attacks on the

unorganised sector. The Government's resistance to remunerative prices for the peasants led to widespread agitation leading to police firings and loss of life. The food for work programme which gave some partial relief to a small section in the rural areas is at standstill and the public distribution system is threatened with collapse. In this background the World Bank is demanding withdrawal of food subsidies. Thus the ground is ready to attack all vulnerable sections to transfer the burdens of inflation and high prices to their shoulders. This will be accompanied by further draconian measures to curtail civil liberties and democratic rights.

It is interesting to note that the present Ordinance does not pretend that the arbitrary powers of arrest are given to higher officials. Usually this is a pretence in every ordinance which arms only officers of certain ranks with such power. Under the present measure any police constable, any one who can be legally described as a police officer can drag any worker or trade union leader for a summary trial and quickly despatch him to the prison.

FACADE OF IMPARTIALITY TORN TO PIECES

Also generally every such measure, to show its impartiality, bans lock-outs alongwith strikes. But this blessed Ordinance forgets to exercise this show of impartiality. And the Prime Minister without batting an eyelash utters a plain untruth when she says that lock-outs are prohibited under the Ordinance.

Some one in the legal ministry will pay for this loss of image, for failure to provide a facade of 'impartiality.

Comrades, the type of scurrilous propaganda unleashed to justify the Ordinance can be seen from the following from the Home Ministry's note "The industrial climate of the country continues to be characterised by a mainly political trade union movement, with intense intra-union rivalries at local levels, at times cutting across trade union loyalties and discipline". Once again the fictitious excuse of trade union rivalries is resurrected and that too at a time when all the Central Trade Union Organisations and Federations stand united to resist Government's anti-labour policies and the Essential Services Ordinance. And again the bankrupt argument about political motivation. The Home Ministry does not know that there is double digit inflation in the country, that the workers cost of living index is rising every month. It seems to accept the Finance Minister's claim that inflation is under control. Strikes therefore are due to the

victimisation of workers by political parties. The Home Ministry's note says further "Utter absence and disregard of trade union norms and industrial action by the labour and at times by the employees, militates against the development of normal relationship. Such a situation which generates climate of distrust and indiscipline takes a heavy toll of the industrial production." Nothing can be farther from truth than this false accusation against labour and the trade union movement. Did the Government call a tripartite conference to consider this accusation of inter union rivalries and labour indiscipline? They dared not because they knew the accusation would be torn to pieces.

The Home Ministry's note claims that the repression directed against the Loco, LIC and Public Sector workers has paid dividends. The note says "the strict handling of the strikes by workers of public undertakings, loco men and the LIC employees had led to a definite feeling in the minds of the Central trade union organisations that the Government insisted on handling the labour situation in a firm manner". Therefore, be still more firm with the workers' discontent.

The strike resistance of the working class had of course started increasing in recent months from the low level of 1980. What did the Home Ministry expect with the consumer price index for industrial workers rising by 12.6 per cent in 1980-81? By April 1981 this manipulated index was 427 compared with 373 in 1979-80. Besides people had to purchase at fantastic prices in the black market. The strike wave was bound to accentuate. But instead of controlling the inflation the Government bars working class resistance to inflation.

SHIELDING CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT MANAGEMENT

It is at the same time clear that the strike resistance is as yet far below what it was in 1978 or 1979. The number of strikes fell from 2,117 in 1978 to 1,338 in 1979 to 899 in 1980. For 1981 upto March the figure was 255.

The Home Ministry officials it is obvious do not study the Economic Survey of the Government of India. Otherwise they would have known the havoc done to production by management in private and public sector alike. Electricity generation is vital to industrial production. And yet it is found that the capacity utilised fell from 55.3 per cent in 1976-77 to 45.4 per cent in 1979-80. The Economic Survey, though it casually mentions labour in this connection places the blame mainly on the inefficient and corrupt management.

Commenting on this fall in utilised capacity the Survey says "Management shortcomings are reflected in inadequate preventive maintenances and frequent failure to follow schedules of maintenance of major issues of equipment such as boilers, turbines, and generators eventually resulting in unplanned outages. Lack of industrial discipline and also inadequate training of labour skills aggravate these conditions. There are also some complaints relating to the quality of equipment supplied especially the accessory equipment and instrumentation, the latter being particularly important for maintaining plant operations. Inadequate availability of spares adds to the period of time taken for repairs and maintenance. Finally complaints about the **quality of coal have risen significantly** in recent years. **The ash content has been increasing and the coal supplied also contained abrasives.** Since the thermal plant equipment is designed for better or different specifications, the steady deterioration, **variation in coal quality has contributed significantly to lowering their performance**". One may only add that the coal industry is nationalised industry. Comrades, this is how class propaganda is carried on and now the Home Ministry under Shri Zail Singh does not shrink from suppressing truth.

MOUNTING ATTACKS

The fact is that the Indira Government has been planning to launch several attacks against the workers' living standards, with a view to wrest away the gains they had secured earlier. This was to be preceded by a policy of wage freeze.

In pursuance of this policy, the Finance department of the Indira Government has been pressing the various ministries to go back on concessions given in negotiations.

Instead of appreciating settlement between the Central Trade Unions and coal authority, the Finance Ministry castigates the latter for making concessions regarding casual leave, leave travel concessions, Sunday wages and carry forward of casual leave for four days in 1980-81, and it asks the authority to submit all future proposals for concessions to the Bureau of Public Enterprises.

The same department has castigated the Communication Ministry for agreeing to certain concessions like two promotions to the P & T workers and the Minister has been forced to eat his words.

Besides there is an attempt to arbitrarily force Rs. 1.30 per point of rise in consumers cost of living index.

Immediately the attack on the working class manifests itself through the determined efforts of the

employers and the Government to erode and eliminate the concept of bonus as deferred wage. This is a big vantage point won by the workers which is now directly or indirectly being assailed. It is being eroded by making new contingents agree to bonus linked with productivity. The first breach was made when the leaders of National Federation of Indian Railway Workers and others agreed to bonus linked with productivity. This was followed by a number of Central Government Employees' organisations falling in the trap.

The second prong of attack is on attempt to put a ceiling on income for those entitled to bonus. The third prong is attack on D.A.—standardisation at an arbitrary rate and ceiling on the amount, and denial of D.A. to those earning above a certain limit. Now after ordinance the Compulsory Deposit Scheme for D.A., will be soon forthcoming. The fourth is a general opposition to any wage increase. To achieve these aims one agreement after another is broken by the Government.

SIXTH FIVE YEAR PLAN

These attacks on workers' wages are enshrined in the wages and incomes policy of the Sixth Five Year Plan. The Planners do not want to reduce the disparity of incomes between the capitalists and the workers, between the big landlords and the peasants. They want to leave the incomes of the monopolists and millionaires intact.

But they want to reduce the disparity of wages between worker and worker by reducing the wages of those who earn better. Besides they demand that no rise in wages should be sanctioned unless a worker produces more—rise in wages should be linked with productivity. Everyone knows that our present wage is low in proportion to our productivity and far below our needs. But the planners demand unless you accept more exploitation you should not get a higher wage. Besides even if a worker produces more he will not be entitled to a rise for a long time and also till the entire economy shows higher productivity. This is a policy of wage-freeze while demanding greater production. Comrades, these concerted attacks have to be met by growing unity on our part and that is what the CITU is calling for. These onslaughts will continue because the capitalist-landlord economy of our country is in crisis, with everything in disorder. The bourgeois-landlord Government wants to pass on the burden of the crisis to the common man—the working class and is therefore preparing for further attacks accompanied by repression.

CLASS BIAS OF THE PLANNERS

The new Sixth Five Year Plan advances the interests of the capitalist-landlord classes at the

expense of the masses and embarks on a big attack on the incomes and living conditions of the mass of our people.

While offering nothing to the peasants—neither land nor remunerative prices for his produce, while making some noise about ameliorating the conditions of the agricultural workers and directing attacks against the wages and salaries of workers and employees, the Plan in the name of new targets of production demands heavy taxation load on the people. Under it inflation and high prices will increase because it provides for a deficit financing of Rs. 5,000 crores. This figure will be doubled by the end of the plan period leading to mounting increase in prices.

The Plan calls for additional resources mobilisation of Rs. 21,302 crores. Of these Rs. 5,000 crores will come through additional taxation—mainly indirect taxation borne by the common man.

ATTEMPTS TO FOIST WAGE BOARDS

To enforce this policy the Government further proposes to reintroduce the discredited system of wage-board. The Labour Minister, Mr. Narain Dutt Tewari, made this announcement in May addressing the annual session of the All India Organisation of Employers. He said "There is a view that the system of Wage-Board, which provides a machinery of collective bargaining in an orderly fashion under the aegis of an umpire, should be raised to evolve the wage structure for each industry on a scientific and rational basis. Our experience of the wage boards set up in the past has not been encouraging. Even so, Government wish to give another trial to the system. It is, therefore, proposed to bring forward a legislation to enable the Government to set up wage boards on a statutory footing investing them with necessary powers and authority."

The wage-boards were discarded by the trade union movement because they proved to be time-consuming and delaying machinery. They took ten years to finalise their recommendations in some disputes. Under the Wage-board the workers are at the mercy of the bogus balance sheets submitted by the employers, which the boards consider to be reliable. There is thus hardly any chance to get a favourable verdict for the workers. And the Government will always have the last word if recommendations go in favour of the workers. This discredited machinery for protracting disputes and tiring out the workers is being revived along with prohibition of strikes.

Comrades will you believe that an Industrial Tribunal a near cousin of the Wage Board took

twenty years to give its verdict? Let me quote from the IPA dated 20th June 1981 "A classic case of 'Justice delayed is justice denied' is that of the 202 workmen of Punjab worsted spinning Mills, Chherta whose services were terminated on December 3, 1960 and the Industrial Tribunal, Punjab, has given an award in their case—published in Punjab Government Gazette dated May 29, 1981—In these 20 years 5 workmen have died, eighty one were untraceable, young boys have become old and old ones are on the verge of death.

FIGHT FOR TRADE UNION UNITY

The CITU has been working for reviving trade union unity for the last year and a half. It took some time for other organisations to get out of the slough of despondency and we could not register much progress for some time. The Bangalore strike and the call for March 11 action which was widely responded to by the workers was the fruit of our efforts to forge unity.

Consultations on other policy matters were going on between the several central organisations. They related to the question of recognition of unions-verification and ballot, ILO representation and common stand in industrial negotiations Coal, Steel etc.

The June Convention in Bombay was a culmination of this process of coming together and its call has to be carried forward. All our unions must seriously prepare for the March to Parliament and for one day strike of all Industries.

Comrades, we must once more renew our call for a confederation of all central trade unions and Federations acting on the basis of agreed decisions. Nothing short of close association and co-ordination of all trade union centres will put the full strength of the organised working class against the repression machinery of the ruling party-of the bourgeois-landlord government.

BRUTAL EXPLOITATION OF LABOUR

Comrades, with the collapse of the administration in the greater part of India, with the economy in deep throes of crisis is it surprising that all labour laws have collapsed or are being defied? Lakhs of bonded labourers are mercilessly exploited in brick kilns and farms; contract labour, a euphemism for bonded labour in many cases, continues to increase in number despite official declaration about abolition of such labour.

There is no data on the number of these workers employed by the private sector or the state governments. The number employed by the Central employing ministries is 3.77 lakhs. Railways

employ 2.37 lakhs. P & T 70,000, Ministry of works and Housing 14,000, Defence 14,000 and Bureau of Public Enterprises 36,000.

This section of the working class is most brutally exploited by central government agencies and the trade union movement must uphold their cause and release them from the bonded conditions.

Comrades, safety legislation has collapsed. Welfare measures have cracked. The Employees Provident Fund is being swallowed by employers but the government refuses to take drastic measures.

The EPF Review Committee appointed by the Government found that total arrears of exempted and unexempted establishments had reached Rs. 57.42 crores. And this when the Committee had not been able to assess the total arrears because the accounts of EPF organisation were drawn on a cash basis while the amount involved in enquiries both pending and in progress had not been assessed.

ATTACK ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The Government of India has been violating the ILO conventions one after another. To earn the certificate of progressivism abroad it signs conventions which it takes no time in breaking. It attacks freedom of organisation. It indulges in unfair labour practices when it itself victimises office bearers of trade unions or permits private employers to do it. No wonder the Labour Minister Tiwari asked freedom to repudiate ILO conventions recently. He made this plea on behalf of underdeveloped countries.

ECONOMIC CRISIS

These developments are part of the grim economic situation that dominates the scene today. Uncontrolled inflation, erosion of peoples living standards through high prices, increased load of taxation, restricted market, incapacity to use industrial capacity, and mounting unemployment character the crisis. The way out for the ruling party is based on intense exploitation of the peasantry by denying it a remunerative price for its produce and by a general assault on the earnings of all sections—workers, employees, agricultural workers etc.

Deficit financing of the Government has exceeded by more than hundred per cent the budgeted provision. After the budget the country has seen at least two spurts of taxation and increase in prices of petrol, diesel, fertilizers—the latest increase netting more than Rs. 1,000 crores from the consumers. No wonder the consumer price index number rose from 373 in March 1980 to 408 in

December 1980 and to 433 in May 1981. The sufferings imposed on our people by the unscrupulous rise in prices are beyond description. The working class and employees alike, are finding it impossible to meet their daily needs. The rocketing prices of necessities of life like oil, vegetables, milk, the non availability of foodgrains in ration shops have all reduced their living standards to a farce. Add to this the prohibitive cost of medicine geared up by foreign multinationals who are allowed by the Congress(I) government to play with our peoples' lives, and the black market price and capitation fees people have to pay for seeking admission into colleges and universities—and the cup of bitterness is full.

If this is the position of those who have regular jobs and who hold them in organised industry, what can one say about the lakhs in cities who have no regular jobs, who are employed in unorganised industry unregulated by any law. The organised working class, may I say, is callous to the conditions of outright misery imposed on this section. Its demands are hardly taken by our unions. And but for this callous and indifference the Antulay Government of Maharashtra would not have dared launch its illegal and inhuman ejection of "pavement dwellers" in Bombay.

And finally comrades the inflation and high prices have brought about the ruination of the small peasant and agricultural worker. The farmer is doubly ruined. He is denied remunerative price for his produce and he has to pay rising prices for what he has to purchase.

The question of high prices, of fight against inflation, has become an acute problem for the entire people. It is proper that the CITU and the Bombay Convention have recognised this and in their fight against high prices have raised the demands of the entire people including the demand for remunerative price for the peasantry, no rise in issue price to the consumer. The fight against high prices arising out of the crisis cannot be confined to fight over the cost of living indices and rates of D.A.

CRISIS IN INDUSTRY

Comrades, I have already referred to the inability under the capitalist path to utilise full industrial capacity.

According to the Sixth Plan document integrated steel plants were able to utilise only 69.2 per cent of their capacity in 1979-80; the aluminium industry 58.2 per cent; fertilizers(N) stabilised plants 75.6 per cent; newsprint 68.2 per cent and so on. Commenting on this the Sixth Plan document observes "As is evident from the table recent

trends in capacity utilisation in several industries are discouraging. This is also true for agriculture, the irrigation potential which has been created is not fully utilised. Levels of yield per acre for many parts of the country are far below what can be attained with known technology".

In some cases there may be deliberate suppression of capacity to peg up prices. In some cases understatement of production by private producers to be able to sell clandestinely in a seller's market.

The basic cause is the economic crises and inability to use the production capacity with 'profit'. Naturally industrial sickness grows.

According to the Reserve Bank of India at the end of June 1979 there were 345 large sick industries units in which bank credit amounting to Rs. 1,011.2 crores was locked up. This exceeds the value of the total investment in the Public Sector under Heavy Industry. According to returns received by the RBI from Commercial Banks the number of sick units in small sector was as high as 20,326 involving bank finance of Rs. 231 crores. During the calendar year 1980 four industrial undertakings had to be taken over. Industrial sickness involving both large and small-scale industries is a matter of serious concern. This is explicitly stated in the Industrial Policy Statement made by the Government in July 1980, which also took note of the mismanagement sickness". (Economic Survey 1980-81)

The sickness which locks hundreds of crores of rupees cost tens of thousands of workers their jobs, wages and inflicts untold misery on thousands of working class families.

Figures for unutilised capacity in 1980-81 are not available. But the situation does not seem to have very much improved judging by the index of industrial production for 1980-81. It was 153.9 last year compared with 148.6 in 1979-80 an increase of 4.4 per cent the cost of this increase itself has been too high for the people.

Comrades, the Economic Survey and the Finance Minister promised pick up in the economy basing themselves on the figures of consents for capital issues.

The consents for capital issues which decreased from Rs. 417.63 crores in 1978-79 to Rs. 378.63 crores in 1979-80 picked up during the first two quarters of 1980-81. The amount of consents for capital issues more than doubled in three quarters of 1980-81 as compared to the corresponding period of 1979-80.

CONCESSIONS TO MULTINATIONALS

However the Survey failed to note that this widened record foreign collaboration agreements. The total number of collaboration approvals during the year reached a new record of 596, surpassing the previous peak of 403 in 1961. Foreign collaboration approvals as well those involving foreign capital participation in 1980, doubled as compared with those in 1979. As in the previous year, the majority of collaboration approvals was with three countries, namely FRG, USA and U.K. (Commerce 11th April.)

This spurt was perhaps due to the various concessions offered to multinationals and foreign capital in recent Government decisions.

This was done at a time when the multinationals were defying governments' directives regarding dilution of equity. The drug and other multinationals have protested the requirements to reduce their equity share to 40%. Their protest seems to have earned them the freedom to violate FERA Regulations and maintain 74% holdings under the plea that they are contributing advanced technology or that they are exporting large part of their product. They are so powerful that neither the Janata Government for the Indira Government dare implement the recommendations of the Hathi Committee to nationalise the drug multinationals. The increased foreign collaboration and investment, the concessions made to them are not unconnected with the World Bank pressure to make more use of private foreign sources if Bank aid was to continue.

This reveals another aspect of the crisis-ridden economy, its increasing need for private foreign capital which intensifies all the elements of the crisis.

Comrades, our trade union movement has not properly understood the danger arising from the increased penetration of multinationals in our economy. They come to dominate and subjugate our country. To start with they demand favourable conditions for exploitation—withdrawal of concessions, of welfare measures, of trade union freedom and finally repression.

The duty and privilege to defend the country's economic independence along with our livelihood rests on the shoulders of the workers. We must make fight against multinationals a part of our daily struggle rousing the working class to the portending danger. We must consistently resist all concessions to the foreign exploiters and along with other organisations demand nationalisation of multinationals. It is heartening to note that Bombay Convention expressed complete unanimity of opinion on this vital issue.

DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN AID

Comrades, the crisis and dilapidated condition of the economy have led to greater and greater borrowing by the Government from the World Bank.

Successive plans have relied on larger amounts of foreign aid. They also reveal that a greater part of new aid is spent on repayments. In 1976-77 out of a gross disbursement of Rs. 1,599 crores, debt servicing absorbed Rs. 755 crores, leaving net external assistance of Rs. 844 crores. In 1977-78 total gross disbursement was Rs. 1,290 crores and debt servicing amount to Rs. 821 crores. In 1978-79 the corresponding figures were Rs. 1,266 crores and Rs. 882 crores in 1980-81 they were 2,341 crores and Rs. 882 crores.

The Sixth Five Year Plan document contemplates net external assistance of Rs. 10,000 crores which means the gross 'aid' may amount to Rs. 15,000 crores to Rs. 20,000 crores.

Comrades, this is a dangerous situation which may end in mortgaging the resources of the country i.e. our labour to pay the foreign charges. Already export orientation means enforced exports to creditor and other countries to earn sufficient foreign exchange to pay off the debts. This also means exporting at dictated prices by some of our creditors.

The Government is now seeking a big loan from the IMF to meet the economic situation. The loan will not be granted without stringent conditions, we know that the fund imposed rigorous conditions on Great Britain when the Conservative Government approached for a loan. The result is now seen in widespread unemployment, cut down in welfare measures and widespread riots.

We should not be surprised if the Essential Services Ordinance is a propitiatory measure to secure the favours of the IMF, in anticipation of demand it is likely to make or the pursuance of what it has already demanded. It is no doubt an assurance to the multinationals that Indian climate will be healthy for their profit-making.

Protesting against these developments we must demand an immediate moratorium on foreign debt payments. We should demand reliance on our own resources mobilised through nationalisation of all foreign and Indian monopolies. In this respect the Socialist countries have proved to be reliable friends and their help has been extremely valuable to us.

BANKRUPT PATH OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

Comrades, there is no relief from this crisis imposed misery of the capitalist path. According to

the Government's Sixth Five Year Plan document, there will be no less than 215 million of our people living below the poverty line i.e. 30 per cent of the population—at the end of the plan period. This is supposed to be achieved by expenditure of thousands of crores of rupees to eradicate poverty. In reality the percentage of people living below poverty line will not be reduced from the present 48 per cent. On the contrary it is going to increase.

I have already mentioned rising unemployment as a manifestation of the crisis. Every successful Five Year Plan has added to the number of unemployed. The backlog was 5.3 million at the end of the First Plan; it was 7.1 million at the end of the 2nd plan; it stood at 9.6 million at the end of the Third Plan, rose to 17.6 million at the end of the Fourth and 22.1 million at the end of the Fifth Plan.

The official figures however understate the real extent of unemployment.

In the next five years there will be 32 million new entrants into the labour market and the planners claim to find jobs for 30 million, still leaving a backlog of 24.2 million.

The claim to find 30 million new jobs is a fantastic claim, since it is based on remedies and Schemes which stand exposed during the last three decades. The Planning Commission observes; "The major employment generation activities are to be found in agriculture, rural development, village and small-scale industries, construction, public administration and other services", i.e. mostly in industries with low pay and sweated labour.

Organised industries can give employment only to a small number. "The increase (in employment in organised sector) from year to year has been around 0.8 million. Even if it is found that the future increase in employment in the organised sector is wholly taken by the educated person alone we find that there is not enough room for educated persons unless they are diverted into self-employment"..... The lure of self-employment in the present condition of the economy is nothing but a fraud on the millions waiting for jobs.

ON TO THE SLUMS

The planners observe: "of the total urban population nearly a fifth is estimated to constitute the slum population. In 1985 the magnitude of such population needing housing accommodation is estimated to be about 37 million." For these the capitalist path-planners will provide 21 lakh houses, the rest being left to the private sector, i.e. to the slums.

Equally bizarre is the achievement of capitalist path in relation to rural housing. "It is estimated that the number of eligible families needing housing assistance would be around 14.5 million families by March 1985. Of these 7.7 million families have already been allotted house-sites.... of the families who have been provided house-sites only about 0.56 million families have been given construction houses."

FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

This situation once again calls on the organised trade union movement to take up the fight against unemployment seriously and demand relief for the unemployed. Let it be remembered that there is very little chance for the sons and daughters of workers on job to find permanent jobs in the near future. Besides the danger of the mass of unemployed will be definitely used by the bourgeois-landlord government against the workers. The question of unemployment cannot be solved without nationalising big industry which means a serious economic and political battle for power. In reality only under socialism unemployment will finally disappear. The movement has to prepare itself for this big battle.

In the meanwhile it must demand the right to work to be enshrined as a fundamental right and pending it adequate relief to the unemployed. Let it be remembered that unless we fight a major part of our youth will have not jobs and will be forced to live in slums.

Recently it was reported in the Press that the Labour Ministry of the Government of India is strongly opposed to payment of allowance to the unemployed. This means it does not approve of the schemes in operation in West Bengal and Kerala. One of the grounds of opposition is that allowances to registered unemployed will mean discrimination against those who are unregistered? Can you beat this reasoning? It is not known whether the Labour Ministry intends to go to the Supreme Court against the West Bengal Government for this discriminatory practice and assert the equal right of all to starve outright.

BUILD UP WORKER-PEASANT- AGRICULTURAL LABOUR ALLIANCE

Comrades during these years the peasants and agricultural workers have been the worst victims of the economic crisis and official policies. Exploited on all sides they are being driven to destitution. They have borne the main brunt of the burdens of

the crisis because they were unorganised. But now the situation has changed.

In recent months several sections—students, teachers, professional have fought various battles. The battles against rise in bus fares in Punjab and other States have been widespread, with mass participation of students. But the most outstanding feature of recent agitation in the country is of the peasant masses in the battle arena. They fought in Karnataka and got bullets. They fought in Maharashtra and got bullets and jails. They fought in Andhra and Punjab and were again repressed. But the movement went on. It forced the Congress (I) Governments to make several concessions.

The Kisan Morcha of 26th March in which the CITU participated was a visible demonstration of Kisan awakening and fraternity between the working class, the agricultural workers and the peasants. The CITU and the working class warmly support the movement of the peasants, for remunerative prices and other demands like cancellation of debts and loans, it supports the demands of agricultural workers for wages and other reliefs. It supports the demand in the charters of the peasants that the issue price of foodgrains should not be raised.

The alliance of the workers, agricultural workers and peasants will be the strongest democratic and revolutionary force in India before which no Government of the exploiting classes can stand. The trade union movement has to contribute to the shaping of this alliance by championing the cause of the peasantry. The working class has to realise that there is no end to its exploitation, no socialism, unless the present ruling class are deposed, a new state expressing genuine democracy of the people is reared and the present iniquitous order is liquidated. This cannot be done without enlisting the help of the mighty force of the Indian peasantry.

The sympathy and intervention of the working class are all the more urgent and necessary because in their absence, in the absence of a radical kisan organisation, the landlords and richer gentry in the rural areas head the peasant discontent to protect their own narrow interests.

DIVISIVE ATTACKS

Comrades, while we are endeavouring to unite the trade union movement and our class, divisive forces are attacking our unity—and sometimes, succeeding in pitting one section of workers against another in open battle.

This happened during the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat where all bourgeois opposition parties supported it. The CPI(M), the CPI, the CITU opposed it and stood by workers unity,

The agitation lasted three months. In the course of it, almost all major towns came under curfew one time or another. Repeated firings were resorted to by the police. The total toll of lives was 45.

The Harijans were the worst sufferers from police brutalities in the beginning. Later on, perhaps, the police beat everyone they came across.

The big bourgeois press, the capitalists, mill-owners, the medical profession, all non-Harijan University students, Professors Teachers, Central and State Government employees, the trading community and mill workers supported the agitation. Some leaders of the Central Government employees' organisations and some leaders of the All India Insurance Employees' Association waged a heroic battle for unity and refused to succumb to the anti-reservation mood. Some of them were removed from the office-bearership of the AIIEA, but later on were restored to their position when the call for LIC strike came.

As against this 75,000 Harijan mill workers employed in the spinning departments of the mills went on strike to support reservation. On this the Sawarna Hitrakshak Samiti called on the Sawarna workers to go on strike and the caste division among the workers was complete.

This divisive mobilisation, this confrontation between two sections both of whom are victims of the bourgeois-landlord rule, was rendered possible because of the deteriorating economic situation and the mounting mass unemployment of recent years.

Comrades, the Gujarat experience in which thousands of Harijan workers were pitted against thousands of others should be a warning to the trade union movement. The gimmick of reservation will be used again and again by the ruling party to keep the Harijan workers away from the common struggle. The opportunism of bourgeois parties will rouse the caste feelings of other workers against untouchable workers, to gain petty electoral successes. The ruling and the opposition bourgeois parties will not take the really effective step against untouchability—overhaul of agrarian relations accompanied by a genuine anti-casteist outlook.

The ruling and the opposition bourgeois parties exploit the weakness of our movement to divide our class. Reservation in promotion is again generating angry feelings in some undertakings. It is an inevitable consequence when one individual feels that he is cheated of his legitimate promotion because of reservation. By holding counsel with other trade union centres and with the leaders of untouchable workers we should be in a position to

find a solution for this touchy problem regarding promotion. One way would be not to deny promotion to any one who deserves it according to normal rules, but ensure proper quota for Harijans etc. by creating additional posts.

Considering the revolting conditions imposed on the untouchables, the caste-discrimination, reservation in jobs cannot be opposed. It should be realised that there is absolutely no change for a Harijan or adivasi to get a job on merit in this caste-ridden society. Besides the claims of the Congress(I) Government to have given them adequate jobs in services are bogus claims. They may have got proper representation only in the lowest paid jobs. It is at the same time futile to expect that under the bourgeois landlord rule they will get jobs in higher services according to their population strength.

The day to day mass struggles led by the trade unions in the country have been insensitive to the special problems of Harijan workers as Harijans and this has created an indifference in the minds of these sections to the common class struggle.

Whether it is working class struggles, struggle against high prices, movement of peasants and agricultural workers, fight against the emergency rule of the class movement for socialism, the Harijan masses whose emancipation is linked with the success of the movements largely keep away from them.

These weaknesses have to be removed by the trade unions and the walls of separation have to be broken down. The trade unions have to pay special attention to this downtrodden section and bring it in the common movement. Simultaneously the Harijan masses should be made to realise the truth that the condition of their real emancipation is the same as the condition for the emancipation of all the poverty stricken people of India—a new social order, overhaul of agrarian relations, nationalisation of monopoly concerns and power in the hands of the people.

DEFEND NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Comrades, the divisive forces are not active only to divide the working class. Their target is national unity, their objective is national disintegration so that India becomes an easy prey to the neo-colonial designs of imperialist powers. The Congress(I) government at the centre is unable to protect nation's unity and the ruling party leaders themselves undermine national unity in the most blatant manner. Communal riots in which the Muslims suffer the most are unleashed. Both Hindu and Muslim communalists exploit them to fan feelings of separatism. RSS talks about the Hindu character

of our nation. Extreme wings of Muslim communalism virtually preach that Muslims are a separate nation. There is talk of another partition of India. Reactionary Sikh agencies claim that Sikhs are a separate nation and demand Khalistan. Some of these communal agencies preaching for separate nationhood get funds from reactionary circles abroad. The hand of imperialism is evident in this propaganda. Certain foreign Christian missions propagate among the tribals for an independent State of tribals.

And finally some Congress(I) Chief Ministers openly rouse provincial and chauvinist feelings. The sons of the soil slogan supported at one time openly by the ruling party is again used to divide Indian from Indian. Maharashtra Chief Minister Antulay a few months back patronised the Shiv Sena which carries on a campaign against people from other States. A few months back shops of non-Maharashtrians were attacked in Bombay. Antulay's recent cruel drive against pavement dwellers was perhaps more in the spirit of Shiv Sena ideology than anything else. A large number of these pavement dwellers were poor people from Tamil Nadu who were forced into trains and sent back to Tamil Nadu. And now Antulay is announcing that he intends to introduce work permit system for entry into Bombay. It seems Maharashtra has already been declared to be an independent State and people from other States would require a visa to enter Bombay. Such are the misdeeds of Congress(I) Chief Minister undermining national unity. But Smt. Indira Gandhi will not disturb Antulay even to protect national unity.

But Antulay is not the only Chief Minister openly torpedoing national unity. Gundu Rao, the Karnataka Chief Minister, does not lag behind. Last year he openly threatened to create Assam like situation in Karnataka—i.e. secessionist situation. During the Bangalore Public Sector Workers' strike chauvinistic threats were uttered against workers from Kerala and Tamil Nadu who formed a substantial part of the strikers. It was known that the source of the threat was Congress(I) circles. Comrades, a large section of the people of Assam is victim of the secessionist movement—fearful of the consequences of influx of foreign nationals. The USA imperialists are secretly helping this agitation to partition our country.

We all must congratulate our Assam CITU our valiant workers and their leaders on the heroic fight they are waging in defence of the unity of the country and the unity of the working class. They had to brave the fury of the reactionary secessionist forces. Many of our comrades were assaulted,

maimed and wounded but they continue to uphold the banner of unity. All glory to them. Comrades, the working class led by CITU should take up the challenge of the divisive forces which directly or indirectly support imperialist plots to dismember the nation. To uphold the banner of national unity, to frustrate the designs of imperialism, to gather in one common fold the people and toilers irrespective of their religion and caste in the battle for the existence of our nation is the duty of the organised trade union movement. In discharging it, it has to see that our functioning and outlook is such that it is able to draw the Muslim minority, the untouchables, who today stand aloof from the trade union struggle, in the common class struggle.

FORGING AHEAD BRAVING REPRESSION

Our CITU unions have been facing intense repression in a number of States and yet they are courageously carrying on the battle. In Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and above all in Assam our unions, workers and our leaders face incessant attacks from the police.

In Haryana, in Sirsa, Hissar and Sonapat Workers have been attacked by police, in-Sirsa for the crime of forming a union and preparing a charter of demands. Hired gangsters followed the police and women had to leave the workers' locality. In Sonapat in the factory of Milton Cycle Co. police followed by anti-socials entered the factory to beat the workers. The Textile strikers of Hissar had to face the same ordeal.

Bhilai in Madhya Pradesh has become a hotbed of goonda assaults, managerial intrigues, and police attacks against our rising strength. Com. P.K. Maitra Vice-President of Madhya Pradesh CITU has been arrested and refused bail and several workers have been harrassed with false criminal cases. All because our unions carried on a struggle against the owners of a number of factories, against retrenchment and victimisation in these industries. In Rajhara in the same State the police know no law. They have used NSA to suppress the contract workers' struggle in iron ore mine. Externment orders were issued against our leaders and workers and workers' residences were attacked. In Bihar during our Joint struggle for 12,000 contract workers employed by the Tatas in Jamshedpur 450 workers were arrested. Police lathi-charged on several occasions. The entire Executive of our TISCO Karmachari Union has been suspended by the management. Nothing however compares with the revolting crimes against Krishnakali Estate Workers. Tea Plantation hospital was converted into police camp. Family members of workers were

attacked by the manager, the police and INTUC goondas. The police superintendent refused to take serious note of charge of rape, made by the women workers. Manager's bungalow was turned into a torture chamber, in which arrested workers were beaten severely. When a belaboured worker asked for water, the manager urinated on him and urine was poured in his mouth. When a worker excreted, he was forced to eat it by the police officer. This is Indira regime and our CITU has sent the details of these sadistic happenings to the ILO. Comrades, MICO Workers' union in Bangalore, whose President is our esteemed Comrade Surya Narayan Rao—President of Karnataka State Committee of CITU—is facing similar ordeal. One day gangsters attacked the union office and INTUC goondas captured it, but Gundu Rao's police took no action. These attacks it seems, were organised by the followers of F.M. Khan Congress (I) M.P.—INTUC leader and Plantation owner from Coorg. The Raza Textile Workers in Rampur, U.P, had to undergo prolonged strike and repression.

Com Harsahay Singh, President, UP State Committee of CITU and Com. Ravi Sinha were assaulted upon during the course of the struggle. in J. K. Rayons', Kanpur, the management has imposed an illegal lay-off after having failed in the attempt to break the CITU Union. The INTUC Camp before the mill gate has become the sanctuary of anti-socials who have repeatedly beaten up our workers and leaders. When the Police searched the camp under pressure from workers, bombs and other lethal weapons including fire arms were siezed. In Orissa, our Com Ajeya Rout, General Secretary of State Committee narrowly escaped from a murderous attack launched by the goonda hirelings of the management who were led by INTUC. In Tamilnadu our Comrade C. Govindarajan, a member of our General Council was attacked by anti-social elements and stabbed in the abdomen. He is lying in hospital now, though progressing well.

We also know that many of our sister organisations are objects of attacks. The Loco and Public Sector strikers were objects of police intimidation. Modinagar in U.P. is a place where workers have to face the collusion of Police with management and goondas. We denounce the murder of brother Jai Prakash HMS leader of Modinagar. The police showed no urgency to catch the suspects. There are serious allegations that the murder was organised by some men connected with the management. I have mentioned only a few instances of police highhandedness and oppression that our comrades

have to meet at every step. Every step forward of the CITU is studded with intense sacrifice and suffering of our comrades, and rank and file workers whose families have to bear the brunt of this attack.

OVERCOME SHORTCOMINGS

While appreciating the progress we have registered in the States like Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Karnataka we must ponder whether we are progressing at the speed required and rendered possible by the urgent economic situation. It will be realised that the momentum we developed in filling a vacuum, fulfilling the need for a militant and principled organisation can now be sustained only by a very planned work and a systematic review of our activities at each stage. What is urgently needed is constant review of our independent activities which should not be slackened in the name of trade union unity and review of our joint activities with others. Unless such reviews are available for the Central CITU it will be difficult to provide concrete guidance for the future.

Our State Committees and unions have loyally and consistently worked for united action of trade unions. They have overcome many difficulties created by others, put up with obstacles and carried forward the struggle for trade union unity. What effect has it produced on the consciousness of the workers? How has it brought accession of strength to the CITU—these questions need to be answered. The struggle for trade union unity is simultaneously a struggle for correct policies, a struggle to overcome erroneous outlook and policies, and it must secure a change in the correlation of forces—the correct policies and outlook must be better appreciated by large and large sections of workers. We have instances when after prolonged united struggle for months, workers are enticed by opportunist elements. We have instances where in spite of our image some individuals mouthing left phrases or indulging in demonstrative action are able to draw large masses. The rise of individualist leaders with no ideology demands our vigilance and criticism of our weaknesses.

For lack of review the hurdles in the rapid expansion of trade union unity and its achievements are not properly understood. The Bombay Convention provided an instance in the midst of a genuine all round desire for trade union unity. In this struggle what should be ensured is not only agreement at the top but carrying the spirit of unity to the bottom. It is necessary that all organisations marshal their full force in demonstrations and

actions and it is the duty of the CITU to overcome obstacle to this urgent step.

DEFEND THE LEFT FRONT GOVERNMENT

Comrades, we all offer our congratulations to the West Bengal Ministry for completing four years in office. This is a memorable feat accompanied by memorable achievements in the service of the Working Class and the people. But reactionary forces are again hatching their conspiracies.

Like the West Bengal Ministry the Tripura Government has notable achievements to its credit. These achievements have been recorded despite a very difficult and acute situation created by the combined conspiracies of Congress (I) Amra Bengali and certain reactionary tribal elements some of whom were financed from abroad. The Ministry had to face the challenge of organised killings and massacres and it succeeded in unholding the unity of the people and enacting measures for their benefit.

The Kerala Ministry also had to face a hostile attack from Congress (I) RSS, Naxalites and other reactionaries. But relying on the people, it has succeeded in initiating a number of progressive measures—like relief for the unemployed etc. and consolidated popular unity. The three ministries have ensured fundamental rights for the people and refused to use the NSA against its opponents.

To defend these outposts of democracy constitutes the urgent task of the working class of India. Our General Council should ensure that this task is discharged. Comrades, I once more wish to refer to the battle between the forces of democracy and authoritarianism that dominates the political and economic situation in India. There is no chance for democracy for economic advance unless the authoritarian party is curbed and its mandate to rule is withdrawn by the people. It is intent on establishing one party dictatorship through the Presidential form of government.

The working class is now called upon to play a leading role in this battle. It is called upon to marshal the full strength of its class through trade union unity and further attract all other oppositional and democratic forces for a common battle against authoritarianism. That is the urgent task facing us today.

CRISIS GRIPPING CAPITALIST WORLD

Comrades, we are meeting in the midst of a crisis situation for the capitalist world. All the countries of advanced capitalism are face to face with unheard of unemployment and inflation. The number of unemployed in the EEC nations has reached 10

million. In Britain itself the figure is 2.5 million over one million more than last year. The unemployment rate of the country as a whole is 10.6 per cent. This year 720,000 British School leavers are getting ready to enter the labour market. Only 4,000 jobs await them. The recent riots has forced the Conservative Government to promise jobs to new entrants, but it will be only a promise. In the USA also there is massive unemployment and it is expected to mount. Unsold stocks have risen by \$20.4 billion and a decline in GNP is likely.

Comrades, let me quote an American writer on the situation; "Never before has there been such a wave of plant shut-downs affecting such basic industries as steel and transportation equipment—But the selection of plants to be shut down and the location of the new enterprises are highly influenced by considerations of class-warfare—For the first time since the 1930s, corporations in major industries such as automobiles and air lines are able to impose direct wage-cuts on hundreds of thousands of workers. They insist that the cuts are necessary to save jobs, which would be forfeit in the event of bankruptcy. Chrysler Corporation Workers have already agreed to big wage cuts and General Motors and Ford are demanding equal takeaways'.

"Of course, with Washington taking more openly anti-labour positions, enforcement of labour-protective laws is deteriorating. In particular, the protection offered by minimum wage and minimum hours legislation has virtually vanished in industries where it is most needed—especially textiles; apparel and other light industries; agriculture; and service industries.

"At the present time, in New York City, there are reportedly, some 3,000 'sweatshops' employing 50,000 workers in the apparel trades. These workers are forced to work up to 12 hours a day and are paid less than half the official minimum wage. Many of them are 'undocumented workers'; from the Latin American and Asian countries they have fled to escape the even more brutal conditions imposed by the puppets of U.S. imperialism. Thousands, in fact, have fled EL Salvador to escape the murderous junta acting under the direction of U.S. military and political 'advisers'—as earlier victims fled the after-effects of the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic.

"A New York Times (Feb. 26, 1981) journalist describes conditions in the sweatshop :

"Rows of women bent over sewing machines, separated by narrow aisles often made impassable by dress racks and piles of piece goods. Five exits and windows, too, are often blocked or even

padlocked, reducing emergency escapes—Sweatshops may fail to comply with minimum wage and hour laws, child labour regulations and fire and safety codes laws....The resurgence comes nearly 70 years after the fire at the Triangle Shirwaist Factory, where 146 garment workers died."

NEW INTERNATIONAL TENSION

And these USA imperialists now want to save Poland to introduce massive unemployment and inflation.

Comrades, this is the desperate background to the international situation, to the new international tensions

The Reagan administration has intensified the drive against detente initiated by the previous U.S. Administration. This is endangering world peace, threatening the security and peace of the countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and America. The people of Europe face the threat of a military confrontation involving the use of nuclear weapons and neutron bombs.

Reagan administration's decision to mass produce neutron bombs—that diabolical weapon of genocide, constitutes a crime against humanity.

The nations inhabiting the West Asian region are faced with direct American intervention. Israel, with the aid of the pentagon, is carrying on a regular war against Lebanon. And the same Zionist force, under the direct instructions of the USA, raided Iraq to destroy its nuclear reactor, U.S. imperialism, though it has received a rebuff in Iran, is intent on firmly planting its feet in the oil region and is making Pakistan its military base under the excuse of helping the Afghan 'freedom-fighters'. The Soviet help to Afghanistan's progressive forces to ward off imperialist attacks is made the excuse to militarise the region.

DANGER OF WAR IN INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

The report of the External Affairs Ministry, placed before the Lok Sabha in March, notes the U. S. plans for a rapid deployment force of 110,000 personnel for use primarily in the Indian Ocean. The Diego Garcia base situated in the Indian Ocean makes it possible to carry on operations against the littoral States. It is a standing danger to India and all littoral States.

But the danger to India does not end here. The USA is bent on feverishly arming Pakistan's military rulers with the latest weapons to create a cons-

tant threat of war between the two countries. It encourages Pakistan to build its nuclear potential to produce nuclear bombs while it asks India to accept prohibition safeguards. The Pakistani dictator, unable to seize any issue to befooled the people, is using the Afghanistan card, acting as the anti-Soviet spearhead of the USA, and is bent upon stockpiling arms to be used against India. Some reactionary Pakistani media are openly speculating on war between the two countries.

The USA is playing the Pakistan card to heighten tension and create threat of war to pressurise India to shift its foreign policy, especially its stand on Afghanistan.

These are pressures to weaken the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation and shift the Government's policy towards the imperialist camp. They are supplemented by other measures like refusal to supply uranium to the Tarapore nuclear plant, threat to cut off economic aid to countries not toeing the U.S. line and so on.

The Indo-Pakistan talks outlined the gravity of the situation as they showed the firm resolve of Pakistan's rulers to ally with the U.S.A.

Comrades, it should be noted that while the working class and people of India denounce U.S.A. military aid to Pakistan as a conspiracy against the people of Pakistan and India, as an instrument of war between the two countries, the Government of Peoples' China takes an opposite view and supports the arming of Pakistan's military regime. Our country which has experience of three wars with Pakistan cannot be complacent on this issue, cannot turn a blind eye to the U.S.A. conspiracy against our freedom.

We stand for friendly relations with our neighbouring countries. We stand for relations of peace and goodwill among the nations of the world. We are happy that the process of normalisation of relations with Peoples' China has started at last. The visit of the foreign minister of Peoples' China to India no doubt marked an important step in this direction. The working class and people of both countries expect further progress to restore the close friendly relations which obtained in the earlier years of our independence.

FOIL IMPERIALIST DESIGN FIGHT FOR PEACE

It cannot be said that our Working Class is prepared and trained to understand the danger facing the country. Reformist leaders, INTUC opportunists and others who look upon the workers as only voting cattle have combined to create indifference among the Working Class towards questions of foreign policy and external danger from imperialism. If this weakness is not overcome by us, the nation's independence might be imperiled any day. The bourgeois-landlord Government of Indira Gandhi is unable to mobilise popular forces and fight the imperialist designs. Some opposition parties like the BJP screen these very designs and mislead the people. It is again the duty of our trade unions to raise the warning signal in defence of our country, foil imperialist designs to create enmity between India and Pakistan and prepare the people to rebuff any aggressive move of imperialism or its stooges. Simultaneously we must now raise our voice in defence of world peace and against U.S.A. designs for aggressive confrontation. We all must endorse the struggle carried on by the U.S.S.R. and socialist camp to save the world from war and military confrontation.

General Council

From Page Seven

which 14 members participated. It was decided that a memorandum on the questions raised in the questionnaire would be submitted by September, 12 which would then be printed as a pamphlet for campaign amongst workers.

The question of sending a nominee to the Central Board for Workers Education was discussed in the Secretariat and the General Council approved the decision of not sending any nomination for the same.

C. Kannan and Lakshmi Sen placed reports of their visit to China, on the invitation of All China Federation of Trade Unions and a resolution thanking the ACFTU was adopted unanimously.

K. Ramani placed his report on the visit to USSR as a member of the goodwill mission on invitation from All Union Central Council of Trade Unions and a resolution thanking AUCCTU was adopted unanimously.

31 members participated in the discussion on the General Secretary's report. Amidst this serious discussion S.S. Bhattacharya brought some allegations which were replied to by Motilal Sharma and M.K. Pandhe. The General Council decided to suspend Bhattacharya pending further discussion and he was escorted out of the meeting.

The discussion revealed many problems before developing united struggle. A self-critical review about the weaknesses in our organisations were also made by many.

P. Ramamurti replied to the points raised during discussion. He pointed out that some of the criticism about functioning of

the CITU Centre were justified and steps have already been taken to improve the situation. Some of the criticisms were not factually correct. But he once again pointed out that a lot of improvement would have to be made at the state and union level without which the task for developing united struggle could not be carried out in a befitting manner. He warned the members about the methods which are being adopted by the ruling class to divide the workers, the conspiracies to destabilise the left front Govts and the growing dangers of war and exhorted the members to take up the task of developing united struggle on the basis of Bombay Convention decisions.

The Council then approved the General Secretary's Report and work report unanimously.

A. Nallasivan presented the report of the Credential Committee. Out of Unions having a membership of 16,064 who had applied for affiliation to CITU, it was found that applications by unions with membership of 9,677 contained all particulars and hence were recommended affiliation straight-away. The remaining unions were given conditional affiliation directing them to fulfil the formalities within two months. The Credential Committee desired that State Committees themselves should ensure that the applications are complete in all respects. The report was accepted unanimously.

Nrisingha Chakrabarty then placed the Report of the Resolution Sub-Committee. In all 33 resolutions were finalised by the Committee and amendments accepted by them were circulated. The resolution on Irish Freedom Fighters was moved from the Chair condemning the attitude of the British Govt to the Irish Freedom Fighters 10 of whom

have already died behind prison bars due to prolonged hunger strike demanding the status of political prisoners. The meeting recalled that similar treatment was meted out to the national liberation movement in our country. A resolution condemning murderous attack on S. Deb Roy of Namrup, Assam was moved by the chair and passed unanimously. In another resolution the dastardly attack on C. Govindarajan was condemned.

The resolution on U.S. Arming of Pakistan, moved by N. Prasada Rao, expressed concern at the massive arming by U.S.A. which helps the dictatorial regime against the people in Pakistan and at the same time promotes the U.S. conspiracy to make 'Asians fight Asians'. While congratulating the Working Class and people of Pakistan for their heroic struggle for re-establishing democracy, called on the people of Pakistan and India to repudiate tension and war between the two countries. K. Ravindranath supported the resolution which was passed unanimously.

K. Ravindranath moved the resolution on Threatening War Danger and Struggle for Peace calling upon the Working Class to realise the growing war danger created by the U.S. imperialists and to rouse the people so that they could, in close co-operation with the World Working Class movement, be able to defeat the game of war mongers and ensure World Peace. E. Balanandan seconded the resolution which was passed unanimously.

Nrisingha Chakrabarty moved the resolution condemning ESMO and appealing to all trade unions to throw their concerted might to force the Central Govt to retrace its steps. K. Ravindra-

-nath supported the resolution which was passed unanimously.

Resolutions congratulating the people and the Govt of West Bengal, Kerala & Tripura were moved by P.K. Kurane, Shanti Ghatak and Sunil Basu Roy respectively. Listing various achievements of these Govts within limited resources, the resolutions stated that these Govts have already demarcated themselves by stoutly refusing to apply NSA or to invoke ESMO and are now acting as advanced out posts of democracy. The resolutions called upon the working class to defend these left-led Govts as an inseparable part of their fight for democracy and better standards of living. These resolutions were seconded by Sunil Basu Roy, Parsa Satyanarayana and K.N. Ravindranath and were passed unanimously.

The resolution on Sixth Five Year Plan was moved by the chair. Referring to the proposed amendment by the Committee, he drew pointed attention to the fact that now instead of taking away of vested land from big land lords, the Planners propose to take away 15% land from those who are holding only 5 acres of land which means that the land of even small peasants would now be taken away. He urged that the Working Class must realise all aspects of the Plan so that it could champion the cause of toiling masses and build up a formidable force against the anti-people policies of the Govt.

The list of other resolutions already finalised by the Sub-committee and circulated were read out and the Council approved the resolutions. Some other resolutions were referred to the Secretariat for finalisation.

B.T. Ranadive summed up the deliberations. He drew attention of the members to the need for taking interest in the

Consumer Price Index Numbers

State/Centre	Base 1960			State/Centre	1981		
	Apr.	May	June		Apr.	May	June
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa			
Gudur	422	433	437	Barbil	391	397	398
Guntur	447	475	486	Sambalpur	431	441	446
Hyderabad	438	446	453	Punjab			
Assam				Amritsar	442	445	452
Digboi	423	436	441	Rajasthan			
Doom Dooma	353	354	355	Ajmer	449	456	470
Labac	342	349	352	Jaipur	461	477	487
Mariani	356	353	353	Tamil Nadu			
Rangapara	351	358	365	Coimbatore	455	459	462
Bihar				Coonoor	437	444	440
Jamshedpur	400	405	415	Madras	412	420	428
Jharia	397	403	405	Madurai	432	446	449
Kodarma	427	426	437	U.P.			
Monghyr	438	442	456	Kanpur	412	420	429
Noamundi	404	397	419	Saharanpur	430	432	436
Gujarat				Varanasi	484	480	484
Ahmedabad	406	418	427	West Bengal			
Bhavnagar	438	442	448	Asansol	435	436	440
Haryana				Calcutta	397	399	406
Yamunanagar	467	456	468	Darjeeling	347	348	350
J. & K.				Howrah	381	385	390
Srinagar	428	449	459	Jalpaiguri	342	346	348
Karnataka				Raniganj	412	415	442
Ammathi	452	457	465	Delhi	448	453	461
Bangalore	472	483	485	Other Centres*			
Chikamagalur	450	464	476	Berhampur ('49)	580	579	577
Kolar G.F.	451	460	457	Cuttack ('49)	536	541	543
Kerala				Jabalpur ('49)	578	592	589
Alleppey	441	445	469	Beawar ('51-52)	532	544	566
Alwaye	441	453	456	Tripura (1961)	394	401	401
Mundakayam	435	449	450	H.P. (1965)	317	320	321
Madhya Pradesh				Goa (1966)	316	320	324
Balaghat	447	449	452	Bhilaj (1966)	295	301	303
Bhopal	447	451	461	Bhilwara ('66)	279	285	291
Gwalior	455	464	467	Chhindwara ('66)	247	252	259
Indore	472	475	480	Kothagudem ('66)	286	292	304
Maharashtra				Rourkela ('66)	294	298	309
Bombay	435	442	450	All India ('49)	519	526	534
Nagpur	435	440	454	-do- ('60)	427	433	439
Sholapur	472	471	482				

Figures in bracket indicate base year.

resolutions. He also drew attention to the problems of Working Women and then expained in detail the present context in which the call for united action was being given, as unity and the form are not static. The content also changes. Today the need to forge unity arises from drive towards authoritarianism. He thanked the Reception Committee and the volunteers. V.P. Chintan, on behalf of the members thanked the Reception Committee and the volunteers. Hari Sadhan Mitra Secretary,

Reception Committee thanked the General Council members.

A mass rally was held on August 25 in the Bally Shantiram Maidan which was addressed by B.T. Ranadive, Jyoti Basu and Monoranjan Roy. Thousands of workers and inhabitants gathered defying the heavy down-pour. The ringing called for United Struggle reverberated throughout the meeting. It was announced in the meeting that West Bengal would also protest against ESMO by a Strike on September-11.

Condition of Workers in the Arab Territories Occupied by Israel

A glimpse of the shocking condition of the workers in the Arab territories occupied by Israel has been revealed in a report dated May, 13, of a mission sent by the International Labour Office, for the fourth consecutive year, following the recommendations made by the 1980 mission.

The report reveals the economic development in the occupied Arab territories do not correspond to the needs of the territories other than those for the purpose of continuation of the occupation. There is little scope of employment in the territories and one out of every three persons have to go to Israel for work every day, and that too, only provisional, temporary or irregular work. These works are valid only for four months and the workers from the occupied territories are prohibited to remain at Israel beyond their normal hours of work. It, therefore stated that there is an obvious need for an active employment policy in the occupied Arab territories geared to the specific requirement of their inhabitants. The mission failed to demand that U.S. imperialism must take off its puppet from the Arab territories.

While the fact remains that Israel is the predator and the U.S. imperialism the inspirer, it is but natural that under the fanaticism of zionism—a tool in the hands of the U.S., the Israelis will make all efforts to liquidate the Arab character from the occupied territories by establishing Jewish settlements, not to speak of improving the lot of the workers.

The report further enlightens that contributions are taken from workers in all branches of National Insurance Scheme, but they are not entitled to benefits, old age, residence, invalidity employment benefit, children allowance, etc.

The real designs of the Zionist aggressors which is punched with U.S. imperialist policies, manifest through wholesale suppression of the trade union rights of the workers. Request to establish trade unions are not acceded to. The Country's laws prohibit the trade unions from engaging in political activities. The true picture of Zionist conception of democracy,—a legacy of U.S. imperialism, was summarised by the delegate from Israel in his report placed at a recently held conference in Moscow on "The Working Class and the problems of anti-monopolist struggle", convened by the All Trade Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU). He

reported about various instances of anti-social elements and criminals capturing industries and forcing the workers to increase production.

The U.S. imperialism have been unleashing all the attacks on the Arab World and get them divided through inner conflicts through its out-post in Israel. The attacks on Lebanon, the blowing up of the nuclear installations of Iraq must serve as eye-openers to the people of the Arab Countries. The Arab world must unitedly face the aggressors. The entire working class must raise its voice of protest and condemnation of the aggressive designs if democracy and peace are to be installed in the Arab World.

Greetings from AUCCTU

The CITU received the following message from All Union Central Council of Trade Unions USSR

Dear Brothers All Union Central Council Trade Unions on behalf organised Soviet wage salaried workers collective farmers extend to trade unions working people of India heartfelt greetings on occasion Tenth Anniversary Treaty of Peace Friendship Co-operation signed between India U.S.S.R. We note with great satisfaction that friendly Indian Soviet trade union relations resting on solid basis of 1971 treaty have been developing consistently in interest mutual work for Peace Democracy Social progress against imperialism reaction for stronger unity of workers trade union movement Stop Historical visit of L. I. Breznev CPSU General Secretary, President Presidium USSR Supreme Soviet has been another higher stage in development friendship co-operation between our countries and will contribute to Peace Security in Asia world over Stop Wish Indian workers their trade unions further success in noble cause of building up new India.

Coal India Management

Responsible for Stagnation in Production

A meeting on coal production and to consider the target of coal production for the current year was convened by the management on 27th July 1981 at C.I.L. Hqrs. In the meeting the T.U. representatives were unanimous in attacking the policy of the management of not paying attention to genuine grievance of the workers which were mainly responsible for the low production in coal industry.

The T.U. representatives were particularly critical of the performance of the Energy Minister who was always making flambouyant statements but not paying proper attention to the question of production. The T.U. representatives pointed out that the Minister had no time to meet the JBCCL and discuss with the members problems facing the industry. The declining emphasis on underground production of coal was also severely criticised by the trade unions and they quoted figures from the dates supplied by the management. The reckless use of mechanisation was also criticised by all with one voice which on the one hand resulted in unemployment of coal miners and on the other hand failed to increase the production substantially. Even according to official figures large amount of machinery was already lying idle but the management went of injecting more and more machines in the coal mines.

In the matter of coal transport, the management was retrenching contractors' workers but giving contract to ex-service-men' Associations by supplying them vehicles at Company cost. The Trade Unions demanded that the work should be departmentalised. They also raised the point that contract system should be totally abolished in all perma-

nent and perenial nature of jobs. The workers' representatives also attacked the lack of safety arrangement in the coal mines and demanded that cost should be no consideration to ensure safety in coal mines. The pending issues of the workers arising out of the last agreement was also raised by all the T.U. Representatives to demand immediate action on the part of the management to implement all the clauses of the agreement in full. The CITU representative referred to the confidential letter written by Union Finance Minister to the Union Energy Minister asking him to show restraint on the workers' demands in coal industry. They criticised the approach in the latter and told the management that coal mine workers will resist the offensive of the managements.

In South Zone Movement for Minimum Wage Mounts UP

The South Zone Convention for Minimum Wage held at Gandhi Bhawan, Hyderabad on July, 12 and 13, decided to observe August 31 as Demands Day in all the five Southern States.

The Convention was jointly sponsored by CITU, AITUC, BMS and both wings of INTUC along with other Federations and attended by 459 delegates from Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Pondicherry.

The main resolution of the Convention demanded Rs. 50000 per month as minimum wage for the lowest categories in all employments in the States with full neutralisation of the rise in index.

The Convention constituted South Zone Minimum Wages campaign committee and also decided to constitute State-wise Committees and hold state conventions to popularise the demand.

Steel Industry Settlement of Anomalies Question

The nonsettlement of anomalies arising out of the last wage agreement which was under discussion in the steel industry remained unsettled for several months due to the dilatory tactics adopted by the management. The CITU representatives have always been pressing for settlement of these anomalies but the Anomalies Committee constituted by the National Joint Committee for Steel industry could not come to unanimous conclusions.

In the meeting of the NJCS held on 10-12 August in New Delhi, the CITU representatives pressed the point and demanded that the question should be settled in the meeting itself. After great deal of discussion the management agreed to form a small Sub-Committee to settle the issue. On behalf of CITU Com A. Dakshi joined this Committee and after long deliberations the management had to agree to resolve the anomalies on the basis of proposals made by the workers' representatives.

The programme of housing construction undertaken by the management was much below the commitment given by the management in the last wage agreement. This point was stressed by the workers representatives who demand that immediate action should be taken to ensure that sufficient number of houses are constructed for the workers.

Regarding increase in the electricity charges in Rourkela and Durgapur after the last agreement the workers' representatives emphasised that during the currency of the agreement no electricity charges should be enhanced. The T.U.s also demanded immediate settlement of gratuity question as well as the problem of Leave Travel Concession. The management, however, has not yet come forward with concrete suggestions.

The T.U. Representatives warned the management that the growing discontentment among the workers may explode if demands are not settled within the shortest possible time.

Mass Retrenchment in Kalta Iron Mines

Under order from the Steel Authority of India, 1650 workmen in Kalta Iron Mines and Mining and Transporting Co. are going to be retrenched from September 1.

The Kalta Iron Mines are producing 90 per cent of the high grade iron ore supplied to the Rourkela Steel Plant since 1965. In 1972 the SAIL appointed the Mining and Transporting Co. as contractors to do the same job in the Kalta iron mines. About 3200 workers of the Rourkela Steel Plant including the contractors' workers were engaged in the mines. But while the wages of R.S.P.s' Workers were Rs. 31.00 (with V.D.A.) per one CBM of ore per day, the wages of the contractors' workers were Rs. 14.75 per one CBM of ore per day. While allowing such a huge profit to the contractors, the SAIL authorities retrenched 550 workers in 1979 and started purchasing iron ore from another contractor, MMTC at the rate of Rs. 60.00 per tonne, when the cost of production by the workers were Rs. 44.50 per tonne. Due to the purchase from MMTC, production of Kalta Iron Mines have come down from 60,000 tonnes per day to 15,000 tonnes per day.

On demands raised by the CITU led United Mines Mazdoor Union the management of SAIL signed a bipartite agreement on April 22, 1980 to departmentalise the contractors' workers like that of the Satna and Bolani mines. But in complete violation of the agreement the SAIL authorities have now issued notice of closure of the Mining and Transporting Company with effect from September 1 retrenching 1650 workers out of 2650. This came in the wake of the Essential Services Ordinance, which was as clarified by the

Prime Minister herself, would be applicable against closures and lockout.

A mass petition signed by more than 1200 workers have

been submitted to the Parliament. The United Mines Mazdoor Union has decided in a mass meeting held at Kalta Mines to go in for an indefinite strike if the retrenchment order is not withdrawn.

HSCL Management's Dilatory Tactics Opposed

In a meeting of HSCL joint Bipartite Forum held in New Delhi on 7-8th August the workers representatives condemned the dilatory tactics adopted by the HSCL management. The representatives of the INTUC found it difficult to support the policies of the management.

The workers representatives in an earlier meeting unanimously demanded Rs. 75 as interim relief and the management promised to give their reactions so that the issue could be settled in this meeting.

Shambhu Kumar, Managing Director HSCL refused to give any clear cut answer on the plea that the Bokaro strike was going on and the issue of the interim relief could be considered only after restoration of normalcy at Bokaro.

The T.U. representatives pointed out that early settlement of interim relief would help restoration of normalcy at Bokaro. The CITU demanded that there should be no retrenchment of a single worker in HSCL and the management should declare that no worker would be victimised for participation in the strike in Bokaro.

The CITU also demanded the settlement of all outstanding issues mentioned in the joint charter of demands submitted by all the trade unions.

The CITU further pointed out that the management's policy of retrenchment of HSCL workers and giving more jobs to contractors is the root cause of

workers' discontent in the organisation. Workers representatives also criticised the rampant corruption prevalent in the organisation which was responsible for the heavy losses.

The All India Co-ordination Committee of HSCL unions (CITU) strongly condemned the anti-working class policy of the management and called upon the HSCL unions to organise Dharna on 2nd September to raise the voice of protest against the policies pursued by the HSCL management.

Beedi Workers To Demonstrate

Beedi Workers of Tamil Nadu belonging to the CITU and AITUC Unions have decided to launch joint actions protesting against wage cut on the basis of an unilaterally fixed number of Beedis on a given quantity of leaves and against the fall back wages fixed by the State Government.

A joint meeting held on August 7, decided to organise a demonstration in front of the State Legislative Assembly on August 29 with the following demands: Minimum guaranteed work for six days for 1500 beedis or 50 per cent of the wages for rolling 1500 beedis as fall back wages; Rs. 1200 as wages for rolling 1000 beedis with D. A. linked to the cost of living index; implementation of Beedi-Cigar Act; constituting the State implementation Committee.

Verdict, Of Course, Belongs To The People

The Left Front Government in West Bengal completes four years in office.

These four years constitute a chapter of tireless and continuous struggle to strengthen democratic values in the state.

In the recent past there was a monstrous move to trample democracy on the self-same soil and leave it gory. It had also wanted to stifle the voice of the people, to crush their democratic rights and play havoc with their lives and calling. People of the state, however, refused to capitulate, lying down. The outcome was the Left Front Government. It is why the Left Front Government is pledged to safeguard all the democratic rights of the people, rights of assembly, association, rights to conduct processions, call strikes, a free exercise of franchise, and above all the fabric of parliamentary democracy. At a time when dark clouds of authoritarianism are mustering strong over the length and breadth of the country, we are resolved to see that the banner of democracy is held aloft by our people, as a protest against such forces.

When, even at the lapse of 33 years after independence, our integrity as a nation is threatened by violent machinations of slithering separatism and communalism when many are at their wit's end, caught in a morass of disunity and mutual suspicion, we have preserved as the pupil of our eye, the unity among various religious sects and castes in West Bengal in our march forward. This redounds to the credit of the toiling masses of West Bengal. This has been achieved cut in the arena of struggle at a cost of sweat and

blood, where friends come to be recognised, distinguished from foes. Our endeavour is to further consolidate this unity and brotherhood, and to annihilate all forces of disruption.

In four years we have come a long way. People in the villages, agricultural labourers, share-croppers, farmers—are all enlivened with a new sense of belonging. New blood has been injected into the moribund agrarian economy. Workers, in factories and offices, teachers and middle-income people have found a new unity in their bid for a better future and have earned recognition for many of their rightful demands. New values have emerged in the field of education and culture. The welfare of the people has become the guiding principle. We want that the portals of our educational and cultural life are thrown open to the people at large. The democracy has been extended down to the levels of Panchayats and civic bodies. We have endeavoured, to the best of our ability to safeguard and advance the cause of the backward, the disabled, and the destitute. The right to work has been made universal and beyond corruption. We are all the time striving to create more and more job opportunities.

We are yet to travel a long way. Organised and active co-operation of the people is what we earnestly require.

Forces opposed to us are also active. They fight shy of a popular verdict. They want to embark upon a course of undemocratic terrorism. Needless to say, the final verdict belongs to the people.

Government of West Bengal

ICA 18302/81