



THE WORKING CLASS

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Call of Anti-Lockout Convention

Court Arrest Before Parliament

THE All India Convention organised by the National Campaign Committee at Mavlankar Hall, New Delhi on January 20, against Lock-outs, Closures, Retrenchments, Lay-offs and Denotification set an action programme of satyagraha/picketing before the Parliament and courting arrest by the leaders of the National Campaign Committee along with a large number of workers calling for a halt on these offensives and demanding nationalisation of all closed and sick units. The programme will be implemented during the Budget Session of the Parliament, the exact date of which will be announced by National Campaign Committee later on. Demonstrations will be organised on the same day in all the state capitals to express solidarity. Simultaneously, the Convention called upon the delegates to mobilise the maximum number of workers for the March to Parliament programme in April to highlight these issues along with the other pressing demands raised by the Second National Convention. Apart from these, the unanimous resolution called upon the entire working class to observe an Anti-Lockout-Closure Week from March 19 to 25 to campaign for the demands raised by the Convention. To mobilise the workers in systematic and organised manners state level Conventions should be completed by March 15.

Despite the biting cold in Delhi, delegates poured in from all parts of the country overflowing the capacity of the Mavlankar Hall, reflecting the urge of the working class to wage countrywide united struggles against these new offensives launched by the employers and the Government throwing thousands of workers out of employment, and racketeering with their lives to satisfy the capitalist greed for profits. Banners and flags of the Central Trade Unions and various federations covered the entire outside wall of the hall. Sections of workers marched to the hall in procession shouting slogans against the anti-labour and pro-monopolist policies of the Government.

The deliberations were conducted by a presidium consisting of M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Chaturanan

Mishra (AITUC), A.A. Siddiqui (HMS), Gyan Sagar Vashist (BMS), Sushil Bhattacharya (UTUC), Ram Krishna Majumdar (TUCC), J.S. Dara (RMC) and Gyan Singh (UTUC-LS).

Samar Mukherjee Moves the Resolution

Samar Mukherjee, M.P., General Secretary of CITU moved the resolution and explained the salient features of it. He said that the offensives of lockouts and closures have increased with the deepening crisis of the capitalist economy. This crisis is all pervading in the entire capitalist world. The advanced capitalist countries are deliberately trying to pass on their burdens on the Third World countries following the capitalist path of development. India which is already reeling under the capitalist path followed by the Congress rulers since independence and is linked to the Western economy, is surrendering to the dictating terms of the IMF and World Bank to stand as a watch dog to protect the interests of the multinationals and strengthen the private sector. The consequence is the further accentuation of the crisis and increasing offensives on all that matters to the working people — starting from attacks on their trade union and democratic rights to lockouts, closures, retrenchments, lay-offs and sickening the industries and denotifying the already taken over units, thus virtually liquidating them throwing thousands of workers jobless in the streets. All this exercise by the capitalists is to wriggle out from the crisis and quest for more profits at the cost of the working class and the toiling people. He said that the mandays lost due to lockouts have been surpassing that due to strikes. 1982, the so-called productivity year of Indira Gandhi turned out to be the lockout year for the working class. Closures have phenomenally increased by 27 per cent since 1979. Reserve Bank itself has attributed 98 per cent of the causes for the industrial sickness to the managements. Sickness has become a profiteering business for the employers. Misappropriation and diversion of public money for new pastures for quick profits have become a law the for monopolists upheld by the Government of India. Explaining the

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essence of the programmes enumerated in the resolution, he pointed out that the situation demands that all sections of the working people have to mobilise public opinion against these anti-social and anti-national pursuits of the capitalists and the policy of the Government of India and prepare for a continuous, long drawn and determined struggle for a reversal of the policies of the Government that are heaping miseries on all sections of the toiling people.

Discussions

The resolution was seconded by Chaturnan Mishra (AITUC), Ram Naresh Singh (BMS), Ambika Soni (RMC), Surendra Mohan (HMS), Pratul Chowdhury (UTUC), Amar Prasad Chakrabarty (TUCC) and Pritish Chanda (UTUC-LS). Forty four delegates participated in the discussions. Prominent among those who spoke were Md. Ismail, M.P., Vice President of CITU; Homi Daji, Vice President, AITUC; Bireswar Tyagi, Secretary HMS; O.P. Aghi, Secretary, BMS; B.S. Dhume (AITUC); Arabinda Ghosh, M.P., Vice-President, All India State Govt. Employees Federation; E. Balanandan, M.P., Treasurer, CITU; Harish Sharma (BEFD); V. Bhatnagar (BMS); Bhagwan Singh (UTUC); Prabhakar Sanzgiri (CITU); Vimala Ranadive (Plantation Workers' Federation); Gyan Singh (UTUC-LS); D.D. Sastri (TUCC); B.P. Kashyap (A.I. Coal Workers' Federations); Than Singh (UTUC); Sunil Mohinta (Bengal Potteries); Ajit Aich (Bengal Enamel); Bimal Ghosh (Bengal Textile); D.N. Mayekar (Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals); G.K. Parmar (Textiles, Gujarat) etc. The delegates narrated about their experience of growing incidence of closures, lockouts, lay-offs and retrenchments accompanied by attacks by the management hirelings to force the workers to accept depressed wages and the dictates of the managements. They also narrated their experience of the total nonchalance of the Government even in cases of sudden and illegal lockouts and closures. On the contrary, the Government came to the rescue of the monopolists by releasing the police force to repress the workers and suppress their protest actions. There were some amendments which further enriched and sharpened the resolution for utilising it as a lever to make the struggles further militant. Because of lack of time a large number of delegates who had sent their names, could not speak. Their names were however announced by the presidium and they were congratulated for their urge to contribute to the fight.

Resolution on Jute Strike

Another resolution was moved by Indrajit Gupta, M.P., General Secretary of AITUC supporting the indefinite countrywide strike launched by the 2.5 lakh jute workers unitedly demanding nationalisation of the jute industry. It was seconded by Md. Amin, General Secretary of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU). The resolution called upon the entire working class to demonstrate their solidarity in support of the struggle.

Summing Up

Summing up the discussions, Samar Mukherjee said that the lockouts and closures have caused a holocaust of jobs. This is the result of the capitalist economy and a part of the crisis of the capitalist system itself. Therefore, while fighting against lockouts and closures, the struggle has to be rooted against the capitalist system itself. He reminded of the main resolution of the Second National Convention of August 21, which had amply brought forth this focal point. Therefore, while demanding for a reversal of policies, all sections of the working people must unite on the basis of class and carry forward the struggle with the objective for the Socialist system which only can be the basis for their upliftment and development of the nation.

(The main resolution and the resolution on the jute strike are being published herewith).

The Resolution

The All India Convention against Closure, Lock-out, Retrenchment, Lay-off and Denotification held in New Delhi on 20th January, 1984 expresses its grave concern at alarming increase all over the country in the Closures, Lock-outs, Retrenchments and Lay-offs and banning of recruitments in all Government institutions and industries resulting in joblessness of several lakhs of Industrial workers. The situation is further aggravated after the decision of the Government to denotify the units already taken over and by the rapid increase in the incidence of so called industrial sickness.

These attacks against the working class are the direct result of the deepening economic crisis in the country and the attempts of the capitalists to pass on its burden on to the shoulders of the workers and the common people. As pointed out by the Second National Trade Union Convention held in New Delhi on 21st August, 1983, the present capitalist crisis in the economy is the direct result of the pro-multinational, pro-monopoly and pro-landlord policies of the Government of India which has become more accentuated after the borrowings from the International Monetary Fund with conditionalities detrimental to India's national interests. While India is forced to remove import restrictions, advanced countries resort to protectionist policies. With terms of trade becoming more unfavourable to India, we are faced with all round stagnation and recession in the economy which has been the root cause of the present capitalist offensive.

The official statistics available on the subject are gross underestimation but still they indicate seriousness of the problem. Over 10,000 units have been already closed down over a period of years in the country. During the year 1982 and 1983 the man-days lost due to lockouts were more than due to strikes clearly indicating that the Employers have been systematically using the weapon of lock-out to

pressurise the workers to accept increased workload and to extract more concessions from the Government. 53 per cent of the man-days lost in industrial disputes in 1982 were due to lock-outs and also as high as 52 per cent in 1983. In 1982, 96 per cent of the man-days lost in West Bengal were due to lock-outs presenting a grim picture of the situation.

The total number of sick units in the country increased from 22,366 in December, 1979 to 28,428 in June, 1982 indicating a rise of 27 per cent. The bank advances to sick units rose from Rs. 1623 to Rs. 2299 crores during the same period. This is apart from advances by financial institutions. Despite crying hoarse by the spokesmen of the capitalists that the sickness of the units was due to the so called labour troubles, the recent study of the Reserve Bank of India underlines the fact that only 2 per cent of the closures were due to industrial relations problems. According to the survey 53 per cent of the units became sick due to mismanagement including diversion of funds, infighting and lack of marketing strategy, 14 per cent due to faulty initial planning and other technical drawbacks. It further points out that 9 per cent of the units became sick due to power cuts, shortage of raw materials etc. while 23 per cent gave the reasons of market recession. A large number of these units belonged to Engineering, Cotton and Jute, Textiles and Sugar industries. The study therefore clearly points out to the fact that the managements were solely responsible for the sickness of the units. In most of the cases units are deliberately made sick as "sickness" has become a profitable business. But in no case the Govt. of India has taken action against such employers resorting to fraudulent practices and diversion of funds to other units even by the MRTP houses. The Govt. of India is conniving at such companies even if the Public Sector financial institutions hold majority or substantial equity shares.

According to official figures, during 1981 and 1982 about 1300 undertakings were closed down in the country out of which about 800 closures had nothing to do with industrial disputes while in 500 cases the employers preferred to close down the units when the trade unions raised legitimate industrial disputes. The Govt. of India failed to prevent these malafide closures.

The Govt. of India recklessly permitted the capitalists to resort to rationalisation, modernisation, mechanisation and automation and other job killing devices which resulted in declaration of surplus workers in most of the organised industries. Retrenchment offensive is in full swing in these industries, though at times it is in a disguised form of so called voluntary retirement. Use of electronic computers have also led to shrinkage in employment opportunities. The problem will be further aggravated by the recent announcement made for the Prime Minister of banning further recruitment and non-filling of vacancies in Central Govt. undertakings and departments. Closure of shift and lay off due to frequent power cuts have become a matter of daily

occurrence. In Construction Industry, after completion of every project retrenchment drive is launched with the result that throughout the life the workers have to remain as temporary workers. Women workers were generally the first target of attack in every retrenchment offensive.

The workers employed in units taken over as relief undertakings faced with serious problems of cut in wages, non-payment of wage arrears and bonus and non-implementation of all labour laws.

The retrenchment compensation paid today under the law is just token and does not in any way help the workers to tide over the situation. Moreover, it is paid only to the permanent workers and a large section of the workers is just not covered even by this paltry payment. In absence of any provision of unemployment allowance the conditions of the retrenched workers become most pitiable with no possibility of getting any alternate job.

Denotification of industrial units taken over by the Govt. of India under the Industries (Development and Regulations) Act 1951 has become another weapon in the hands of the Government to hit the workers. The Government of India has so far denotified Containers and Closures Ltd., Indian Rubber Manufacturers Ltd., Carter Pooler & Co. Ltd. and Motor and Machinery Manufacturers Ltd. and many more names are in the waiting list. These units will either be returned to their erstwhile owners, or handed over to the big business houses or go in for liquidation.

The Bengal Potteries Ltd., instead of nationalisation is being given on a platter to Birlas. It is reported that the National Textile Corporation under instructions from the Govt. of India is seriously considering a proposal to close down 26 units all over the country on the plea that it would not be possible to run them economically. The IRCI has miserably failed to revive the sick units and has become a den of corruption and pilferage, defeating the very purpose of the formation of the IRCI.

The legitimate interests of the working class can be effectively protected from the attacks of the capitalist class only by Nationalisation of companies owned by the multinationals and big business houses and run them through genuine workers participation in management at all levels on the basis of equality. The trade union movement must also fight for inclusion of right to work as a fundamental right in the Indian Constitution so that real social security is ensured for the workers in the country. It is also necessary to impose ban on closure and lock-out to put an end to the blackmail by the capitalists. The convention therefore calls upon the working class to fight for implementation of the following measures:

Regarding Closures

1. Strict implementation of the provision for 90 days' notice prior to closure. Such provisions

should be applicable to all establishments irrespective of their strength.

2. No closure notice will take effect without permission of the State Government concerned.

3. In all cases of closures, a thorough investigation should be held and those responsible for closure should be punished severely and the misappropriated amount should be realised from the personal properties of the persons concerned.

4. Government must take over units under closure for more than one month.

Regarding Sickness

1. All sick units should be taken over by the Government with all the complements and liabilities due to the workers and run through genuine workers participation in Management.

2. A thorough probe into the affairs of sick units should be conducted and all the amount misappropriated and diverted should be realised from other assets of the Members of Board of Directors.

3. The management responsible for sickness should not be given licence to manufacture any items.

4. Once a unit is reopened it should not be allowed to be closed.

5. As a preventive measure to check the financial or administrative mismanagement, the Govt. should appoint financial experts in every company for monitoring purposes.

Regarding Lock-outs

1. All closed & locked out units must be opened immediately unconditionally with full complements.

2. Lock-out can not be treated at par with strike. Severe restrictions should be imposed for declaring a lock-out.

3. Workers must be paid subsistence allowance during the lock-out period. A lock-out after 15 days of its commencement should be treated as closure.

4. Ban on lock-out during negotiations with the trade unions or after deliberate ending of negotiations.

5. If the lock-out continues beyond one month the Government should take over such units and reopen them immediately with full say of the workers in all aspects of running the undertaking including

purchase of raw materials, sale of finished goods and decision making.

6. Provisions for compulsory imprisonment of employers' representatives for all malafide lockouts.

Regarding Retrenchments

1. Ban on all retrenchment measures

2. Stop introduction of mechanisation, automation and other job killing devices.

3. Ensure full utilisation of existing installed capacity so that additional jobs can be created.

4. Stop import of items which can be produced indigenously. Serious drive for import substitution so that country's dependence on foreign products is reduced to the minimum.

5. Payment of unemployment allowance to all the retrenched workers in the country.

Regarding Lay-Offs

1. Payment of full wages as compensation for lay-offs

2. Stringent punishment to the employers including imprisonment for non-payment of lay-off compensation.

Regarding Denotification

1. Take over and nationalise all the units denotified so far by the Government of India and no handing over of the units to the big business houses.

2. Stringent action against the officers who have indulged in rampant corruption and frittered away the resources of the units taken over by the Government.

Programme

The Convention while congratulating the workers of all affiliations for observing 4th December, 1983 as a Day of protest against these draconian measures calls upon the working class to unitedly implement the following programme of action all over the country.

1. To hold regional, state level conventions on these issues by the 15th March so that the slogans of the National Convention are implement at local levels.

2. To observe one week from 19th to 25th March to campaign for the demands raised by this Convention among the working class.

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Indefinite Jute Strike

ABOUT three lakh workers of the entire jute industry in the country went on an indefinite strike from January 16. This was the first continuous industrywide strike launched by the jute workers after the 50-day strike of 1979. In between, three one day strikes were observed on October 10, 1980; August 10, 1981 and August 10, 1982.

Nationalisation of Jute Industry

The present strike having the widest sweep so far, has embraced all the jute growing centres in the country, viz W. Bengal U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh. In an unique show of trade union unity, all the fourteen unions in the industry, including the INTUC have joined the strike, unanimously raising the vital demand — nationalisation of the entire jute industry including purchase of raw jute and foreign trade in jute and jute products. The other main demands of the 30-point charter includes implementation of the 1979 agreement on grades and scales of pay and on workload, reinstatement of all retrenched workers, fixation of raw jute price at Rs. 300 per quintal, etc.

Compelling Circumstances

The strike had to be launched under compelling circumstances when the jute barons led by IJMA and even the nationalised units following the dictates of the IJMA refused to implement the vital agreement arrived at after the 50-day strike of 1979. According to the agreement the mill owners were to implement the decision of the W. Bengal Labour Minister on the recommendations of the Committee on the grade and scale. The grades and scales were to be implemented from March, 1980. But violating the agreement, the jute barons went to High Court to seek "justice". Having lost in the Division Bench also, they went to the Supreme Court where also they lost. But still they refused to implement the agreement taking law entirely in their own hands. It is indeed scandalous that in a vital industry like jute there is no grades and scales of pay.

Regarding workload also, the management after the 1972 agreement, took full advantage of the then semi-fascist terror and the subsequent Emergency period, violated the agreement and inhumanly increased the work load and retrenched about 46,000 workers. In this respect also they refused to implement the terms of the 1979 agreement to abide by the decision of the Labour Minister in respect of the recommendations of the Committee on workload.

Similarly they have refused to do away with the contract and badli system and have still enforced this primitive system of employing contract labour forcing the workers to part with their wages with contract labourers to reach the production targets. They have also refused to make 90 per cent of the

workers permanent and special badli to 20 per cent of workers, i.e., to guarantee 220 days' work in a year. On the contrary, they had systematically kept about 15 to 20 mills under lockout and further increased the work load. Regarding several other points also with respect to transfers, house rent, etc. they have refused to implement the 1979 agreement.

Production: Man Power

Before independence the number of jute mills were 111 in W. Bengal which employed 3.5 lakh workers and the production was 9 lakh tonnes. Now there are 52 mills employing only 1.6 lakh workers. But the production has increased to about 14 lakh tonnes. The inhuman work load can well be imagined bearing in mind that there has been no modernisation in the industry. During the period the Government of India has given crores of rupees to the barons only to allow them to misappropriate the money and channelise it to other investments and mint huge profits. The above production was achieved despite the fact that since 1980 practically only 40 mills were kept open with about 70 thousands of workers remaining unemployed and millions of jute growers becoming destitutes.

The Subservient Government

All these years the workers and growers have been struggling for existence against the ruthless exploitation by the jute barons and demanding to nationalise the industry to save it from their loot. But the Government of India has turned a deaf ear to all the entreaties, subserving the interest of the monopolists. It has refused to nationalise the industry. It has rejected even the all party Assembly resolution of W. Bengal. It has rejected the Parliamentarians' appeals. On the contrary it has allowed the monopolists to indulge in racketeering with the public money. Of course it has truly laid bare its class character and made evident the dictates of IMF against nationalisations. The contrast in attitude with the left front Government of W. Bengal is seen in the Congress(I) rule states also. While Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister and Krishnapada Ghosh, the Labour Minister of W. Bengal have congratulated the jute workers and have lent their full support to their struggle, the Congress(I) Government of Uttar Pradesh has declared the strike illegal. The Government of India has refused to intervene as yet.

Success of the Strike

The Strike in its sweep has embraced all the workers in all the jute centres. In Andhra Pradesh, as per previous decision, the workers have joined the strike on January 20. In Tripura, there is only one mill run by the left front Government, which have accepted all the demands. So the workers there have demonstrated their solidarity by observing strike on

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Electricity Workers form Federation

WORKERS employed in the Electricity industry formed their federation, viz, Electricity Employees' Federation of India (EEFI) in the foundation conference held at Trivandrum from January 13 to 15. 217 delegates and observers from 14 states, Assam, Tripura, West Bengal, Bihar, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, Delhi, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh attended the Conference. Unions representing 85,435 members were affiliated to the federation, out of which 52,635 members were from CITU unions. Observers from unions representing 1,02,000 workers also attended the Conference, which are likely to be affiliated later on.

On the first day a National Seminar on Energy and Power was held which was participated by eminent persons. Papers presented in the Seminar were on Energy policies and practices since independence; Power development in India—a historical overview; Current status of Nuclear Power; Energy and Environment; Power development — Kerala experience and Planning for Power — prospect and perspectives. An exhibition — “Energy and Man” was inaugurated by C. Kannan, President of the Kerala State CITU.

The Delegates' session was inaugurated by B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU on January 14. BTR explained about the immediate tasks of the working class and the role of the electricity workers in organising the federation. E. Balanandan submitted the report on behalf of the Coordination Committee. 19 comrades participated in the discussions on the report which was adopted including a resolution on the general demands of the electricity workers calling upon them to observe a Demands Week from March 19 to 25 throughout the country. The draft Constitution was placed by V.P. Chintan which was adopted with some amendments.

The Conference elected a 44-member Working Committee with E. Balanandan as President and D. Janakiraman as the General Secretary.

A public meeting preceded by a massive procession was held on 15th afternoon which was addressed by B.T. Ranadive, V.P. Chintan, D. Janakiraman and others.

The Resolution

This Conference of the Electricity Employees Federation of India regrets to note that our country is among the lowest in the per capita availability of electrical power which is indicative of our underdevelopment. 82 per cent of our house holds are yet to be connected with electricity. In none of the five year plans the target set could be attained though they were far behind the requirements. Even the achievement of the 6th Plan target may not be more than 70 per cent. It is a shame that our natural

resources particularly our hydel potential mostly remain untapped. Our thermal plants which were installed without any rational understanding of the conditions obtaining in the country are now facing innumerable problems. The undue reliance on foreign technology at the cost of our own R & D, still continues to be the basis of our Power Planning. The bureaucracy and the corrupt administration of the Electricity Boards make a mess of the whole of the power sector. The Electricity Supply Act under which the administrative set-up of the power sector is devised, needs drastic changes. The 7 lakh employees who are working in this key sector are never heard or consulted on any of the problems including the generation or distribution of power in this country, and are not given a fair deal by those in authority.

Therefore this Conference demands:

1. The Power Policy in its totality should be drastically revised and a crash programme to double the power output within the next ten years must be undertaken.

2. Strengthen research and development and self reliance in the Power Sector.

3. National grid should be formed in consultation with State Governments.

4. Rational revision of Tariffs should be made with a view to give concessional rates to domestic, agricultural and small scale industrial sector.

5. Electrification of all villages at the earliest.

6. Amend the Electricity supply Act to suit the federal set up and giving adequate representation to the workers in the authoritative bodies prescribed under the Act including the State Electricity Boards.

7. The service conditions of the electricity employees including wages, salaries and other amenities must be drastically revised and upgraded on a national scale without leaving it to the mercy of the electricity boards and the other authorities.

8. All casual, NMR work charged categories must be given permanency. No work of a perennial nature be done under contract system. All the existing vacancies must be filled up.

9. No automation or computerisation be introduced in the power sector which will adversely affect the employment potential.

10. Full trade union rights should be guaranteed for all the employees working in the power sector and the standing orders must be suitably amended.

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Victory for Reserve Bank Employees

FOLLOWING an agreement reached between the All India Reserve Bank Employees' Association and the management, all the fifteen dismissed/suspended employees of the Kanpur and Delhi offices were reinstated without any pre-condition or penalty. The top echelons of the management came down to Calcutta on December 29 and signed the agreement. The entire period of dismissal/suspension, nearly 20 months, will be treated as on duty. The employees returned to work on December 30 amidst deafening slogans.

During the agitations in April-July, 1982 against increased work load and other anti-worker provisions of the Dighe Tribunal Award, the management had dismissed all the 13 Executive Committee members of the Association at Kanpur and the Secretary at New Delhi and suspended the President at Kanpur. These punitive steps were taken apart from indiscriminate wage cuts, police harassments and court proceedings against a large number of employees. The Association went through a series of action programmes including one day's strike on September 6 last. As per the agreement, the dispute over work load in certain departments has also been resolved.

State Govt. Employees Prepare for Struggles

FIVE million State Government employees are preparing for struggles demanding bonus, D.A. and salaries at par with the Central Government employees. The National Executive of the All India State Government Employees Federation met at Delhi on December 3 and discussed the problems of the State Govt. employees in view of their utterly low emoluments which have been reduced to the lowest position as compared to other Government employees, not to speak of those in the public sector

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This Conference calls upon the Government of India to take immediate steps on the demands listed above and appeals to all the Power Workers of the country organised under different unions to raise the above issues and join the Electricity Employees Federation of India for united movement for winning these demands.

This conference calls upon all the unions affiliated to the federation to observe a week from March 19 to 25 to popularise these demands and to mobilise support of all the Power Workers and the People.

but of the Central Govt employees also. In a memorandum submitted to the 8th Finance Commission the federation has urged for devolution of funds to the State Governments to meet the obligation and remove the disparities between Government employees.

Sukomal Sen, M.P., General Secretary of the federation reported that on an earlier memorandum submitted to the Finance Minister and also when the demand was raised in the Parliament, the Central Government passed off the buck to the State Governments as a state subject. But the Centre refuses to sanction funds to the states and on the contrary puts restraints on its resources, even on overdrafts. Regarding bonus, the memorandum said that it is a deferred wage and no section of employees or workers should be debarred from it. So far as D.A. is concerned, the Centre must take responsibility to devolve funds for payment to all, as it is because of the Centre's fiscal policies that prices are boosted up.

The meeting decided to implement the following programmes:

Memorandum to all Chief Ministers urging upon the Central Government for providing funds to the states to meet the demands of the state employees; Bonus Conventions to be completed in the states by the middle of February; and Mass Demonstration Day to be observed on March 8 in all state Capitals, Districts, Taluks and Blocks. The National Executive will meet again after March 8 to consider one day's token strike in pursuance of the demands.

Port & Dock Workers on Struggle

The Port and Dock Workers at the major Ports observed Demands week from January 1 to 7 in pursuance of the common charter of demands submitted by the four federations. The previous settlement having expired in December, 1983, the Government has been dilly dallying with the fresh charter of demands offering only a percentage increase over the existing financial expenditure, instead of negotiating on each item of demands. Following the agitations, the Ministry of Shipping and Transport convened negotiations on January 11 at Delhi. But the negotiations were not fruitful as the Government still quibbled over the demands. It has sought time till first week of February to decide on the issue. In a joint letter signed by the leaders to the Minister of Shipping and Transport the four federations have served an ultimatum to the Government to settle the demands by the time, failing which the workers will be compelled to intensify the action programmes.

Organised Labour Demands Change in Govt. Policies

THE Finance Minister invited the representatives of the Central Trade Unions in a pre-budget discussion on January 24. Nrisingha Chakrabarty represented CITU in the discussion. Others who attended were N.K. Bhat and G. Ramanujam (INTUC), Indrajit Gupta (AITUC), S.R. Kulkarni and D.D. Vashisht (HMS), M.P. Mehta (BMS), Motish Roy (UTUC), N.M. Barot (NLO) and Naren Sen (NFITU).

The Finance Minister opened the discussion stating that last year industrial relation situation was good though there is a strike in jute in West Bengal now and that there has been increased production apart from a good harvest. Price-rise however is causing concern. Similarly low capacity utilisation and productivity has become a matter of concern. Huge investment has been made but there is no appropriate return. He also said that the Govt. would like to induct new technology for increased production and competitiveness.

Certain aspects of the present situation came in for sharp criticism. Failure of infrastructural facility particularly power cut, contributing to loss of production and affecting the wages of workers, was one such. The concern regarding price rise was voiced by all and a demand for making daily necessities available through public distribution system was placed. Regarding introduction of higher technology, unanimous concern was expressed that already displacement of existing workmen has started due to this. There was also unanimous demand for abolition of Income tax for wage-earners and review of the monetary limits laid down in Bonus Act, E.S.I., E.P.F., Workmen's Compensation Act etc.

It was also pointed out that investment in public sector is helping the private sector to reap profits. There is no monitoring as to how the funds from the financial institutions are being used. The question of corruption and fraud in the Banking industry was also pointed out. The Govt. has not held consultation on Public sector undertakings as demanded by the trade unions one year back.

From CITU it was pointed out that the figures of increased production are not borne out by facts. There is a circular in the coal industry directing that inflated figures of production be shown. Besides there is growing incidence of lock-out and closures and power cuts. Hence the claim of increased production may not stand the test of truth. That apart, the industrial relation situation is not very good. There is a strike in jute which could have been avoided if the Govt. nationalised the jute industry as is being unanimously demanded by the West Bengal Assembly. At least if the public sector had settled the demands of the workers there would have been pressure on IJMA. Instead of that the public sector is following the IJMA dictat. Then in the

coal industry the situation is being aggravated in such a manner that unless this trend is stopped and reversed, there is likely to be a blow-up very soon. Apart from strengthening of public distribution system the question of nationalisation of wholesale trade of food grains and supervision by popular committees was advocated. It was also pointed out that the question of D.A. for public sector employees should be settled early and the three instalments of D.A. which have become due to the Central Govt. employees should be released forthwith. It was also pointed out that principal reason for increase in prices is increase in indirect taxation, excise duties and deficit financing. If there is some let up in these respects, then only prices could be stabilised to some extent. Hence relief to the common man should be granted in this budget.

It was also pointed out that growing industrial sickness, closure, lock-out, retrenchment and denotification have created a serious situation for the workers. A Convention held on January 20 last has suggested several measures in this regard. Apart from these, it is necessary to black list such of the concerns who have deliberately diverted funds and made the industries sick. Funds of the Public Financial Institutions locked up in these undertakings (Rs. 4000 Crores or more) could be released if the companies or houses are black listed and further loans and licenses are not granted to them. Growing unemployment has become another arena of concern. Proposal of higher technology has to be viewed in the back ground of this. Right to work should be made a justiciable fundamental right and unemployment relief should be introduced so that people are not affected by new technology. Besides it must be seen that the induction of such technology do not stand in the way of our self reliance and R & D efforts.

The investment policy should also be examined. In about 110 companies in the private sector, financial institutions hold more than 25 per cent equity shares. These companies have been left to be managed by those who do not have more than 10 to 15 per cent equity or less than 1 per cent of the assets. Why not the Govt. take over these companies in normal course and run them with co-operation from labour who are ready to do so in terms of equality. The CITU had offered when the question of Convertibility clause was examined by the Committee headed by Mr. Narsimhan. The system of companies being declared as zero tax companies should also be reviewed.

The Finance Minister while concluding, said that nationalisation is not the only panacea against all ills. Here is a different socio-economic structure and the Govt. is trying to tackle the problems as they come up.

AROUND THE STATES

TAMILNADU

Fourth State Conference

The fourth conference of Tamilnadu state CITU was held at Coimbatore from December 28 to 31, 1983. The conference was attended by 400 delegates and observers including 27 women, representing 1.5 lakh workers from different industries in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. The venue of the conference was named "Anjan-Nagooran-Ganasekaran Memorial Hall" in memory of the three martyrs of agricultural workers' movement who lost their lives in police firing on the historic all India general strike on January 19, 1982. The red flag hoisted at the conference was brought from Hosur in memory of Saktivelu, a CITU activist in Asoke Leyland, who was killed by the management gangsters. Three comrades from Asoke Leyland brought the red flag to Coimbatore travelling on bicycle. K. Ramani, President, State CITU hoisted the flag.

Inaugurating the conference B.T. Ranadive, President of CITU, stressed on the tasks of the working class on the national and international situation and explained the approach of CITU on the issues. Among those who greeted the conference were K.T.K. Thangamani, President of Tamilnadu AITUC; C. Kuppuswamy, President of Labour Progressive Federation (DMK); Dr. Sivasami of peasant and Labour Party; G. Veerayyan, General Secretary, Tamilnadu Kishan Sabha; P. Kumaravelu, General Secretary, Agricultural Workers Union; Pappa Umanath, General Secretary, Democratic Women's Association; N. Nanmaran, President of State DYFI; S. Rajan, President of State SFI, etc. V.S. Raiah of Ceylon Federation of Labour greeted the Conference on the second day. The State Committees of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka sent messages of greetings to the conference.

The Delegates session began with a resolution demanding of the State Government to take immediate measures, to help the victims of the recent flood and heavy rains in different parts of the state. It also called upon the CITU unions to contribute and participate in the relief activities. K. Vaithianathan, Secretary submitted the work report which gave details of the struggles conducted by the CITU unions as well as the united struggles launched in the state. In the General Secretary's report, R. Umanath reviewed the struggles and outlined the tasks on the international, national and state issues. The report noted that the membership of the state CITU had increased from 1.2 lakhs to 1.5 lakhs during the last three years. Circulation of the state journal, CITU Seithy was 12,000. After

district level group discussions, 36 delegates including 3 women participated in the discussion on the reports. Addressing the Delegates session, P. Ramamurti, Vice President of CITU underlined the tasks of the working class on the issues of war and peace, unity and integrity of the country, working women, struggles of the peasants and agricultural workers and on united trade union movement. The report was adopted after summing up by R. Umanath. The accounts placed by A.K. Padmanabhan, Treasurer, was also adopted unanimously.

The conference decided to approach other trade unions for a statewide one day strike on the question of pricerise, unemployment relief, implementation of minimum wages, against police atrocities and anti-labour policies of the state Government. It also decided to observe January 19 every year as Martyrs Day in memory of the martyrs of the working people's movement in the state. First June, the International Day of children will be observed as a day against exploitation of child labour. It also decided to create a special fund to help the peasants' movements by collecting Rs. 1 per worker per year and directed the CITU unions to hold demonstrations in support of the agricultural workers during their All India Demands Day on January 20. It also called upon the union to mobilise the workers in maximum for the ensuing March to Parliament programme by the N.C.C.

The conference adopted resolutions on War and Peace, lock outs and closures, anti-labour policies of the Central and State Governments, on demands of working Women, child labour, in solidarity to the jute workers' strike, on retrenchment in EID Parry Sugar Factory, on Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, etc.

The concluding session was addressed by BTR and Jyoti Basu. The conference elected an Executive Committee of 63 members with K. Ramani as President and R. Umanath as the General Secretary.

Mass Rally: Despite the fact that several districts were affected by heavy rains and flood, over two lakh workers joined the rally on December 31. The huge procession started from the race course and culminated at the N.O.C. Park where the rally was held. The entire arena turned red with flags and banners. K. Ramani presided over the rally which was addressed among others by B.T. Ranadive, P. Ramamurti and Jyoti Basu.

Working Women's Conference

The second state conference of working women organised by the coordination committee of working women was held at Coimbatore on December 27. The conference was attended by 126 delegates from all districts of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. Vimala Ranadive, Secretary, A.I.-Co-ordination Committee of Working Women inaugurated the conference. She briefed about the struggles of the working women all over the country and urged upon the delegates

to actively participate in all organisational activities. Pappa Umanath, General Secretary of the State Democratic Women's Association and K. Ramani, President of the State CITU greeted the conference.

While Mythili Sivaraman placed a general report on the problems, demands and tasks of the working women, Saraswathi submitted the work report of the co-ordination committee and the various struggles conducted by it since the first conference. 25 delegates participated in the discussion. The conference passed resolutions on war danger, price rise, employment opportunities for women, against atrocities on women, on the struggles of the plantation workers in Kanyakumari, in Sundaram Spinning Mill at Salem, etc.

The conference elected a coordination committee of 15 members with Mythili Sivaraman as the convenor.

KARNATAKA

Tile Workers on Strike

Under the joint call of CITU and AITUC, 8000 tile workers in Karnataka went on an indefinite strike from December 12. The call for the strike was given demanding revision of wages, introduction of V.D.A., etc. When the Mangalore workers commenced the strike on the day, the Chief Minister's attention was drawn to call a tripartite meeting. As he did not take any action, the workers of both South and North Kannada joined the strike on January 3. The beedi workers of South Kananda went on solidarity strike on January 5 in support of the tile workers. In a statement issued on January 5, C. Nanjundappa, General Secretary of the State CITU extended full support to the striking workers and demanded of the Government for a tripartite meeting. The State Labour Minister thereupon called a meeting on January 17.

Plantation Workers' Struggle

25,000 plantation workers went on various forms of agitations in the districts of Chikmagalur and Hassan from January 9 demanding wage revision and introduction of VDA. The agitation is being conducted by the Joint Action Committee comprising of CITU, AITUC and INTUC. The Labour Commissioner was compelled to convene a tripartite meeting on January 17. The Joint Action Committee has decided to go in for strike actions if the employers refuse to accede to the demands.

CITU Leaders Win Municipal Elections

Umesh Naik, General Council Member of CITU and T.S. Naik, State Committee Member were elected to Dandeli Municipality on December 4. T.S. Mani, Vice-President of the State CITU was also elected to the Kolar Gold Fields Municipality. Apart from this, members of CITU Unions were

elected to the Municipalities of Kundapara and Sullia in Dakshina Kannada, Dandeli in Uttara Kannada, Sidlaghata in Kolar and Kunigal in Tumkur districts.

ANDHRA PRADESH

I.T.C. Workers on Struggle

9,000 workers of I.T.C. Ltd., I.L.T.D. division Guntur are on struggle against threatened closure. On the expiry of the previous agreement in May, 1983, the A.P. Federation of I.L.T.D. company workers submitted a fresh charter of demands. But after only one negotiation in November, the management refused any further meeting and arbitrarily issued notice reducing the wages of the workers with effect from January 1. It has reduced the wages of the male workers from Rs. 14.08 to Rs. 11.35 and of the female workers from Rs. 13.58 to Rs. 10.12. The management has further threatened to close down the depots at Guntur, Ongule, Chikaluripet and Tangutur if the reduced wage are not accepted. The State Labour Ministry has not taken any action to stop the management's move which will throw 5,000 workers out of employment. In February, 1983 the management had closed the Chirala factory and Parchur depot throwing 6,000 workers out of employment. A successful protest day was observed on December 20. The ILTD federation has called upon the workers to intensify the struggle to compel the management to withdraw the retrograde step and accede to their demands.

MAHARASHTRA

Massive Jail Bharo Stir

More than one lakh Workers, Kishans, agricultural workers and other sections of the people courted arrest at different parts of the state during the massive jail bharo agitation on November 22. The programme was organised jointly by CPI(M), CPI and PWP and actively supported by CITU, AITUC and other mass organisations like Kishan Sabha, Agricultural Workers Union, SFI, DYFI, Sharmik Mahila Sangh (AIDWA), etc. The action was launched against the anti-labour and anti-people policies of the Congress(I) Government in pursuance of a 21 point charter of demands relating to the various sections of the working people. The demands included take over of wholesale trade in foodgrains and other essential commodities and distribution of the same to the people at cheap rates; nationalisation of textile industry and reinstatement of the nearly one lakh retrenched workers; repeal of all anti-democratic and anti-trade union legislations; minimum wage of Rs. 15 and Rs. 12 for the agricultural workers on irrigated and dry lands respectively; remunerative prices to the peasants; rehabilitation of the flood affected people; stoppage of atrocities on Dalits, Adivasis and women; implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations; implementa-

tion of the land ceiling Act and distribution of surplus lands to the landless; unemployment allowance to the unemployed; etc.

Intensive campaigns and meetings were conducted jointly by the three left parties and the mass organisations throughout the state for more than one month for the success of the programme. The sweep of the stir practically embraced all the thirty districts of the state. People courted arrest in hundreds and thousands not only in the district head quarters, but also in various taluk head quarters and even in smaller and remote places. The militant participation by a very broad spectrum of people, including workers, peasants, agricultural labour, students, youth, women teachers and middle class employees, demonstrated the growing discontent of the common people with the anti-people policies of the Congress(I) Government. The participation of women, Dalits, Adivasis and other minorities in most of the places was a notable feature.

In Bombay, a huge procession of over five thousands, including more than 500 women marched from Azad Maidan to Mantralaya to court arrest. Even the vast posse of police force proved utterly inadequate for the huge mass. It took more than two and a half hours to arrest the first batch only. Prominent among those arrested were S.Y. Kolhatkar, Ahiliya Rangnekar, Prabhakar Sanzgiri, A.B. Savant, P.R. Krishnan (All CPI-M); B.S. Dhume, Tatra Reddy, Manju Gandhi (all CPI) and Bhai Bhandarkar (PWP); Similarly, several thousands were arrested from each district like Thane, Nasik, Raigad, Pune, Solapur, Kolhapur, Dhule, Jalgaon, in the Marathwada region, Vidarbhar region, etc.

ASSAM

Second State Convention

December 8, 1983 was a memorable day in Assam when the flood gates of united trade union movement were broken open by the surging procession of thousands of workers who converged at Gauhati from all parts of the State to hold the second convention organised by the State Campaign Committee. Emerging from the suffocating inhibitions of the secessionist and chauvinist forces through intense struggle, and having received the impetus from the Second National Convention of August 21, the trade union movement in the state boldly demonstrated its urge for unity in the streets of the state capital when thousands of workers joined the procession leading to the Convention hall. The streets were reddened with flags and banners. They shouted slogans breaking apiece all barriers of race, religion and language to uphold the banner of class unity of the workers and fight against the pro-monopolist, pro-multinational and pro-feudal policies of the Government of India to solve the basic problems of livelihood like price rise, growing unemployment, increasing attacks on democratic and trade union rights, the imperialist conspiracies to divide the

people, etc. So far, the entire state was chained with a permanent Section 144 against the democratic and trade union rights of the workers, although the secessionist forces had a free lance to pierce through the unity and integrity of the people and the country. Permission was not granted even for holding peace rallies on September 1 against the looming danger of a nuclear war created by the American Imperialists. But the mounting pressure of the working people's unity for the first time compelled the authorities to grant permission for the procession and the Convention. Still glowing fresh in memory of the historic strike of January 19, 1982, when braving the barbarous attacks of the secessionist forces, over one lakh workers of Assam struck work, the convention drew over three thousand delegates, surpassing the expectations of the Campaign Committee even. The Convention unanimously resolved to implement the decisions of the Second National Convention and march ahead to mobilise all sections of the workers in all industries and districts in the state to unitedly participate in the programmes.

UTTAR PRADESH

Grim Struggle by J.K. Rayon Workers

Led by J.K. Rayon Workers' Union (CITU), the workers of J.K. Rayon, Kanpur are on a grim struggle against the closure of the plant. The Singhania declared an illegal closure of the plant from May 16, 1983, throwing 2200 workers out of employment. The assurances given by the Chief Minister of U.P. and the Union Commerce Minister not to allow the closure turned out to be false. Even after repeated representations made by the union and CITU to the Union Labour Minister, Commerce Minister and the Industries Minister, they have not intervened in the matter to prevail upon the Singhania to reopen the factory. Both the Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh have also refused to take over the Company.

Addressing a mass gate rally at J.K. Rayon on December 28, Daulat Ram, General Secretary of the U.P. State Committee of CITU, made a scathing attack on the pro-monopolist policy of the Congress(I) Government. He said, while the Government shed crocodile tears for the workers, and while the Commerce Minister and the Labour Minister both demagogically proclaim themselves to be for the labour, they have openly allowed the Singhania to throw the 2200 workers jobless and divert the fund of the Government financial institutions in other pastures for more profits. Before this, they had also closed down the J.K. Electronics and J.K. Manufacturers (Kailash Mills). They had also illegally laid off the workers of J.K. Sato. The Government and the Singhania had combined together in their profit-hunting spree by taking the jobs of more than 6000 workers and making their thirty thousand family members destitute. In a similar fashion the Government served the Singhania at J.K. Synthetics, Kota also. He appealed to all sections of the workers to

further consolidate their unity and build up protracted and determined struggle against the Singhania and the monopolist-subservient policy of the Government.

The union chalked out a programme of mass "padayatra" and demonstrations from January 9 to 11 throughout the industrial belt of Kanpur to mobilise all sections of workers to raise the demand for take over and nationalisation of all closed factories.

Sugar Mill Workers on Struggle

Led by Azad Hind Karamchari Sangh (CITU), the workers of Vishalpur Sugar Mills have launched struggles in pursuance of their 15-point charter of demands. The management of the mill has rejected any settlement of the demands and on the contrary has unleashed a reign of terror on the workers. Charge sheets, suspensions and dismissals have become a daily occurrence. It has even straightway refused to attend conciliation meetings called by the labour department at Bereili. But the labour department has taken no steps to compel the management for a negotiated settlement. The workers have started hunger strike at the gate from January 15.

Willard Employees on Struggle

Led by CITU, the workers of Willard (India) Ltd., of the Sikandrabad industrial area, Bulandshar, U.P. are on struggle in pursuance of their 23-point charter of demands. The demands include wage revision and classification of workers as per the recommendations of the Engineering Wage Committee; D.A. and V.D.A.; incentive production award; medical facilities; E.S.I. benefits; welfare schemes, promotional avenues; providing union office; etc.

Despite several representations the management refused to come down for negotiations with the union. In a massive gate meeting held on December 28, the union has chalked out plans of action programmes to pressurise the management for negotiated settlement.

Saharanpur District Campaign Committee

A meeting of the representatives of CITU, AITUC, BMS and other trade unions of the railwaymen, municipal workers etc. was held at Saharanpur on January 19 to observe the anniversary of the all India industrial strike. Accepting the proposal of Tilak Raj Bhatia, President of the District CITU, the meeting decided to form a District Campaign Committee of trade unions to jointly implement the programmes of the N.C.C. A Convention will be held at Saharanpur on February 26, for this purpose. The meeting adopted a resolution demanding take over of the Ikbalpur Sugar Mill and immediate payment of all arrear wages and other dues to the workers which amounted to about Rs. 65 lakhs.

District Conference of CITU

A meeting of the CITU unions was held at Saharanpur on January 20, under the presidentship of Tilak Raj Bhatia. The meeting decided to convene the District Conference of CITU in the last week of February. The meeting also decided to send a delegation to the District Magistrate demanding take over of the Ikbalpur Sugar Mill and payment of all arrears to the workers. Apart from this, the delegation will also press forth the problems of the brick kiln workers due to the refusal of the owners to implement the labour laws.

BIHAR

Bharat Wagon Workers on Struggle

Organised under CITU, the workers of Bharat Wagons, a Government of India undertaking, are on struggle at the Muzaffarpur and Bela units in pursuance of their 36-point charter of demands. Following a rabid anti-labour policy the management flouted the prevalent chain system of appointment of apprentices to single out the Secretary and the Joint Secretary of the Apprentice Sangharsh Samity and kept them out of regular employment. They have further refused to regularise hundreds of casual workers and engaged contract labour to do the regular jobs. The management has also been openly indulging in corrupt practices. Factory machineries and equipments in good and running conditions are being sold out in auction as scraps and old junks. The mass of workers including the Security Guards are being denied increments while the high officials are being allowed regular increments in their salaries. On protests voiced by the workers, the management has started threatening them with the hirelings with the cooperation of a stooge union.

Under such circumstances, the Bharat Wagon Kamgarh Union (CITU), the Apprentice Sangharsh Samity and the Casual Workers' Sangharsh Samity have formed a Joint Action Committee to wage an united struggle. On December 16 a mass hunger strike was observed before the office of the Chairman cum Managing Director at Patna. At Muzaffarpur, a week's dharna was staged from December 27, followed by demonstrations after each shift. From January 2, the workers have started relay hunger strikes in both the units. A mass gate rally was held on January 2, at Muzaffarpur, which was addressed among others by the President of the Joint Action Committee, Nand Kishore Shukla; its Secretary, S.P. Singh; Jogeshwar Gope, the State CITU President; Kapildeo Singh of the N.G.O.; Ram Pukari of the Working Women's Coordination Committee; Sagar Dasgupta of Bank Employees; Ram Kumar Sahni of Kishan Khet Mazdoor, etc. The speakers urged upon the workers to step up their struggles and extended full support to their demands.

Colliery Teachers' Convention

An all India Convention of Colliery Teachers' morcha was held at Dhanbad on December 24. The Convention was attended by 407 delegates including 12 women from the different collieries under CIL, i.e., from ECL, WCL, CCL and BCCL. The teachers in the various collieries under CIL have been agitating for long with their various demands like permanency in job, revision of wages, educational facilities for their children, etc. The Convention was the first step to organise the colliery teachers on an all India basis and make movements with the demands. A report in this respect was placed by P.N. Thakur. Addressing the convention, M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU made a scathing criticism of the CIL's anti-labour policies and urged upon the delegates to build up united struggles in pursuance of their demands. Among others who spoke were Sunil Basu Roy, General Secretary of All India Coal Workers' Federation; Santosh Dutta, Secretary of Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India; S.K. Bakshi, General Secretary of Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union; Chandī Prasad, General Secretary of Bihar State CITU; Ramdeo Singh (AITUC); Anand Mohan Prasad (HMS) and leaders of Dhanbad District Coordination Committee, Primary Teachers Association, Bharat Coking Coal Staff Coordination Committee, etc.

The Convention decided to observe Demands Day on February 6, demonstration before the Chairman, CIL on February 27, dharna in front of the Head Offices of all the Companies of CIL in March and hold demonstration in front of the Head Office of CIL.

Iron Mine Workers Prepare for Struggle

Organised under the United Mineral Workers' Union (CITU), the workers of the iron ore mines in Bara Jamda and Karampada in Singhbhum district are preparing for struggle against mass retrenchments. In the Bara Jamda mining belt the management of Bijoy Iron Ore Mines retrenched the workers on December 15. Similarly, in the Karampada Mining belt the management of Saha Brothers has retrenched 250 workers out of 500. Arrears of wages accruing from leave & increased minimum wages have also not been paid for several years. In two mass meetings held on December 22 and 23, the union called upon the workers to prepare for united struggle for reinstatement of all retrenched workers. The meetings also adopted resolutions demanding take over of the wholesale trade in foodgrains and other essential commodities and distribution of the same to the people at cheap rates; ban on retrenchment and closure of mines; unemployment allowance to the unemployed; nationalisation of the private iron ore mines; remunerative prices to peasants, payment of minimum wages, etc.

RAJASTHAN

J.K. Managements' Repression Continues

The repression by the managements of the J.K.

group of Companies took a barbarous turn when the management personnel themselves beat up one worker, viz, Om Prakash of J.K. Tyre Cord, Kota on December 12 without any rhyme or reason. The Works Manager thereafter dragged the worker in his room, called in the police and forcibly got his resignation letter. The incident immediately sparked off agitation and all the workers came out in protest and took out a massive procession. A gate meeting was held after which the workers started daily dharnas. The management was compelled to negotiate on December 14 and asked for four days time. But after four days the management, instead of settlement went on further confrontation with the workers and even withheld the attendance register from the workers. On January 3, the workers held another massive gate meeting and decided to intensify the struggle against the managements barbarous repression.

Earlier on November 26, Gopal Sharma, Treasurer of J.K. Synthetics Mazdoor Union and leader of the Kachchi Basti Federation was barbarously beaten up by the D.S.P., when he went to the police station to submit a report on the gangster attacks on the workers at the behest of the management. Gopal Sharma was taken out on the street and beaten again. The police thereafter issued a cooked up statement to the press that Gopal Sharma was arrested because of his murderous activities and was caught with an open sword with blood stained hands.

A joint meeting organised by CPI (M), Janta Party, D.S.P., along with CITU and other trade unions demanded action against the guilty police officers and called upon the workers to fight against the barbarous repression unitedly. Later a delegation met the District Magistrate and the Police Commissioner and submitted a memorandum demanding immediate suspension of the D.S.P.

ORISSA

Steel Contractor Workers' Strike

Led by the Steel Employees Trade Union (CITU), 5000 contractor workers of Rourkela Steel Plant went on one days token strike on January 4 demanding to rescind an anti-worker agreement arrived at by the management with its patronised union in the labour department. The union had been demanding since long regularisation of the contractor workers engaged in permanent and perennial nature of jobs, equal wages to all workers doing the same or similar type of work, free medical treatment in company's hospital, maintenance of P.F. account for the contractor workers and provision of P.F. Loans, etc. But the management helped by the labour department, arrived at the black agreement with its patronised minority union. The workers started agitations immediately. They held a massive demonstration before the Administrative Office of RSP on December 14. Demonstrations were staged before the Deputy Labour Commissioner also. A massive

Convention was held at Rourkela on December 18 to mobilise the workers to participate in action programmes. But despite all assurances given by the Dy. Labour Commissioner no step was taken to rescind the black agreement. After the successful one day strike on January 4, the union has called upon the workers to prepare for indefinite strike till the agreement is revoked.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

CID Interference in CITU

The interference of the Congress (I) Government into the activities of CITU, SFI and CPI (M) was revealed when the C.I.D. in Himachal Pradesh picked up Tara Chand, the State Committee member of CITU and brought him to Simla for interrogation even without any alleged charge. During interrogation he was mainly asked to divulge the financial resources of CPI (M), regarding its membership, the names of the activists and of the mass organisations. He was questioned about the financing of CITU, SFI, etc. During the interrogation, the CID made a fantastic allegation that the CPI (M) is making a monthly payment of Rs. 12,000 to the SFI and demanded the accounts of the same. It has also been revealed that the CID also tried to see the party accounts in the bank. The entire episode was in connection with the so-called spying activities in the Himachal Pradesh University fictitiously built up by the Himachal Pradesh Government.

The Secretariat of the state CITU in its meeting held on January 10, condemned the Government for its naked attack on the democratic rights of the political parties and its nefarious attempt to malign the CPI(M) and its mass organisations. Haunted by its growing alienation from the people because of its pro-monopolist policies, the Congress(I) Government had again exposed its authoritarian character to contain the growing influence of CPI(M) and its mass organisations. The Secretariat questioned the authority of the Government to indulge in such CID interrogations while professing for democracy. The CITU demanded a white paper from the Government on the spying story floated by it, or else it would build up mass actions in cooperation with other democratic forces demanding resignation of the Government.

The meeting also adopted a resolution supporting the month long strike of Tej shraw workers (Kala Amb-Sirmour) and demanded of the Government to intervene forthwith to settle the legitimate demands of the workers.

HARYANA

Struggle of Hissar Workers Continues

The grim struggle of the 5000 workers of the Hissar textile mills of D.C.M. which commenced from 1981, still continues. After the joint charter of

demands submitted by CITU and other unions was rejected by the management, the workers went on an indefinite strike from May 21, 1981. After 108 days of successful strike, the management came down to sign a tripartite agreement in presence of the Labour Minister of Haryana on September 3, 1981. The management thereafter totally violated the agreement and chargesheeted and dismissed 150 workers. The labour department practically refused to intervene. Ultimately it illegally locked out the factory on March 30, 1983. It however reopened the factory suddenly without any prior notice knowing fully well that a large number of workers had gone back to their villages during the lock out in search of other means of livelihood. It refused to take back a large number of workers and then retrenched more than 1500 hundreds of them. It also deliberately kept 40 per cent of the plant idle. By November, 1983, the management laid off a large number of workers, retrenched about 1800 and kept 80 per cent of the plant idle. All the time and the labour department refused to intervene, compelling the workers to launch an indefinite strike again from November 16.

The undaunted workers have formed a joint action committee of all the unions and are carrying forward the struggle demanding take over and nationalisation of the mill. Representations made to the Union Commerce Minister and Labour Minister in this respect have not been taken any cognisance of as yet.

Struggle by Haryana Polysteel Workers

Trouble has started brewing in Haryana Concast Ltd. also due to the refusal of the management to implement the agreement arrived at with the Haryana Polysteel Workers Union (CITU). An agreement was arrived at by the management on October 20, 1983 to regularise the daily wage workers and pay them the increased wages. This agreement was made based on an earlier agreement signed as back as in December, 1977. But the Managing Director raised a dispute over the interpretation of the agreement. Ultimately, the Chairman of the Company arrived at the final agreement on October 20, 1983 which settled the point of dispute. But the management still refused to implement the agreement without any valid reason. All representations made to the labour department have turned into deaf ears. The workers are now preparing for action programmes for implementation of the agreement.

ANDAMAN & NICOBAR

CITU State Committee Formed

The Andaman and Nicobar CITU State Organising Committee was formed in a Conference of various unions at Port Blair on December 6. The Conference was presided over by M.K.T. Raja, General Secretary of Hinterland Seamen's Union. A large number of workers, kishans, students and youth attended the inaugural session. Ninety six

SWFI Assails Management for Gangster Attack

THE gangsters of a minority HMS union patronised by the management, killed one CITU activist, Zuber, inside the plant of RSP at Rourkela on January 5. In a statement issued to the press on January 11, Jiban Roy, General Secretary of the Steel Workers' Federation of India squarely blamed the RSP management for the dastardly killing. He said that such a killing inside the plant could not have been possible without the direct involvement of the management. Only two months back in another ghastly assault the five year old son of Ananta Rout, the State Committee member of CITU was also killed. He said that the motive of the management was clear when the majority of the workers, organised under the CITU rejected the black agreement on the contract workers arrived at with the minority HMS union and went on a successful strike on January 4. He warned the management that CITU

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delegates from North, South and Middle Andamans as well as from Nicobar group of islands representing twelve unions and a number of fraternal unions participated in the Conference. After hoisting of the CITU flag, Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary of CITU inaugurated the Conference. He explained the basic difference of CITU as with other trade unions, aiming to end capitalism and usher in a socialist state where there will be no exploitation of man by man. He urged upon the delegates to carry forward the basic task of uniting the entire working class and the toiling people for a struggle against the exploiting class to achieve the objective. He pointed to the American inspired danger of nuclear war and the pro-monopolist, pro-multi-national and pro-feudal policies of the Government India resulting in growing unemployment, rising prices and increasing attacks on the working people in the form of lockouts and closures and called upon to wage militant and united struggles for an alternative change in the policies of the Government. He explained the programmes of CITU and the National Campaign Committee against lockouts and closures and urged for successful implementation of the same. Nepal Dev Bhattacharya, M.P., General Secretary of SFI also addressed the Conference.

The Conference adopted resolutions against war and for peace, against lockouts and closures demanding nationalisation of the closed and sick units, supply of essential commodities at cheap prices, on grant of bonus to the Government employees of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, abolition of Contract system, etc.

The Conference elected a 35 number Committee with N. Vasudevan as President and B. Chandrachoodan as the General Secretary.

had come to stay in RSP and no heinous repression will be able to suppress it. SWFI has given a call to all the affiliated unions to observe January 31 as the Rourkela Day protesting against the gangster attacks on the CITU activists.

In another statement SWFI assailed the management of SAIL for restricting the productions. The statement said that the SAIL plants have produced 5.41 million tonnes of Ingot Steel and 4.58 million tonnes of saleable steel upto December of the 1983-84 financial year against the annual capacity of 9.4 million tonnes and 7.2 million tonnes and against 6.12 million tonnes and 5.14 million tonnes produced respectively during the corresponding period last year. Taking opportunity of the critical market position the management has started curtailing the man powers. TISCO is contemplating to declare 10,000 workers as surplus. The working Committee of SWFI also discussed the situation in its meeting held at Durgapur on December 25 and 26 with respect to the crisis in the steel industry in all the capitalist countries vis-a-vis in India. Steel productions have also been curtailed in USA, UK, W. Germany, Japan, etc and workers are being retrenched in thousands. The situation in India has been further aggravated by the liberal import policy of the Government. The Working Committee also noted with serious concern the non-implementation of the various items of the agreement even after six months of its signing. The meeting demanded withdrawal of all restrictions on production; exploration of domestic market for steel; stoppage of all imports and withdrawal of the OGL facilities.

CISF Shoots Down Coal Workers

THE barbarism resorted to by the Central Industrial Security Forces took a serious turn when they shot dead Subodh Ghosh and Haradhan Mandal, the two coal workers at Damagoria Collieries of the BCCL under the Chunch Victoria area recently. The workers reacted immediately and launched agitations in the entire belt. A delegation led by Haradhan Roy, General Secretary of the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India, Sunil Basu Roy, General Secretary of the All India Coal Workers' Federation, Bampada Mukherjee, Vice President of CMSI and Santosh Dutta, Secretary of CMSI met the Chairman cum Managing Director of ECL on January 9 and submitted a memorandum demanding withdrawal of the CISF. The workers in all the coal mines staged a mass rally at Sanctoria on January 27 to ventilate their demand. The rally decided to intensify the action programme demanding withdrawal of the CISF and settlement of the other issue of their 14-point charter of demands.

26 January 1984

Consolidate National Integration and Unity

On this day we renew the pledge we took to build a prosperous India. Our pledge was to ensure economic and social justice to our people, guarantee freedom of thought and expression and equality of status.

Fulfillment of these cherished goals and aspirations demands our continuous effort.

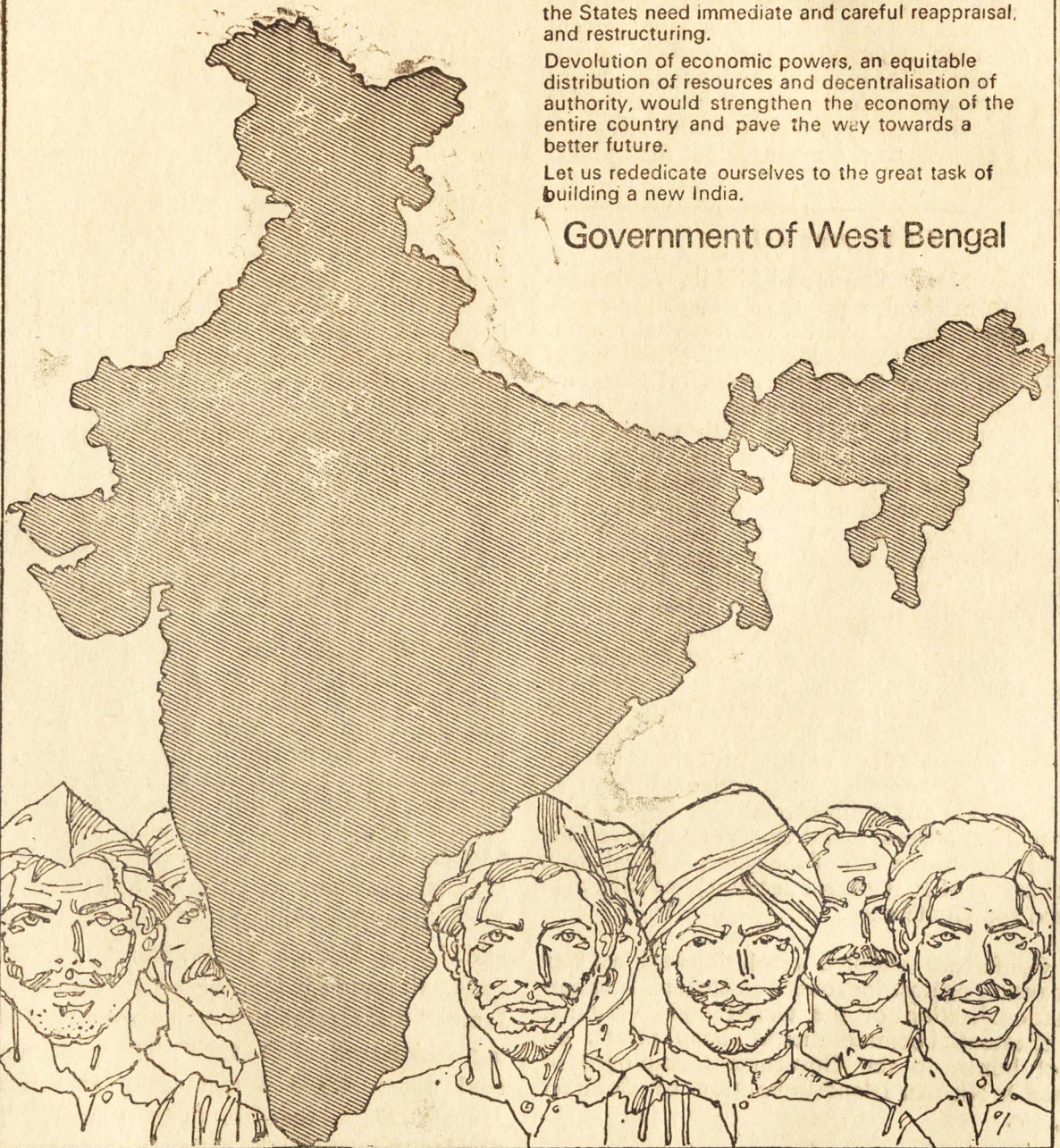
Over-centralisation has given rise to regional imbalances and growth of political authoritarianism in the country. Disparity between regions in the economic sphere has provided a fillip to the separatist, parochial and other reactionary forces. As a result, national unity and integration are gravely endangered.

Along with political and legislative issues, economic and financial relations between the Centre and the States need immediate and careful reappraisal, and restructuring.

Devolution of economic powers, an equitable distribution of resources and decentralisation of authority, would strengthen the economy of the entire country and pave the way towards a better future.

Let us rededicate ourselves to the great task of building a new India.

Government of West Bengal



BEEVAS/ICA/842A

Struggle of the Station Masters

THE struggle of the Station Masters appears to be taking a serious turn. On the notice of the strike given by the Southern Zonal unit of the Station Masters Association, the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) intervened and the strike which was to start on December 11 has been deferred. But from a leaflet issued by the Madurai Divisional Committee of Dakshin Railway Employees Union and others it appears that the negotiation is not fruitful and the strike is going to start from January 20. Jafar Sharif, the Minister of State for Railways on whose assurance the indefinite hunger strike of the Station Masters was withdrawn has not replied to the letter written by Samar Mukherjee, M.P., General Secretary, CITU. In the meanwhile information is received that the South Central railway unit of the SM's Association has also decided to start the agitation. Samar Mukherjee has once again drawn the attention of Jafar Sharif on this question asking him to intervene.

N.C.C.R. formed in Western Railway

In a meeting held on January 15 at Ahmedabad in which M.L. Banerjee, General Secretary Traction Workers Federation was the chief spokesman, the NCCR zonal unit of NCCR was formed with

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January 16 in token of support. In Madhya Pradesh the strike is total. In W. Bengal, the major jute producing centre, the industry is totally paralysed. Unable to cause any so-called union rivalry, as all the unions have doggedly united, the managements are adopting indirect and illegal methods to frustrate the strike by surreptitiously trying to take out the goods from the godowns and sell them at black market price from secret centres. But the vigilant workers supported by the people have caught them red handed and frustrated their black acts.

All round support

The strike has drawn all round support from various mass organisations all over the country. CITU has issued a statement congratulating the workers. B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU has sent a telegram greeting the workers. National Campaign Committee in the Convention on January 20 has adopted a resolution urging upon the working class to demonstrate their solidarity. The 15 opposition parties which met at Calcutta from Jan. 13 to 16 extended full support to the strike, which commenced during their meeting. Large number of telegrams and resolutions are being sent to the Prime Minister, Labour Minister and the Commerce Minister demanding to nationalise the industry and settle the worker's demands.

Gangaram Mistry as the Convenor. It may be noted that during the historic May '74 strike of railway, zonal NCCRS could not be formed in this railway. Formation of NCCR for a campaign on basic demands of railwaymen therefore has generated much enthusiasm among the railway workers.

In Northern Railway too, which was another railway in which zonal NCCRS could not be formed in 1974, efforts are being made for formation of zonal NCCR. In a meeting held on January 22, it has been decided that a Convention will be held in March for formation of the zonal NCCR.

Dharna in NE Rly

About 125 loco running staff from all sheds of NE Rly staged a Dharna before the General Manager's Office at Gorakhpur from 10 A.M. on January 5. At the invitation of the General Manager a delegation consisting of B.D. Kumar, D.N. Paul, Narendra Prasad, A.A. Khan, Sheo Parsi and Prasad Rai met him and presented a 19 point charter of demands. After some discussions on these demands the General Manager assured that he would consider the demands sympathetically. Ved Prakash Sinha, Gorakh Nath Sharma, K. Hassan of fraternal organisations addressed the Dharna. All the leaders of LRSA named above as well as Nanhe Lal Viswakarma, J.K. Saksena and S.P. Mishra addressed the workers in the Dharna and explained the substance of the talks with the General Manager. The Dharna ended at 5 P.M. on that day.

Railwaymen for Communal Harmony in Punjab

The urge for unity of working class for peace and communal harmony in Punjab is growing apace and breaking through all organisational barriers and the railwaymen are in the forefront of this struggle. At the call of fourteen railway organisations who normally do not come on a single platform (NRMU, URMU, URKU, LRSA, SMA, AIREC, AIGC, AICWSC, AISCTSA, Electric Staff Association, LMSA, IRSOTSA, NRWU and IRTCSA) united together and gave a call for a Peace March. CITU, AITUC and HMS joined and a mighty force of ten thousand workers started a silent march from Railway Workshop at Amritsar and ended at Town Ground passing through railway station, Bhandari Bridge and Hall Bazar. Harcharan Singh (LRSA) was the Convenor on behalf of the 14 railway organisations.

The rally was addressed by Harcharan Singh (Convenor), Nazar Singh, Tarsem Lal, Raj Paul (NRMU), Sudarshan Mehta (NRWU), Joginder Singh (LRSA), I.D. Garewal (AICWSC), Gurdev



Working class unitedly advocating peace in Punjab

Singh, Atter Singh (AIREC), Mangal Ram Pasla, Pandit Kishori Lal (CITU) Sat Pal Dang (AITUC) and Udhey Chand Trishna (HMS). The speakers urged for maintenance of peace and communal harmony so that a united working class could struggle against the pro-monopoly pro-multinational and pro-landlord policies of the Govt. and advance the cause of the working people of the country. The speakers also urged upon the Akali Party to dissociate themselves from the extremists who are contributing to the imperialists conspiracy to destabilise our country.

School for Trade Union Activists

A two-day school for trade union workers of Rajasthan was held at Bharatpur on December 28 and 29. 120 workers attended the school. On the first day Samar Mukherjee M.P., General Secretary, CITU took the class on the basic questions of philosophy, economy, and development of society. In the evening he addressed a largely attended mass meeting explaining the present situation of the country exhorting the workers to build up a powerful movement against the anti-people, anti-labour policies of the Congress(I) Government.

The class on the Second day was taken by Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary, CITU. He explained the development of the trade union move-

ment, the first international and the history of trade union movement in India (Short Course) and mainly devoted on the tasks in trade Union movement and its functioning.

The CIMCO workers union made the arrangements for holding the school and the workers of Kisan Sabha in the area helped in organising the classes which were attended by the leaders of the Rajasthan State Committee of CITU.

On January 1st another class was arranged at Hisar, Haryana in which more than sixty workers attended. Nrisingha Chakrabarty took the class on development of society and the trade union movement of our country explaining the slogans on which CITU was formed and developments that have taken place since then. He explained the tasks before the trade union movement, of strengthening united struggle while keeping up independent activities.

Erratum

In the Presidential Speech published in the January issue on page 10, 2nd column, 5th para, 2nd line, — “the loss due to production” has been wrongly printed as 55 per cent. Please read it as 25 per cent.

Countrywide Observance of Peace Week

IN pursuance of the decisions of the Jamshedpur meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, the State Committees and the affiliated unions organised peace week in the country from December 20 to 28. Processions, rallies, demonstrations and meetings were held in different states and industrial centres which were joined by various other trade unions also. The week commenced at W. Bengal, holding massive rallies on December 20 and culminated at Kerala on December 28 with identical demonstrations against the nuclear madventures by the U.S. imperialists.

A two lakh strong rally was held at Saheed Minar, Calcutta on December 20. From the morning itself, streams of processions started pouring in from the adjoining districts of Howrah, 24-Parganas, Hooghly, Burdwan, etc. and even from distant places like Midnapur and Haldia and by the noon the entire metropolis was turned into a city of processions and red banners — all marching towards the Saheed Minar. These were people's marches, combining the workers, peasants, agricultural labour, women, students, teachers, youth, doctors, lawyers, film and stage artists, litterateurs and others. The common slogan raised was — "We want peace and not war", pinpointing to the common enemy of mankind — the hated Reagan, the President of America, the gendarme of world imperialism. The combination of the diverse sections of people, the high pitched slogans and their expression of anger against the U.S. imperialists were indeed an unique demonstration of the conviction of the working class and the people of W. Bengal to smash all bourgeois-concocted theories of two super-powers and identify the real enemy, and their determination to protect the fruits of socialism and throw the Reaganomaniacs into the dust heap of history.

The massive rally was presided over by Benoy Chowdhury, Minister of Land and Land Reforms of the left front Government and addressed by Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of W. Bengal and Vice-President of CITU and Saroj Mukherjee, the State Secretary of CPI(M). Benoy Chowdhury warned the people against the so called two super power theory equating Soviet Union with the USA. He said it is not a conflict between USA and the Soviet Union. But it is a question related to the two systems — capitalism and socialism. Imperialism, headed by USA is out to devastate the socialist system for world domination. The working class therefore is bestowed with the historic responsibility to project itself as the greatest anti-war force and relentlessly struggle for peace to safeguard and consolidate socialism. Saroj Mukherjee castigated the USA for sabotaging the Geneva talks by deploying the nuclear missiles in Western Europe. He denounced Reagan's statement that it was necessary to fire nuclear missiles in the Soviet territory in order to bring back USSR to the Geneva talks and called upon the people to intensify the mass struggles to

demand of the Reagan administration to withdraw the missiles and resume the Geneva talks.

Jyoti Basu made a scathing attack on the policy of Indira Gandhi. He said, she is certainly crying hoarse for peace. But she will not raise her accusing finger towards the U.S. imperialists, even though the Reagan administration has brought the danger of war at the door steps of India by heavily arming the Pakistan military ruler and making a naval base at Trincomalee, Ceylon. During the recent Commonwealth meeting also she expressed her concern over the danger of war by mentioning about the two super powers. Neutrality does not mean that one should not identify the actual enemy — India's enemy and the enemy of mankind — the U.S. imperialists. As a matter of fact, she cannot do that, because she is under the dictating terms of the IMF and she will again go in for IMF in future also. He said it is the task of the working class to identify the enemy. All sections of the working people have to come forward and wage consistent struggles for peace to merge with the mainstream of the international struggle of the working class and all sections of the toiling people for peace which only can put the Reagans and the Thatchers into straight jackets.

At Kerala similarly, Cochin was the scene of huge masses rallying for peace. The rally was organised by the left democratic front and led by its leaders like E.K. Nayanar, P.K. Vasudevan Nair, Kadanappally Ramachandran along with most of the state secretariat members of CPI(M) and CITU and E. Balanandan, Polit Bureau member of CPI(M) and Treasurer of CITU. People joined the force with placards and banners from Trichur, Aleppey, Kottiyam, Indukki and other districts. They carried with them blue flags inscribed with the white dove, the symbol of peace. Through their slogans they exposed the war machinations of the U.S. imperialists and their NATO allies. They condemned the deployment of the Cruise and Pershing missiles and demanded their withdrawal to save the world from a thermo-nuclear holocaust.

Addressing the rally, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, the Gen. Secretary of CPI(M) elaborated about the danger of war escalated due to the deployments of the missiles by USA and explained about the consistent efforts taken by the Soviet Union to avert the holocaust. He severely criticised the so-called anti-imperialist stance of Indira Gandhi when she was constantly referring to the two super powers, equating the jingoist U.S. imperialists with the Soviet Union which declared that it will not be the first to strike the nuclear weapons. He pointed out that her administration did not allow the CPI(M) to hold protest demonstrations before the US embassy at New Delhi when the imperialists invaded the tiny Grenada. He called upon the people to step up the struggles and demand of the Government of India to take a firm stand to oppose the US imperialists

under the present international context and stand solidly by the Soviet Union which stands as a bulwark of peace to safeguard humanity from extinction. Among others who spoke were Mir Qasim (DSP), E.K. Nayanar (CPI-M), P.K. Vasudevan Nair (CPI), P.C. Chacko (Congress-S), Syed Ummar Baffakki Thangal (AIML), Thampan Thomas (Janata), Baby John (RSP), etc.

At Orissa, peace rallies were held at different places jointly organised by CPI(M) and CITU, SFI, DYFI, Kishan Sabha, Coordination Committee of Workers and Employees, etc. At Bhubaneswar a big procession was taken out which culminated at Raj Mahal Chowk where the rally was held under the presidentship of Nabakishore Mohanty of CITU. Among these who addressed were Sivaji Patnaik, President of the State CITU, Dushmantha Das of the Co-ordination Committee, Sisir Hui of SFI, Bidwan Das of DYFI, etc. At Cuttack the rally was jointly organised by CITU, AITUC, and the Cuttack City Co-ordination Committee. At Berhampur the rally at Giri Market Chowk was preceded by a procession of workers, peasants, youth and students and presided over by Kalu Panda of CPI(M).

At Punjab the week was observed on different days at various places. Industrial workers, railway workers, salaried employees, students, youth and kishans held meetings and rallies at different places and the industrial centres.

At Delhi a torchlight procession was taken out by the State Committee of CPI(M) and CITU on December 28 and a demonstration was held before the US embassy.

A similar torch light procession was taken out at Patna on December 23, culminating in a rally at the road junction near the railway station. Rallies were also held at Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Muzaffarpur, Gaya, Bhagalpur and even in small towns of Bihar.

Karnataka observed the day on December 27 at Bangalore with a 2000 strong rally and bicycle procession and distribution of leaflets against the war policy of US imperialism. Meetings were held in other parts of the state also.

A big convention was held at Agartala in Tripura which was attended by large sections of workers and women despite cyclonic weather. The Convention was addressed among others by Baidyanath Majumdar, President and the State Labour Minister, Biren Dutta, General Secretary of the State CITU.

Meetings and rallies were held at Indore by the district CITU and at Bhillai by Hindustan Steel Employees' Union in Madhya Pradesh, by the Meerut District Committee of CITU, in U.P., by the Bharatpur District CITU at Rajasthan and in other places also.

Opposition Parties Appeal for Mass Actions

Twelve opposition parties met at New Delhi on January 27 to concretise the plan of mass actions against the Government policies as discussed in the Calcutta meeting of 13th-15th January. The demands raised included measures to control price rise and adequate supply of essential commodities at reasonable prices through a comprehensive network of the public distribution system; remunerative prices to the peasants' produce; restructuring of economic policies for production of mass consumption goods and expansion of employment opportunities; revival of food-for-work programme; right to work to be incorporated in Constitutions; land reforms and assent to the States, Land Reform Bills; minimum wages to the farm workers; acceptance of the demands raised by the National Campaign Committee, reversal of the anti-labour policies, scrapping of NSA, ESMA, steps against closures and lockouts; economic self-reliance, reversal of policy to encourage the big monopoly houses and the multinationals; steps against atrocities on Scheduled Castes, Tribes, religious minorities, women and other weaker sections of the society, etc.

The meeting chalked out the following programmes:

- (1) Observe Demands Day on February 13 by holding mass demonstrations, rallies, etc. all over the country.
- (2) Hold statewise Conventions in the last week of February.
- (3) A National Convention at Delhi in the last week of March to chalk out future course of actions.

The meeting appealed to all democratic parties, mass organisations and individuals to participate in the programmes and raise their voice in support of the demands.

The meeting was attended by Makhan Paul, Pratul Chaudhury and Souren Bhattacharya of R.S.P.; Chitta Basu and D.D. Shastri of Forward Block; Satyanaraya Reddy of Telugu Desam; George Fernandez, Dr. Kaldate and Sahabuddin of Janata Party; Indradeep Sinha and M. Farooqui of the CPI; Syed Ahmed Hashmi and Mahendra Kumar Saini of Janwadi Party; M.M. Mehta of the Rashtriya Congress; C.T. Dhandhapani of the DMK; Brij Mohan of Congress(J); Abdul Rashid Kabuli of the National Conference; Ambika Soni and K.P. Unnikrishnan of the Congress(S) and H.S. Surjeet and E.M.S. Namboodiripad of the CPI(M).

(from page 4)

3. To popularise the March to Parliament to be organised by the National Campaign Committee in April next so that maximum number of workers will be mobilised to highlight these issues alongwith other pressing demands of the workers.

4. To organise satyagraha/picketing before Parliament—courting arrest by the leaders of the National Campaign Committee alongwith a large number of workers to further focus the attention of the Government of India on these issues. Demonstrations will be organised on the same day in all the State capitals to express solidarity. The exact date of the programme will be announced later by the NCC.

The struggle for a complete reversal of the anti-working class, anti-people policies of the Government is going to be longdrawn battle and unless all sections of the working class and the people are united to resist these policies, the Govt. of India is not likely to give them up. Therefore, the Convention calls upon the working class and all sections of toiling masses to prepare for a sustained and concerted struggle against these policies.

The Convention is confident that the working class of India will rally behind the clarion call given by the National Campaign Committee so that the menace of closure, lock-out, retrenchment, lay-off and denotification is resolutely fought through united struggle of the entire working class and the toiling people.

Resolution on Jute Workers' Strike

This All India Convention called by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions on the issues of closures, lock-outs, lay-offs, retrenchment, etc. notes that one of the worst victims of capitalist attacks, viz. the 2¼ lakhs of workers in the Jute industry, have gone on an indefinite general strike from January 16th, 1984.

This strike has been forced on the workers by the utterly reactionary, anti-labour and anti-national policies of the jute mill owners which they have been pursuing over the past several years. Closures and lock-outs reached a peak in 1983, when no less than 21 mills were closed at one time on one plea or another. Thousands of workers have been laid-off without compensation. The managements have systematically been increasing the work-loads arbitrarily. The total work-force in the industry has been reduced from 3 lakhs in 1947 to a little more than 2 lakhs.

Wages in the jute industry have not been revised since 1979 and are lagging far behind those in other comparable major industries. The West Bengal Labour Minister's awards of 1979 in respect of introduction of scales and grades, and restoration of the pre-emergency work-loads, have been blantly

defied by the employers. It is astonishing that even the 6 nationalised mills under the NJMC are following in the footsteps of the IJMA. As a matter of fact, the Central Government itself has consistently been appeasing and encouraging the millowners in their profiteering activities and has given them substantial loans, export subsidies, etc. & has failed to protect the interests of either the workers or the raw jute cultivators.

This Convention is of the view that without total nationalisation, under a democratic system of management & popular supervision, of not only the jute mills, but also the raw jute trade and export trade in jute goods, there can be no salvation for this industry and no fair deal for the workers and cultivators. Nationalisation is also necessary to plug the huge drainage of funds caused by under-invoicing of exports, speculation and other mal-practices, diversion of profits to other investments, etc.

This Convention, therefore, supports the demand of the jute workers for total nationalisation. It also supports their demands for upward wage revision, against the threats of further mass retrenchment and of linking the workers total pay packet to productivity.

The present strike, which has been called, jointly by 14 trade unions is 100 per cent complete and peaceful. It has affected not only the mills in West Bengal but also in Madhya Pradesh, U.P., Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh. The Convention condemns the action of the U.P. Government in banning the strike by means of an ordinance, and demands its withdrawal.

The Convention demands of the Central Govt. that it should immediately intervene in the dispute and take necessary steps to hold tripartite discussions for an early negotiated settlement of the workers' demands. The Convention assures the striking jute workers of the whole-hearted support of all workers and all unions and federations represented here, and appeals to the entire working class in the country to express its active solidarity with the strike.

Samar Mukherjee for Dhaka

On invitation from the Jatio Shramik League, Dhaka, Samar Mukherjee, M.P., General Secretary of CITU will attend its Sixth Congress to be held at Dhaka on February 17 and 18.

CITU Nomination

CITU has nominated the following comrades in the Industrial Committee on Cotton Textiles:

1. Jamini Saha, M.L.A.,
Working Committee Member, CITU.
2. K. Venugopal
Member, Nilgiri District Committee of CITU

Following the sad demise of P.K. Kurane, K. Venugopal has been nominated in his place.

CITU Condemns Government Measures

NRISINGHA CHAKRABORTY, Secretary Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement on January 21:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions criticises the so-called price-stability measures announced by Smt. Indira Gandhi in her broadcast on January 15th, later on explained by the officials on the next day, as these are hypocritical and would increase unemployment and miseries of the people. To say that she shares the "worry of the people about the price situation" and "is only too conscious of the hardships of families with low or fixed income" is hypocritical when her Govt had been increasing the administered prices of coal, steel, oil and railway freight and fare which contribute to the price-increase of daily necessities. To say further that ban on recruitment has been imposed in order to strengthen fiscal discipline for maintaining price stability is another spurious plea. Such ban would directly increase the work load on the workers and swell the ranks of the unemployed which has already reached an alarming position. The situation would be still aggravated by the cutting down of non-plan expenditure by 3 per cent and for the plan outlay of 1983-84 by 5 per cent as thousands of workers engaged in several construction projects are being thrown out of jobs, as a sequel to this.

These measures have been announced together with the announcement that the Govt of India is not drawing the third instalment of IMF loan is only to deceive the gullible as all the measures announced by Smt Gandhi are influenced by the IMF conditionalities.

The announcement marking the four years of Smt Gandhi's return to power is nothing but an election propaganda to confuse the people and the CITU is

Editorial Board

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

M.K.Pandhe (*Editor*)

confident that the working class and the people of the country will see through this game.

Demand for Nationalisation of Bengal Pottery and National Tannery

Sushil Bhattacharya, M.P. along with Badal Kar, President, Bengal Potteries Mazdoor Union (CITU) and Sunil Mohinta of Bengal Potteries Workers & Staff Union (AITUC) submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister on January 23 signed by 50,000 people and forwarded by the leaders of National Campaign Committee of eight Central Trade Unions, urging immediate nationalisation of Bengal Potteries Company, the management of which was taken over by the Union Govt. in 1976, and National Tannery, 80 per cent of share capital of which is held by the Public Financial Institution. It was deprecated that despite such clear position, the production of these Companies have been stopped due to want of raw materials, financial stringency and bad management resulting in continuous suffering to its workmen numbering about 6000.

Another deputation headed by Samar Mukherjee, MP., General Secretary, CITU met Pranab Mukherjee, Finance Minister on January 22 for immediate nationalisation of the two companies.

M.Ps. Demand Take Over of Birla Mills

Fourteen Members of the Parliament belonging to the CPI(M) have jointly protested against the illegal lockout of the Birla Textile Mills, Delhi and demanded immediate take over of the mill. The following letter has been submitted to the Government signed by Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU; M.M. Lawrence, Secretary, CITU; E. Balanandan, Treasurer, CITU; Md. Ismail, Vice-president, CITU; Satya Sadhan Chakraborty; Dipen Ghosh; K. Mohanan; Sudhir Kumar Giri; Arabinda Ghosh; Sukomal Sen; Sunil Moitra; Nirmal Chatterjee, Kup Chand Pal and Sushil Bhattacharjee, General Secretary, Delhi State Committee of CITU:

"We, Members of Parliament belonging to the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Strongly condemn the illegal lockout declared by the management of Birla Textiles, Delhi throwing over 5,000 workers out of Jobs. The lockout has been declared in total violation of the agreement signed by the management only six months ago to avoid payment to the workers of lay-off relief specified by the agreement and to permanently close the weaving department. In such a situation there is no alternative to immediate take over of the mill. We, therefore, demand that the Central Government end its covert support to the mill management and immediately take over the mill".

Letter from President, AUCCTU, Moscow to President, CITU

22.12.83

Dear Comrade Ranadive,

The Presidium of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions had its enlarged session on December 30 1983. Its participants gave an all-round evaluation of the disturbing and fraught-with-danger world situation resulting from the adventurous and aggressive policy adopted by the leaders of the United States and the Western European countries.

Everyone speaking at the session expressed an emphatic approval of the Statement by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Yuri Andropov, relating to the beginning of the deployment of American medium-range missiles in Western Europe. Delegates discussed issues of further mobilizing the Soviet Trade unions in the campaigns for peace and disarmament. The position of our country's trade unions has been reflected in the Statement approved by the AUCCTU Presidium.

I enclose herewith a copy of the Statement and trust it will enjoy your understanding and backing.

We hold in high esteem the efforts being made by the trade unions of India to maintain peace. In our turn we do our utmost to avert a nuclear holocaust which can result in the destruction of all Humanity.

Far from underestimating the obstacles awaiting us on this road I believe that the present-day situation urgently requires new approaches in this issue. More efforts and mutually shared endeavours are needed to force the USA to reconsider its decision of the deployment of the Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in Europe. That would create the ground for the continuation of the talks aimed at making the whole of Europe nuclear-free.

Fraternally,

S.A. Shalayev,
President, AUCCTU

Reply by BTR

Dated 10th January 1984

Dear Comrade Shalayev,

I thank you for your letter enclosing therewith the statement approved by the AUCCTU Presidium.

We fully support the statement of the AUCCTU Presidium. We are working on the same lines to mobilise the working class and the people in India against dangers of a nuclear holocaust and for

peace. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the resolution which was adopted in the Working Committee Meeting of CITU held at Jamshedpur from November 30 to December 2, 1983 for your information.

We also thank you for making a mention about the movement on peace in India in your letter.

With greetings,

Yours fraternally,
B.T. Ranadive
President.

Message from AUCCTU

January 17, 84

Centre of Indian Trade Unions, Delhi

Dear Comrades

On behalf of Union of waged and salaried workers and collective farmers of the Soviet Union the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions is extending heartfelt greetings to the Trade Unions, all working people of India on your National Holiday, 34th Anniversary of Republican Day. We note with profound content that close bonds of friendship between workmen and trade unions of the USSR and India go from strength to strength. Friendly Soviet Indian relations are based upon a firm foundation laid up by the treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed between our countries. They serve the course of peace and progress in India and the world over. We sincerely wish all Indian workers more success in the struggle for socio-economic changes in the country in building up new India.

Message from WFTU

January 25, 84

CITUCENT, New Delhi

Occasion Republic Day, WFTU warmly greets workers and trade unions of India and wishes them all successes in their actions, safeguard peace, oppose arms race and promote global economic cooperation for social progress, carrying forward conclusions of non-aligned summit, upholding economic independence of developing countries and for New International Economic Order STOP With greetings of international solidarity and our best wishes.

Ibrahim Zakaria, General Secretary, WFTU.

International Struggles for Peace

United States

Drawing strength from the revolting mass actions of the European workers against the nuclear threat, militant U.S. trade unionists are fighting against the economic and militarist policies of the Reagan administration and for jobs. Thousands of leaflets publicising the massive demonstration against the cruise and pershing missiles at San Francisco Civic Centre questioned the Reagan administration for okaying the missile deployments without a public debate. They also questioned the Bundestag in West Germany for accepting the deployments defying the protest actions of the millions of West Germans who constitute 75 per cent of its people. After the 2.5 lakh strong demonstration in Washington on August 27 for jobs, peace and freedom on the anniversary of Martin Luther King's historic march, sweeping trade union actions are taking place in the United States against the deployment of the Euromissiles.

Costa Rica

December 3 was the scene of massive protest actions at San Jose against the USA's aggressive policy against Nicaragua, El Salvador and the Caribbean nations. The demonstrators denounced the war manoeuvres of the U.S. imperialists which have threatened the future of the human race and dragging the world into arms race. The Women's Committee for Peace in Costa Rica also urged upon the world's democratic organisations to double their efforts for peace. Organised by the United Workers' Confederation and other trade unions, anti-war rallies have been sweeping throughout the length and breadth of Central America.

Denmark

The 30th Congress of the Danish Federation of Trade Unions held at Copenhagen in November denounced the USA and its NATO allies for deciding to deploy the nuclear missiles while the Geneva talks were on. The Congress held up the proceedings on November 22 in support of the nationwide 5-minutes work stoppage by the workers in protest against the deployments in West Germany.

Spain

The National Federation of Commercial Workers of Spain in its recently concluded Third Congress denounced the U.S. decision to deploy the nuclear missiles at England and West Germany and its hostilities in Central America and the Caribbeans. Resolving to step up the struggles for peace, the Congress demanded of the Govt. to withdraw from the NATO.

Italy

CGIL, the largest Italian trade union centre, in a communique sent to the Government has demanded withdrawal of Italy's military contingent from Beirut.

The communique which has been published and distributed to the trade unions, expresses its deep indignation over the worsening armed conflict in Lebanon, the role of USA as an occupying power and the involvement of Italy in the multi-national force which is getting directly involved in the war. It urged upon the government to withdraw the Italian contingent and formulate a political-diplomatic initiative towards finding a solution for peace in Lebanon.

Norway

The Norwegian Communications Workers' conference held recently at Oslo unanimously rejected the theory of the USA and its NATO allies that "in order to disarm, it is first necessary to rearm", and denounced the Reagan administration for sabotaging the Geneva talks and deploying the nuclear missiles at England and West Germany. Expressing solidarity to the peace struggles of the millions across the world, it demanded withdrawal of the missiles and resumption of the Geneva talks.

Great Britain

Women from all over Britain have started converging at the Greenham Common U.S. airbase to augment the vigil against the Cruise missiles deployment by the USA. Defying the Thatcher Government's order to "shoot at sight" at the missile base, the women tore down more than a mile of the nine-mile wire fencing around the base taking the police and the army completely by surprise. New rounds of intensified peace activities have started in Britain from November 9 demonstrating the people's resolve to stop the base becoming operative. A group of eleven peace women has flown to USA to stop the missiles through courts as they argue that these are illegal under U.S. constitutional law and international law.

Israel

In a massive general strike against cut in social security measures and increasing militarisation of the economy, all activities in Israel came to a halt on December 28. Railways, communications, postal services, minings, Government offices, etc were paralysed by the strike. Clashes between the police and the people were reported from Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other places. The Government while increasing the military budget to 22 billion dollars at the behest of USA in pursuance of its militarist and expansionist policies, have cut the wages, bonus, overtime, food subsidies and other social security measures of the workers and the people. It has devalued its currency, the Shekel by 23 per cent and shunted up the prices of the basic consumer goods. Since 1980, the annual inflation rate has been constantly over 100 per cent. Official statistics have estimated the inflation to be around 170 per cent in 1983 because of the 70 per cent of the state budget being spent on militarisation.