



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

CITU GENERAL COUNCIL  
JAIPUR, SEPT 28—30

## Presidential Speech

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Comrades,

I offer my homage to the memory of the comrades who are no more with us. All of them fell fighting for the cause of the workers. Some became victims of goonda attacks while others fell victim to police bullets. I pay my homage to the memory of our Tripura comrades who were murdered by Congress(I) hired goondas.

Comrades, many others suffered imprisonment and police torture while defending the CITU and its right to champion the cause of the workers. We honour their valour and courage. I express my warm sympathy and solidarity with tens of thousands who are locked out and retrenched, with their families undergoing privations. Never before India witnessed so many thousands of families thrown to the wolves and offered hostages to the economic crisis.

### Pursuit of war by USA

Comrades the fifteen months since our Kanpur meeting have witnessed rapid and important developments in the national and international situation. The international situation is now surcharged with dangerous possibilities. The US imperialists intent on their nuclear war drive are pouring in hundreds of cruise missiles in Europe to aggress against the Soviet Union. Their NATO partners are adding this suicidal game though the people of these countries abhor war and demand peace. Through mighty peace demonstrations and other mass actions millions in these countries have expressed themselves against the deployment of missiles in Europe and demanded their withdrawal. In the USA also the peace loving forces are condemning Reagan's war policy and peace has become an issue in the Presidential election.

The Soviet Union and the Socialist countries hold the peace banner firmly putting forward concrete proposals to save the world the horrors of a nuclear war. At the same time the USSR has warned the

US imperialists that those who dare attack her will meet with the retaliatory action sufficient to cool their ardour for aggression. While the working class and people of the world highly appreciate the peace fight of the Soviet Union, some people in our country and abroad in their extreme foolishness refuse to distinguish between an imperialist power out for nuclear war and conquest and a socialist country intent on peace and indulge in talk about two super powers. Thereby they prettify imperialism and slander socialism.

The US imperialists have again exposed themselves by refusing to accept the Soviet offer for serious discussion on keeping the outer space free from nuclear weapons. The poisonous mind of Reagan was revealed to the people when in 'joke' he talked at outlawing the Soviet Union and ordered its bombing. The joke was duly broadcast in certain radio networks. It was a crude device to familiarise the people with the idea of a nuclear war against the USSR and revealed the innermost recesses of Reagan's mind. Recently Reagan sought to cover them by hypocritical talk about peace. India's working class and the trade union movement owe it to themselves that in this dangerous situation they take the fight against war in all earnestness, expose the US imperialist game of nuclear aggression destruction of Socialism and subjugation of the world and rouse our people.

All CITU unions must give full and grand response to WFTU's call to observe September 1, as a day in defence of peace and against war.

### Greetings to British Coalminers

Comrades, we must send our warm greetings to the coal miners of Great Britain who are waging a courageous fight against unemployment and closure of pits. The Conservative British Govt. is resorting to every mean device, with which we are familiar in our country, to crush and defeat the strike. Undaunted by the repression let loose against them, by the imprisonment of their leaders, and by

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police barbarities against themselves the British miners are fighting for months and we wish them success in the heroic struggle. We denounce the Thatcher Govt. for its anti-working class policies and its barbarities and are confident the British TUC and the entire working class will stand by the miners and ensure their victory.

### India being Surrounded

Comrades, the developments in our sub-continent should cause concern to all those who prize the freedom of our country and the freedom of our neighbours. The imperialists are intervening to stem the march of the democratic forces in all these countries to disunite the people and support the reactionary dictatorships. They support the reactionary forces in each country to fan the fire of chauvinism and create hostility between the neighbourers. In relation to India their game is to surround the country with a number of hostile and reactionary governments to bring pressure on her to change its policies and to attack the growing democratic urge of the people. They are therefore supporting the Pakistan dictator who has no backing of the people and giving him plenty of arms to be used any time against India. The supply of F-16 aeroplanes, the supply of Harpoon missiles and plentiful finance for acquiring defence materials are preparations for creating hostilities between the countries. It will be suicidal if the working class of our country fails to take note of these imperialist conspiracies and does not consciously fight them.

The same agencies utilise every opportunity to create bad blood between India and Bangladesh while they support the military dictator against the democratic movement in that country.

And now recently the imperialists have succeeded in drawing in their net the reactionary Jayawardene Govt. of Srilanka with whose aid they are bent upon fanning hostile feelings between the people of the two countries.

### The Developments in Sri Lanka

The CITU and its all unions have watched with great admiration the struggle of Tamils in Srilanka and have expressed their indignation and protest against the oppression and atrocities committed against them. To kill the defenceless persons in jail is a cowardly attack worthy of those who hire Israeli and British mercenaries to fight the minority in their own country. But the danger is not only to the Tamils, it is to the entire people of Srilanka, to their freedom and independence. Once you allow armed imperialist mercenaries in your country, you find it difficult to push them out. But Jayawardene is determined to pursue this dangerous path, because he is afraid of relying on the healthy democratic instincts of the people of Srilanka. There are sufficient grounds to believe that Trincomalee is already under US control and some other strategic places will also be placed at its disposal. This is the inevitable

result of relying on the imperialists to fight your own minorities.

Comrades, the army, navy and police forces in Srilanka do not seem to be under any control. Or perhaps they have been secretly given the license to murder anybody at their will. Otherwise it is difficult to explain how there could be naval shelling of a town in Jaffna or destruction of Mannar by the army. These brutalities practised by the Lankan army show to what extent the Jayawardene Govt. has gone in repudiating every norm of a civilised Govt. In fact the fighting Tamils in Srilanka are facing something worse than a military dictatorship.

Comrades, we must all appreciate the courageous role played by the Communist Party of Srilanka and other left parties in this difficult situation and their fight for people's unity, justice to minority and against imperialist penetration. The ruling politicians of Srilanka are issuing provocative statements to create feelings of hostility between the peoples of our two countries. This suits the US imperialists from whom Jayawardene has sought help. This screens the imperialist penetration in Srilanka. Besides it helps the US designs to surround India with undemocratic and hostile regimes.

Comrades, we must warmly congratulate Tamilnadu State Committee and our trade unions in the State for the correct and courageous way in which they have handled the critical situation created by the repression of Tamils in Srilanka. Short sighted politicians and parties sought to exploit the genuine anger of the people to direct it into chauvinist channels which would have created permanent barriers between the people of the two countries and suited the imperialist designs. The Tamil problem in Srilanka can be solved only with the pressure of international working class opinion and the unity of the Tamil and Lankan democratic forces. Our unions all over the country must recognise this difficult situation and by their continuous support for the cause of Tamils they should rouse the international working class to intervene so that justice is done to them.

### The Indian Situation : Crisis in Textile Industry

Comrades before I turn to political developments in our country let me deal with an urgent issue that faces our trade union movement. I am referring to the crisis in the cotton textile industry which has imposed misery on tens of thousands of workers.

Comrades, the cotton textile industry in India is experiencing the severest crisis in the last fifty years with more than a hundred mills gone sick, others closed, others locked out with thousands of workers losing their earnings. It is indeed strange that with half of India going almost half-naked, there should be a crisis in the textile industry. But this is how capitalism works, or rather the mixed economy of India — India Govt.'s euphemism for capitalism in India—works.

The crisis affects not only the direct factory workers, but lakhs of people who are connected with textile trade or production. The organised industry together with powerlooms and handlooms is estimated to employ not less than eight million people. An equal number is estimated to work in trade and complementary industries which supply raw materials to the industry.

Now a substantial part of this vast mass of Indian people is thrown on the streets, a helpless victim of the crisis.

The crisis was brewing over years and it relates to the basic economic policies pursued by the Govt. You cannot stop the outburst of crisis if you subject a basic necessity, next in importance to food only, to the vagaries of inflation and have no plan to keep its price within the reach of the mass of consumers.

The per-capita off-take of textile has been continuously on the decline since 1979. It was 13.65 metres in 1979, it declined to 12.08 metres in 1981. At present the offtake is estimated at around 10.5 metres per annum. In fact, the decline in per-capita consumption of cloth has been there for the last several years. Per-capita availability of cotton cloth purchased by the masses was going down since 1962. It was 15.2 metres in that year, never to reach that figure in any subsequent year. It started sliding down to between 14 and 13 metres, then between 13 and 12 metres and later on between 11 and 10 metres. Now in spite of the steady fall in the availability of cloth there is a crisis. It is evident that with the success of every Congress Plan the Indian people are becoming less and less capable of meeting their cloth requirements, and are forced to economise on cloth. And the Congress (I) Govt. hypocritically claims that during the course of the Sixth Five-Year Plan, they have raised millions of people above the poverty level.

The root cause of this decline in cloth offtake in spite of decline in availability is of course the price factor, the inflationary spiral of the economy engendered by the deficit budgets of the Congress Government. This was admitted by an official committee — the Textile Committee of the Ministry of Commerce. Its studies showed that in 1978 when average value per metre of cotton textiles was Rs. 5.56, the per-capita offtake of cotton textiles was 11.60 metres, while in 1981, when the average value per metre went up to Rs. 8.22, the per capita offtake fell down to 9.40 metres.

The Estimates Committee of Parliament, 1977-78, made the following observation on the Govt.'s failure regarding textile policy and the fall in consumption of cloth.

“The Committee are surprised to note that even after thirty years of independence and completion of four Five-Year Plans, the Govt. have not yet been able to formulate an integrated national policy in respect of a basic necessity like cloth. The Com-

mittee would like to point out that the task force on textile industry had envisaged per capita consumption of cloth in the country by 1978-79, i.e., the terminal year of the Fifth Five-Year Plan as 17.67 meters. As against this, the per-capita consumption of cloth in the country has gone down from 14.49 in 1973 to 13.62 metres in 1974 and 13.81 metres in 1975. The fall in the per capita consumption has been mainly in the rural areas and the decline has been mainly noticed in the case of persons belonging to lower income groups”.

The erosion of the purchasing power of the people especially of the peasants and agricultural workers is so much that they are not able to consume existing production which is only 50 per cent of the estimated capacity. It is estimated that the centralised and decentralised sectors together can produce 22,000 million metres of cloth per annum. But the highest production figure reached was 11,500 million metres in 1983-84. This 11,000 million metres production was also too much for the country. More than 1000-1200 million metres had to be exported.

The Industry's reliance on the Western markets for its exports has added to its difficulties. The Western countries — Europe and the USA — many of them with their imperialist ambitions and anti-Indian policies, have been steadily reducing imports from India. Indian exports to Europe were valued at Rs. 1368 million in 1976-77, they came down to Rs. 726 million in 1982-83. Indian exports to the USA were valued at Rs. 406 million in 1976-77, they came down to Rs. 114 million in 1982-83. Total Indian export to Europe, America and Africa were valued at Rs. 2622 million, they fell to Rs. 1345 million by 1982-83, i.e., by 50 per cent. The capitalist crisis, rising fever of protectionism and anti-Indian outlook, all contributed to this precipitous fall in exports.

The situation would have been impossible had not the exports to the USSR made up the loss. Indian exports to the USSR valued at only Rs. 383 million in 1976-77 rose to Rs. 1779 million in 1982-83. The result was that the loss in the exports to Western countries was more than covered. In 1976-77 total Indian exports including the USSR were valued at Rs. 3005 million; in 1982-83 they were valued at Rs. 3124 million. Linking with a crisis-free Socialist economy has paid dividends. Thanks to it exports have not declined and they are higher in 1982-83 than any previous year.

There is at the same time no doubt that the mill magnates with their inefficiency, incompetence and penchant for making a fast buck have contributed to the present plight of the industry.

The situation in some centres is not so bleak as it is presented by the mill magnates. The rapid rise in the number of powerlooms from 23,000 in 1951 to 600,000 is not totally unconnected with the patronage extended to them by some millowners. It is known that many mills often shut the weaving

section and transfer their yarn to powerlooms to escape excise duty and in the bargain make huge profits. An important cause of the present state of affairs is the industry's refusal to attune itself to the domestic market which demands cloth at lower prices and which therefore affects their rapid profit-making capacity. This is an anti-social and anti-national outlook. The textile magnates want to cater either to the foreign markets or to those who can buy high-priced man-made fibre cloth. The industry cannot survive on this narrow market. It has to depend on the domestic market composed of the mass of poor people. This solution must be imposed on the magnates to avoid lay-off, closures and lock-outs.

One of the persistent demands raised both by the Government and the employers is that of modernisation. In the first place modernisation of even a substantial number of mills will lead to a large increase in production. Who will purchase it? Will the price of cloth be lowered and market expanded? Let me quote from an article in *Commerce*: "How do mills produce low-priced cloth with operations cost escalating so rapidly. Is large-scale modernisation the answer?"

"As opposed to industry expectation no radical improvement in technology can substantially help the industry as a whole since such expensive improvements pay for themselves only if they are used to produce fabrics which are highly expensive and confined to a minor elitist market — the narrow segment once again. Research findings have exposed the fallacies in the conventional argument that modernisation will enable production of cheaper cloth; instead they point to one singular conclusion — modernisation will not be cost-effective at the entire industry level. For instance, detailed technological viability analyses for different types of high technology machines, which have a stress on high machine productivity and low labour complement through automation, have shown that they do not become viable economically under Indian conditions until the fabric price is Rs. 12 per metre (ex-mill). Secondly, modernisation would be highly labour-displacing; were the textile industry, the largest employer among Indian manufacturing sectors, to displace labour, there are bound to be damaging repercussions in the consumer market itself. The industry would only pull the carpet from under its feet."

The cry for modernisation is raised to tie the industry to foreign markets to earn profits and neglect the domestic market. And in the bargain they want to displace thousands of workers.

The same article indicts the management for its operational inefficiency. "Poor maintenance is one of the significant factors behind this latter situation. A considerable gap exists between the actual and potential productivity performance of any given machines, even obsolete ones. Inter firm data show that the scope for improving productivity in mills is

of the order of about 30 per cent on the average". Instead of tackling the problems concerning inefficient management, and orientating the industry to the needs of the people, both the Govt. and the employers care more for exports than for the basic health of the industry. When the industry is unable to thrive on the basis of the vast domestic market, it betrays the bankruptcy of the policy of the Govt. and the management. Besides, the management adopts unfair labour practices, keeps young workers on temporary jobs for years, denying them both DA and bonus, and even entrusting work to contractors to escape the provisions of the labour laws. But this cannot save the industry as a whole. It intensifies workers' exploitation and at the same time does not meet the needs of the people.

Thanks to Congress planning which with every success makes the poor poorer and the management's selfishness and blindness which fails to see that the industry cannot maintain itself without orientating to the mass of the people, the textiles are seeing the worst crisis since modern textile production was started in the country. The crisis is far wider and deeper than even the 1930 crisis.

In 1983, the number of cotton mills, spinning and composite, was 805. Of these more than a hundred have gone sick and taken over by the Govt. In 1971 only eight mills were taken over. Their number suddenly increased to 65 in 1972. But the Govt. did not move in to remove the basic causes of sickness. The 103 mills taken over by the Govt. do not end the story. Many more mills continue to close. In Bombay, after the last strike, more than 50,000 workers are on the street.

Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, M.P., U.P., West Bengal and several other states are witnessing closures and lock-outs. Rajasthan textiles are also complaining about loss of market. Twentyfour mills are closed in Gujarat and 14 in Tamil Nadu. In all 58 textile mills have closed down leading to loss of jobs for 73,000 workers. This figure added to those thrown out of jobs in Bombay will easily go to 125,000. Such is the depth and extension of the textile crisis, the main victim being the textile workers. The Govt. dared not prevent the managements from closing the mills as and when they liked. They could have refused sanction at least in certain States for closure on the basis of the existing law. And sometimes the Judiciary intervenes and declares such laws void. In July the Lok Sabha passed the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill making prior Govt. permission compulsory for closure, layoff or retrenchment in any industrial unit. How will this affect the lock-outs and closure of 58 mills that are already there? This is the usual trick of cheating the people by passing a counteracting measure after allowing the capitalist offensive to reach its objective. And one can be sure that on future occasions also the Act will remain a dead letter.

The Govt. itself has not proved efficient in managing the taken over mills. The same malady of

inefficiency, corruption and lack of social consciousness dominate the taken over sector. The NTC management also seeks to run the mills without participation of the workers in management on equal terms. This is resisted because it will stop many avenues of illegal gratification now available.

In the course of years the decentralised production, especially the powerlooms production, had made rapid advance. Total decentralised production is now ahead of textile mills production. Mill magnates often suggest that powerloom production competes with mill production because it has not to pay excise and other taxes. But as against this the mills have the advantage of large-scale economy. Why should the former go ahead and the latter fall behind?

It should be clear that the workers, the people and industry need not suffer if the industry is correctly linked with people's needs and supplies cloth at prices within the reach of the people. This also means that official policies which erode the purchasing power of the people must be defeated.

It is clear that the cotton textile industry cannot be allowed to remain in the hands of private capitalists. They have ruined it and will continue to ruin it in pursuit of their self interest. Some Bombay millowners, for instance, want to dispose off their mills and make huge profits by selling the land of the mill. They want to pocket this unearned income running into crores of rupees and go in for new pastures. In the bargain they seek to deprive thousands of workers of their jobs.

### **Demand Nationalisation of Textile Industry**

Nationalisation of the cotton textile industry is the only remedy in the present situation. The crisis has shown the bankruptcy and anti-social character of private management. But nationalisation with bureaucratic management will produce no results. The bureaucratic management does not in the least differ from private management except perhaps in the depth of its corruption. The mess that is made by the NTC is therefore everyone to see.

Nationalisation therefore must be accompanied by equal status for workers in running the industry and managing the concern. Without this neither the present profiteering outlook will be eliminated, nor the anti-social role of private capital. The CITU must therefore demand immediate nationalisation of the textile industry and the opening of all the closed mills.

The Govt. is opposed to nationalisation and is trying to aid the industry by some financial concessions, loans and proposals for modernisation. All these are just devices which do not go to the root of the problem.

It is necessary that there should be substantial relief in taxation on cotton cloth. The spendthrift

Govt. should not be allowed to earn millions out of people's nakedness. Such relief should be passed on to the consumers by lowering the cloth prices. The excise duty on cotton cloth in 1982-83 amounted to Rs. 124 crores, on cotton yarn Rs. 96 crores and the duty on all cloth including man made fibres was Rs. 700 crores. The Govt. of India has absolutely no right to lay such heavy taxation on this necessity of life next in importance only to food. A drastic reduction or abolition of this obnoxious tax major will definitely help people to buy more cloth.

The textile workers have immeasurably suffered from the crisis. The defence of their interests must be considered to be the supreme duty of all organisations. We should demand that the existing lock-outs and closures should be declared illegal and the closed mills should be reopened. We should demand that all those who have been locked out or retrenched should get unemployment wage till the factories reopen.

### **Trade Union Unity Requires Further Strides**

Comrades, there is no reason to be completely satisfied with our achievement in regard to trade union unity. Though there has been certain notable developments and certain notable advance, the unity achieved falls far short of what is possible and required under the present circumstances. The offensive of lock-outs, closures, etc is so big and extensive that the trade union movement cannot claim that it has succeeded in giving a consistent fight against it, much less has it in any way succeeded in reducing its severity. The textile industry, the biggest industry in the country, constitutes a glaring example of the weakness in trade union unity. The movement has also not been able to check the offensive in a number of unorganised and scattered industries. Taking advantage of this the employers and the Govt. are forcing agreement linking wages with productivity. Recent months, besides, have seen increased attacks on the freedom and liberty of the trade unions. Arbitrary reduction from wages are made for going on strike. The Coal Authority of India by using an Act passed by the British Govt., the Payment of Wages Act, enacted when Indians had no fundamental rights, has confiscated a week's wages of thousands of coal workers for one day's strike. The Patna High Court order calling for stay and declaring that the Act goes against the fundamental rights of the Indian people was, it seems, being disregarded, but perhaps later on better counsels prevailed. But the Govt. intended to use the Act on a wide scale. It is being used in several states.

The Govt. of India has banned the all-India coal miners' strike under the ESMA. The ESMA is being perennially applied to some industries and the right of strike is being virtually extinguished. The U.P. Govt. excels in extending the application of the Act to one industry after another to attack strikes.

These attacks are bound to increase in future. Both for defence of the living conditions and the freedom of the trade union movement, it is essential that trade union unity takes many more strides forward and is able to draw increasingly large numbers of unions, central organisations and workers within its fold.

### Approach Paper to Seventh Plan

Comrades, now let me turn to the document on approach to the Seventh Plan. It sets before the people Indira Govt.'s policy to handle planning and the country's economy during the next five years. It determines the scope for, employment in modern industry, the ways and methods to tackle the problem of unemployment, investment in modern industry, the Govt's plan regarding agriculture and peasantry and housing for workers dwelling in cities and rural areas.

The document published in the midst of a deep rooted crisis of the economy manifested in the massive rise in unemployment and joblessness and closure of industry and utter ruination of smaller concerns. It does not offer any respite to the workers and the people of India from the regime of high price, unemployment, slum dwelling and sweated labour. The same old promises are repeated and the same old methods are adopted which during every plan have thrust millions into deeper poverty.

So far as the figure of total investment is concerned it is estimated at Rs. 3,20,000 crores; out of this the public sector plan outlay would be Rs. 1,80,000 crores. This last figure comes very near to the total outlay in the public sector during all the previous plans put together.

But of what avail? All the previous plans have witnessed tens of millions being pushed below the poverty line. Besides with all the investments in the earlier period the targets and objectives in relation to production could not be realised.

Even during the Sixth plan targets regarding steel, power generation, iron ore, coal, electronic goods and irrigation could not be achieved. Where physical targets cannot be reached what change is there for social targets despite profuse promises.

The Seventh Plan aims at a growth rate of 5 per cent in the economy. Can this offer any relief to the Indian people. The Sixth plan is expected to achieve a growth rate of 5.2 per cent slightly higher than the Seventh plan. What relief has it given to the people? In fact situation during the Sixth plan has worsened with lock-outs, increased unemployment and massive destitution in rural areas. It is futile to expect that the Seventh Plan can offer any relief from the present distress.

The Seventh Plan aims at a growth rate of 4 per cent per annum for agricultural production and 7 per cent per annum for industrial production. Is this rate

possible for industry considering the miserable failure to use existing capacities in big and small industries alike and monstrous erosion of the purchasing power of the people which will continue during the plan years.

The document observes that within the framework of the declared principles — growth, equality and social justice, self reliance, improved efficiency and productivity—“the movement of social justice has to be faster and there must be a sharper focus on employment and poverty alleviation. Hence the Seventh Plan must emphasise policies and performances which will accelerate the growth of food grain production, increase the employment opportunity, and what is equally important, raise productivity”.

The same wornout record — to cheat the people that increased production will mean a radical relief, a change in their social status. Experience shows that so long as planning is carried out within the frame work of the existing class i. e., with landlords, money bags and capitalists pre-empting all benefits of social progress and increased production, there is no escape for the people.

The document goes on announcing high objectives but does not change the class basis of planning, does not dare attack the right of vested interest and have not the courage to suggest break up of the land monopoly. Therefore its promises will remain empty words.

The entire plan and its approach is dominated by the crisis of the economy and the pressures created by the results of earlier plans.

Years of borrowing from abroad and heavy taxation on the Indian people and dependence on exports to Western countries, now in the midst of crisis, have put their imprint on the strategy of the plan. “The Seventh Plan has to take into account the prospect of considerably diminished flow of concessional financial assistance from abroad, sizeable date service obligations and a global environment where interest rates are expected to be high with only limited possibility of any sharp acceleration in the volume of export growth”.

India's creditors—the IMF and the World Bank have been repeatedly demanding that India must restrain her ambition of industrial advance and cut her coat according to her cloth. This is precisely what is being done by the planners.

How do the planners propose to mobilise the financial resources? “The required resources have to be mobilised in a manner which minimise dependence on external sources or in deficit financing which has a high inflationary potential. In order to do this the public sector will have to generate more internal resources through improvement in efficiency and productivity.”

What chance is there for the public sector to meet the resources needed for planning and overcome reliance either on foreign indebtedness or on deficit financing? There is no chance whatsoever unless the bias in favour of a bureaucratic and corrupt management, in favour of an arrogant and anti-working class management is ended, and the bureaucratic public sector is placed under genuinely public management with the participation of the workers.

The public sector concerns are notorious for their mismanagement and inefficient organisation. Every year they inflict loss of crores of rupees on the state instead of contributing to its resources. The Central Govt. public sector during the 1983-84 incurred a loss of not less than 30 crores of rupees.

But the Govt. shows no desire to change. The CITU repeatedly declared that its trade unions and workers are prepared to discharge their responsibility in running the industry on the basis of equal status in management. But the Govt. has refused to respond. For sake of appearances it has announced a new scheme of workers' participation which ensures no participation, no genuine responsibility for the workers. It is intended only to show international opinion that the Indian Govt. possesses a progressive outlook. But just as the earlier scheme was never introduced in the public sector the current scheme also will not be implemented.

On this important question of workers' participation the approach document makes only a vague reference to workers' share in the management. "By planning to give the work force a share in the fortunes of enterprises through a share in the management and by improving industrial relations the Seventh Plan should aim at improved work ethics, great pride in work and reduce absenteeism; it should minimise the loss of working days and increase the man-hour productivity substantially"—all of course without participation of workers on equal terms.

These platitudes are accompanied by contrary practices. To inspire the workers to make the public sector more productive the authorities are embarking upon intimidatory and confiscatory measures. The nationalised coal India is confiscating eight days wages for one day strike under an obnoxious Act passed by the British enslavers. An arrogant bureaucrat who heads Coal India makes insulting statements about labour leaders and trade unions and says that he will not hold negotiation with the unions and will not call meetings of the Joint Negotiation Committee. The man is not kicked out either by the Labour Minister or the Energy Minister. The same person besides refuses to carry out in full the terms of a solemnly signed agreement. All this shows that the public sector is a completely bureaucratic sector and that neither the Govt. nor the Planning Commission has any idea of reforming it.

Besides it is known that in a number of public

sector undertaking losses are incurred because of the use of substandard materials and other corrupt methods. The Nationalised Coal India itself has been charged with supplying substandard coal to the railways and electrical boards. The latter have charged that the substandard coal has damaged the capacity of the powerhouses to produce electricity and that in some cases the machinery itself has been damaged. But when the workers expose this corruption they are not appreciated but are victimised.

It is therefore futile to expect that the bureaucratically managed public sector will help in ending reliance on external aid and deficit finance. The Seventh Plan will have to increasingly rely on either costly foreign debts or huge deficit finance for securing the necessary financial resources. That means heavy debt payments for the country and rising prices spiral for the debts. Already the effects of current deficit financing are being felt by the people. Prices has started shooting up in the last few months and the Finance Minister is unable to deny the rise. He however, tries to explain it away by saying that it is due to seasonal influences. There is no doubt that the accumulated effect of the Govt.'s deficit financing will inflict the prices further making the conditions of people utterly miserable. The Seventh Plan instead of alleviating the situation is going to exacerbate its discontent.

What is the direct result of all this? Development of modern big industry is to be checked. "This strategy outlined in the section on objectives of the Seventh Plan would result in the lowering of the capital output ratio. This is of great importance, if as is likely, there is a constraint of resources in real terms. The likely increase in debt servicing obligations in the next two years, the possible reduction in the additional resources mobilisation from the ill sector, and the balance of payments consideration would necessitate concentration on areas of low import requirement". That is there must be restriction on the development of modern and sophisticated industry.

The key note, the key excuse is utilisation of existing capacities. "The Seventh Plan has to lay emphasis on improved utilisation of capacity by pinpointing the factors responsible for the existence of idle capacity. Continued regular and intense monitoring of all major public sector enterprises and especially the capacity utilisation should be used effectively for the purpose". It is known that India's per capita production and consumption of vital commodities like steel, coal, electricity is one of the lowest in the world. Its capacity to produce these items is not large and yet there is under utilisation of capacity. Why? Have the planners thought of removing the basic cause of this under utilisation? It is nothing but the expression of economic crisis in the typical form of over production of the means of production. The over production is not in relation to the needs of the people but in relation to eroded purchasing power of the people during every

Five Year Plan. Full capacity cannot be utilised unless this basic cause is removed. Instead of removing it and going for quicker industrial advance the capitalist path of planners leads to slow down in industry and further erosion of purchasing capacity and perpetuation of under utilisation.

Net result is that the workers, the young generation and the employees should look less and less to modern industry with modern wage standards, for jobs. They must seek them in ill paid small industries.

Therefore there will be greater and greater emphasis on per capita increase in productivity, through imposition of heavier work load, or introduction of sophisticated means rendering large section of labour redundant. When you refuse to accept agreed norms of production and share management with the workers to fight corruption and inefficiency, to solve the problem of production, increased productivity means only imposition of additional burden on the work force and its further alienation from production. The workers will be face to face with this attack on a big scale during the years of the Seventh Plan.

The approach document says "the Seventh Plan must emphasise policies and programmes which will accelerate the growth of foodgrain production, increase employment opportunities and what is equally important raise productivity". It says "the Seventh Plan must aim at a accelerated rate of agricultural development and self sufficiency in foodgrains and edible oils at higher levels of consumption. Special programmes need to be formulated and implemented during the Seventh Plan for effecting a breakthrough in rice output, especially in the eastern region and some of the southern region States. Similar programmes are necessary to raise the output of oil seeds, millets and pulses".

All this in the first place shows that six successful five plans have not made India self sufficient in food grains and edible oil. The approach paper therefore has to emphasise the necessity of self sufficiency.

Secondly, all this targeted production with the rate of 4 per cent growth in agriculture—will it lead to a radical improvement in the conditions of the people with the present day one sided distribution of the food grains produced? At best it may relax the severity of present day scarcity of edible oils, etc. But it is futile to expect that the proposed rise in rice production etc will automatically increase the purchasing power of the rural masses and ensure a higher per-capita consumption of food. So long as the existing property relations in the countryside and the country as a whole continue, benefits of progress in food and other production will continue to be monopolised by a tiny section of big property holders. It is a law of economics that the distribution of means of production decides the distribution of means of consumption among the people. In fact the planners have now realised that economic

progress does not automatically lead to economic well being of the people and social justice.

The key solution is change the distribution of means of production, property relation in land, etc. But this the planners would not accept.

This food programme if it is successful will at best continue the existing misery and maldistribution.

But the approach document assures that it is striking a new part and is integrating the food and agricultural programme with a programme for alleviation of rural poverty. "The core of anti-poverty programme lies in the endowment of income generation assets of those who have little or none of these. Hence redistribution, land reforms and security of tenures to the informal tenants have to be directly integrated with the anti-poverty programme".

This same promise is recorded in the sixth plan documents and without any result at the end of the plan. The reason is easy to see. The most obvious method of endowing income generation assets in rural areas on those who have nothing is to break the land concentration and distribute land among the landless. But this neither the sixth plan contemplated nor the approach document contemplates. In its place it only suggests distribution of surplus land, the traditional cheating slogan of Congress (I) government. Here one may ask the question is the Indira Government at all serious about any substantial addition to the assets of those who have none? If it is why is Presidential assent being withheld for bills passed by West Bengal Legislature which ensure the same objective.

So one crucial part of the poverty alleviation programme collapses.

Like the sixth plan the new approach document claims to provide employment for lakhs of people so that they are taken above the poverty line. This is supposed to be a vital part of the seventh plan. "Employment schemes will aim at the creation of durable assets, skill formation and generation of permanent and continuing employment with progressively increased income levels. In addition the scheme will continue to promote self employment in economically viable activities. This would shift a sizeable part of the rural population from agriculture to the secondary and tertiary sectors—a logical corollary of implementation of programme that will increase rural income and rural employment will be the production of consumer items in rural areas with guaranteed market arrangements. This would also revise a number of hand made and handicraft items.

Now every effort to give work to rural unemployed is wellcome. Such schemes and plans have been there in the past also. The sixth plan also was supposed to create millions of jobs. But all these schemes have produced very little effect on the grim

*(Contd. on page 25)*

## **Victory of the Democratic Forces**

**T**HE sacking of Bhaskara Rao and reinstatement of N.T. Rama Rao as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and then his winning the massive mandate of the legislature signalled a decisive victory of the forces of democracy over those of authoritarianism. The one month of the hectic episodes — the repeated rape an all democratic and constitutional norms by the Congress(I) and its Bhaskara Rao brand of hoodlums on one side and the massive upheavals of the people on the other, proved that authoritarianism and dictatorship can be brought down to the knees and democracy established if people unite.

### **Centre Directly Responsible**

The dismissal of the N.T. Rama Rao ministry was the worst culmination of the series of authoritarian drives by the Centre during the present regime of undeclared emergency, toppling the duly elected state Governments one after another and trampling underfoot the verdict of the people. Pondicherry and Sikkim were the earlier instances, and then more brazenly the Farooq Abdullah ministry of Jammu and Kashmir was dismissed before N.T. Rama Rao was guillotined. It was crass impropriety, as termed by an editorial, on the part of Indira Gandhi to plead ignorance of the happenings in Andhra Pradesh from the start to finish, when the foul game of purchasing the M.L.As was going on at the direct bidding of the Centre and the Governor being used as its agent. The entire episode if chronologically analysed will reveal the diabolical plan hatched to coincide with NTR's absence for one month for heart surgery in U.S.A., when Indira Gandhi herself air dashed to Andhra Pradesh. Thereafter, as the plan started collapsing in the face of nationwide agitations and almost a people's uprising in Andhra Pradesh, the desperate Centre connived with its bandwagon of Bhaskara Rao gangsters to create the worst hooliganism unparalleled in the history of Parliamentary democracy anywhere in the world. It is significant to note that all the time, even till the end, the Congress(I) never withdrew its support to the rascal of the Chief Minister — Bhaskara Rao who was attempted to be grafted on the people against their will. And still Indira Gandhi disclaims everything. Blind with her dictatorial ambitions, she failed to realise that she can fool some people for some time, but not all the people for all the time.

### **Revoltng Movements**

The working class and the people have been realising from their own experience the shape of things to come under the Indira regime. The revoltng movements were the reflection of their anger born out of this experience. August 25 — the Save Democracy Day heralded a renewed phase of united

movements by the opposition parties (except AIADMK) in cooperation with the united trade unions in the National Campaign Committee. CITU of course can be proud of accepting the major brunt of responsibility to organise the actions. Functions in eight states were completely paralysed by bundhs. These were Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Pondicherry, Jammu and Kashmir, Tripura and West Bengal. Having successfully observed the day throughout the state, Bihar observed total bundh on August 29. Tripura called another bundh on September 4. People of the country, the working class, peasants and agricultural workers, the middle class employees, the professionals, students, youth and women were on the streets on August 25 demonstrating a massive show of unity of the democratic forces asserting the voice of the people against the authoritarian onslaught. The sudden spurt of the communal riots created by the divisive forces to coincide with the timing could not detract the people's wrath from the Congress(I) brigands.

### **Countrywide Observance**

In Andhra Pradesh, the success of the day compelled the authorities to cancel all the schedules of the South Central Railway. In Karnataka the industrial centres recorded a very low attendance. CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS jointly took out a massive 15000 strong procession to the Raj Bhawan. The industrial centres in Tamilnadu were paralysed. Over two lakh people were arrested on the day. In Tanjavur, two lakh agricultural workers struck work. Pondicherry was similarly paralysed on the day. In Jammu and Kashmir, the defector Shah Government resorted to large scale arrests. The entire state of Tripura wore a deserted look echoing only the sound of demonstrations from one part to another. In West Bengal, the previous bundh programme of September 12 was preponed to August 25 and the people's strike was complete. The Congress(I) hoodlums, true to their character, tried to create violence, but were silenced. In Kerala, the Congress(I) led Government started arrests from the previous day itself, but its motive was frustrated by the total paralysis caused by the bundh. In Delhi, about 900 workers, students, youth, women and other people were arrested. A mass memorandum was submitted to the President. In Maharashtra, the doctors and lawyers also came out to join the ranks of the workers and the people to uphold the banner of democracy. Earlier on 19th the police resorted to brutal lathi charge on the people including on women. Dharnas and rallies marked the day at Rajasthan. Over 100 workers belonging to CPI(M), CPI, Lok Dal, BJP, Congress(S), Congress(J), DSP and Sanjay Manch staged a dharna at Jaipur. CITU General Council members from Assam and West Bengal who had reached Jaipur for the General Council meeting (which was postponed subsequently)

also participated in the dharna. Despite the short notice, the actions embraced vast sections of people in the whole country spontaneously.

### Vigilance to Safeguard Democracy

Confronted with the increasing and continuous mass actions and the prospect a successful Bharat Bundh on September 20, the Centre had to retrace its path and reinstate N. T. Rama Rao. It is to be noted that but for the determined actions of the people and the working class it would not have been possible to make the Centre surrender unconditionally. The bundh programme of course has been converted by the opposition parties to be observed as victory rally day. The working class however cannot afford to remain content by holding victory rallies only. It has to note that the chain of recent actions from the amendment of the NSA, Terrorist Affected (Special Courts) Act, illegalisation of strikes, to the spate of toppling are part of the grand design of Indira Gandhi to suppress the democratic and trade union rights in the country. The blatant and illegal attacks on the non-Congress (I) Governments recorded a new height to her intolerance to opposition. The constitution is under constant attack. Coinciding with the attacks started the so called "debate" on the dictatorial Presidential form of Government under express sanction from Indira Gandhi herself. The Centre-State question has now become vital for the safeguard of India's democracy and protection of the federal constitution of India. Following her debacle after emergency, she changed her tactics of authoritarian onslaught by declaring that she will never impose emergency again. But she will not rest. After the Andhra Pradesh debacle she will again adopt new tactics to steamroll over the workers' rights and the democratic institutions. Therefore, the unity that has been achieved has to be carried forward through unremitting united struggles. And, the working class has to take the lead.

While congratulating the working class for the victory, the CITU has warned them to keep their vigilance and fight back the growing authoritarianism in the following statement issued on September 10.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions congratulates the working class and the democratic masses of the country for forcing the usurper Bhaskara Rao Ministry to resign and thus inflict an ignominious defeat on the Congress (I) in its authoritarian drive of having the monopoly of forming Govts at the Centre and the States trampling underfoot the verdict of the people. This has been possible because of the month long struggle of the people of Andhra Pradesh and solidarity actions by the Working Class and democratic masses who have been preparing for a "Bharat Bundh" on September 20.

The CITU however warns them to keep their vigilance and fight back the authoritarian tendencies of the Cong.(I) Govt. at the Centre and all attempts to destabilise the state governments which do not see eye to eye with Congress(I) Govt. at the Centre.

## CITU Condemns Violation of Safety Rules in Sounda Mines

**M. K. PANDHE**, Secretary, CITU and President, All India Coal Workers Federation has issued the following statement on September 19:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions and All India Coal Workers Federation strongly condemn the Central Coalfields Ltd. management for violation of safety regulation which has led to a ghastly accident in Sounda colliery in Bihar on 18th September, 1984 due to explosion of gas leading to death of 6 workers and injuries to several others.

During the recent past in this area there have been a number of accidents which clearly highlight the negligence on the part of the CCL management.

In a meeting of Standing Committee on Safety in Coal mines held in New Delhi on 9th August, 1984, the Energy Minister, Shri Shiv Shankar assured that the management would take immediate action against the officers against whom prima facie charge has been established during departmental enquiry in case of colliery accidents without waiting for the judicial enquiry. The CITU and the AICWF strongly demand, that strong action should be taken against the guilty officers in this case.

The CITU also notes with grave concern the callous attitude of the Union Labour Ministry in not providing adequate staff for the Directorate General of Mines Safety for proper inspection of the Mines. The Mines Rescue Stations are also in ramshackle conditions which delay the rescue operations. It is shocking that the decisions of the Fifth Conference on Safety in Mines held in 1981 are not yet implemented.

Mere appointment of Judicial Enquiry and payment of compensation to the families of workers will not be sufficient in this case. The CITU and AICWF therefore appeals to the coal workers to campaign all over the country for immediate implementation of all safety rules by the CIL management.

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# State Govt. Employees' Countrywide Strike

**T**HIRTY-FIVE lakh state government and Semi-Government employees went on one day's strike on September 4 in pursuance of their 7-point demands at the call of the All India State Government Employees' Federation. The strike displayed a magnificent show of unity of the various sections of employees in different parts of the country that was never seen before. Not only the state employees, but even the employees of the Boards, Corporations and other Semi-Govt. institutions and teachers also joined the strike in thousands in several states this time, because they also shared the plight of the State Government employees.

The strike was complete in Maharashtra, Bihar, Karnataka, Tripura and W. Bengal. In Bihar the six lakh employees and teachers have gone in for indefinite strike for the day. It was a great success in Orissa also. In Kerala however the strike was not held as some of the major demands were met just prior to the strike and as the day coincided with the Onam festival. In Assam, due to adverse political situation the programme had to be modified by holding rallies, demonstrations, etc. In Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh also the adverse political situations did not favour holding the strike although massive preparations were made for it. However, the significance of the strike lay not merely on the participation of employees in it, but to the great extent on the nature of the demands. Apart from the focal points of bonus, D.A. and interim relief, the strike was also called with the demand to control price rise by effecting a radical change in the economic policy of the Central Government and strengthening and widening of the public distribution system; devolution of more funds by the Centre to the State Governments so as to enable them to meet their employees' demands; vacation of all victimisations of the state employees and scrapping of all the anti-worker enactments by the Central Govt. and various state governments and full trade union rights for the state employees.

These demands raised by the state government employees gradually evolved through years of experience and the federation made ceaseless efforts to make the employees conscious of the demands and rouse them to actions. The federation in fact through its memorandum to the Eighth Finance Commission and also to the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations took a significant step in asserting to the demand of devolution for more funds to the states.

The unity brought forth among the employees on such vital issues was no mean an achievement. This significant a achievement paid dividends and lakhs of employees all over the country were mobilised for

action on the day of the strike which succeeded in highlighting the problems of the state employees in a much sharper way than before.

## Movement by Central Government Employees

**I**N pursuance of their demands for bonus to all before Pujas, release of the four instalments of D.A. and submission of the interim report of the Pay Commission by October, the Central Government employees are carrying forward their agitations all over the country. After having observed a "Call Attention Day" on August 7 and a massive dharna before the office of the Pay Commission at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on August 21, they observed nationwide Pay Boycott Day on August 31.

While it has become evident that the interim report of the Pay Commission is not going to be submitted by October as previously assured by the Government, it has also bypassed the report of the Bazle Karim Committee recommending uniform bonus to all Central Government employees without discrimination and unilaterally announced varying rates of bonus to various sections of other employees like in Railways, Defence and P&T.

The Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers which had decided a programme of continuous fast and demonstrations from September 19 to 24, however decided to withdraw the programme in view of the Government's announcement to pay 18 day's wages as ad hoc (provisional) bonus before the Pujas to all employees who are not yet covered by productivity linked bonus scheme.

The Government at the same time however, have withheld the payment of the arrears of four instalments of D.A. in cash, which fell due in January, February, April and June and were already sanctioned, till further orders. The Government put forward the age old spurious plea that cash payment of the D.A. will spiral the inflation. In a statement issued on September 19, S.K. Vyas, Secretary General of the Confederation assailed the Government's anti-worker policy and pointed out that during all these eight months when the D.A. has not been paid, the inflation could never be contained. True to its pro-monopolist character, Government always turned its face away from the huge black money which caused inflation and put curbs on the employees' rightful and justified claims. He called upon all the Central Govt. employees' to launch demonstrations and rallies before the Government offices demanding payment of the arrear D.A.s before the Pujas.

# Successful Strike by Postal Employees

**T**HREE lakh extra departmental and sixty thousand regular postal employees went on one day's strike on September 19. The call for the strike was given by the All India Postal Employees Union—Postman Class IV & EDA. The strike was called in pursuance of several long pending major demands which include parity in wages with the regular P&T employees on pro-rata basis for identical work on the principle of "equal work, equal pay", Dearness Allowance and Interim Relief as paid to the regular employees.

It is to be noted that about 3 lakh Extra Departmental Agents (EDA) as they are called by the Government, are serving to the needs of about six lakh villages and working as rural Branch Post Masters, Sub-Post Masters, Postmen, Runners, Mail Carriers and Packers in more than 1,25,000 Branch Post Offices. This system of exploitation was introduced by the Britishers and the Govt. of India is still perpetuating it even after 37 years of independence. Simply on the plea that they are extra departmental workers, the Government is paying them a paltry salary between Rs. 137 and Rs. 200 per work for 3 to 5 hours, whereas a regular employee doing the same work for seven and half hours gets Rs. 550 p.m. It is also astounding that the Dearness Allowance which they used to get before has been stopped from January, 1973. They are also debarred from the Interim Relief which has been paid to the regular employees. Besides the above major demands, the employees have been also raising demands for leave, advances and other fringe benefits and amenities as extended to the regular P&T employees. Despite a series of agitations being launched and representations made, the Government has refused to accede to the rightful demands of the employees. On the contrary, to befool the workers just prior to the strike the Government announced the formation of a one man Commission to look to the justification of demands — only as a measure of delaying tactics. In the past, many recommendations of increase in salaries and other benefits passed by various Commissions have not been implemented by the Government. In this background of ruthless colonial type of exploitation, the employees were compelled to go in for the strike action.

As per reports received till the afternoon of 19th, the strike almost totally paralysed the postal functions in the country. In W. Bengal and the eastern region it was total. In the N.E. region comprising the seven states all the postal employees joined the strike along with the E.D.As. In Maharashtra, the success was to the tune of 90 per cent including in Bombay. Similar reports came, from Madhya Pradesh, U.P., Kerala and Delhi. At Delhi even the huge letters coming to the Prime Minister and to Rajiv Gandhi were not delivered. Successful strike was reported from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan also. Only in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh the employees

organised mass demonstrations and rallies in support of the strike.

Extending full support to the strike, B.T. Ranadive, President of CITU condemned the Government in a statement issued on September 17 for perpetuating the exploitation and demanding of the Government to concede the demands of the EDAs. He called upon the affiliated unions of the CITU and appealed to all Central Trade Unions to extend support to the strike. The National Campaign Committee also issued a statement supporting the just struggle of the EDAs. In a statement issued on 19th, K. Adinaryana, General Secretary of the All India Postal Employees Union—Postman Class IV & EDA congratulated the employees for the successful strike and called upon them to prepare for further actions to compel the Government to accede to their demands.

## Working Journalists on the Path of Struggle

**C**ONTINUED refusal of the monopoly houses in the News Papers to implement the Palekar Tribunal Award fully and to consider the necessity of further wage rise has brought the working journalists once again on to the streets. Barring a few favoured ones, the overwhelming majority of the working journalists are denied reasonable standard of living and comparable wages. They therefore demand a wage Board for the working journalists and newspaper employees.

On September 20, they under the leadership of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ) came in a procession beating drums and shouting slogans from the Hindustan Times Building in Connaught Place, Delhi and led a mass deputation to the I.E.N.S. Building where they submitted their memorandum to the management. Later on they moved to Shram Shakti Bhavan and submitted their memorandum demanding setting up of a Wage Board. A delegation under the leadership of the President of IFWJ met the Minister of Labour.

The journalists had approached the National Campaign Committee for support to their struggle and the Committee in a resolution adopted in its meeting held on 11.9.84 supported their cause. On September 20, members of the Committee — Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary, CITU, Y.D. Sharma, Secretary, AITUC, J.S. Dara, President, ITUC and Anil Sarkar from UTUC addressed the deputationists who had assembled in the lawn of Shram Shakti Bhavan and expressed solidarity with their struggle.

# Stalemate in Tripartite DA Committee Continues

**T**HE stalemate in the Tripartite Committee on DA for public sector undertakings could not be resolved in its meeting on 31st August as a result of the refusal of the Government representatives to offer any higher quantum of DA than Rs. 1.50 per point offered earlier.

The Finance Minister was prepared to go up marginally but indicated that his offer would come if the trade unions accept that marginal rise. According to sources from public undertakings the Government may be prepared to go up to Rs. 1.60 if trade unions would be prepared to accept the quantum. In a meeting of the trade union representatives it was decided not to agree to Rs. 1.60.

In an informal meeting with the Finance Minister the trade union representatives proposed that if the Government is prepared to accept Rs. 1.75 per point rise in index, they would settle the matter immediately. They told him this was the rock bottom proposal and they would not agree to go below this quantum. The Finance Minister neither said yes nor no to the proposal but said he would meet them again to consider the proposal.

In the meeting the Finance Minister agreed to constitute a tripartite committee to periodically

review the working of the Public Sector undertakings. He instructed the Director General of the BPE who was present during the discussions to take steps in the matter.

## Government held Responsible

In the meeting of the Tripartite DA Committee the trade union representatives held the Government responsible for the stalemate in the work of the Committee. M.K. Pandhe urged that the Union Labour Minister as the Chairman of the Committee should assert his position and make efforts to bring round the Government to Rs. 1.75 as the rate of DA but Veerendra Patil expressed his inability to do so.

## Government's proposal Rejected

The BPE however gave its proposal regarding the manner in which the new rate of DA will be implemented. The representatives of the trade unions rejected the proposal of the Government and wanted a better method of fixation from January 1983.

The following is the proposal of the Government on the fixation of the new rate of DA with effect from June 1983 and from 499 price index onwards:

## Government Proposal on Fixation of New Rate of DA

The rate of DA for neutralisation in increase in the AICPI will be at the rate of Rs. 1.50\* per point shift in AICPI (Simla Series 1960-100). This will be effective from 1st June, 1983 and will be related to AICPI 499. All quarterly revisions of DA falling due on or after 1st June, 1983 will be compensated for at this rate for AICPI index beyond 499. Increases which fall due before 1st June, 1983 will be compensated for at the rate of Rs. 1.30 per point shift in AICPI.

(\*Rs. 1.50 assumed for working purposes)

### Implementation for Public Enterprises having different quarters for working purposes

PE 'A' Average AICPI for Jan., Feb. & March, 1983 ((495+508+502)/3)	499	PE 'B' Average AICPI for Mar. & Apr. 1983 ((500+502+508)/3)	503.3 say, 503
PE 'C' Average AICPI for Mar., Apr., & May, 1983 ((502+508+521)/3)	510.3, say, 510		

Last quarterly adjustment made on 1st March, 1983 based on average AICPI of			Quarterly adjustment due on 1st June 1983 on average AICPI of			Difference in AICPI to be compensated @ say Rs. 1.50 per point.	Amount to be added to DA existing on 31.5.83
Oct., Nov., Dec. 1983	Nov., Dec., 1982 & Jan., 1983	Dec., 1982 Jan., Feb. 83	Jan., Feb., Mar. 1983	Feb., Mar., Apr., 1983	Mar., Apr., May. 1983		
PE 'A' 494.7 Say, 494		499				5	Rs. 7.50
PE 'B'	496			503.3 Say, 503		7	Rs. 10.50
PE 'C'		497.3 Say, 497			510.3 Say, 503	13	Rs. 19.50

# Hoax of New Grievance Settlement Authority Opposed

**T**HE attempts of the Union Labour Ministry to impose a legal mechanism within the framework of the notorious Industrial Disputes Act to deal with the grievances of the industrial workers failed due to the united opposition of the trade unions. The meeting convened by the Labour Ministry on 4th September did not adopt the draft grievance procedure circulated earlier.

B. G. Deshmukh, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation presided over the meeting in which representatives of both managements and trade unions were present. On behalf of CITU M. K. Pandhe and P. K. Ganguly attended the meeting. The other Central TUs participating in the meeting were INTUC, AITUC, HMS, BMS and UTUC (LS). From the side of the management apart from the employers' organisations, representatives of BPE, SCOPE, CIL participated in the meeting.

M. K. Pandhe while initiating the discussion on the subject pointed out that settlement of the day to day grievances is a subject matter of mutual relations between the union and the management and it cannot be settled through a legal framework as suggested by the Ministry. He criticised the so called model grievance procedure evolved in 1958 which could not work at all since it provided only a mechanical apparatus and much of time was lost in procedural matters.

The provision of section 9 c of the I. D. Act cannot be seen in isolation of the Industrial Disputes Act which has been made more retrograde by the Government with the recent amendments imposing severe curbs on workers' T. U. rights including the right to strike.

The Grievance Settlement Authority as suggested by the Government would consist of only the pro-management unions and will not properly include workers' representatives. Even the pro-managements' unions which are recognised by the management as "representatives" will have to submit 4 names out of which 2 will be selected by the management. Thus the management has been given full powers to control the Grievance Settlement Authority.

The CITU criticised the dilatory procedure suggested by the Labour Ministry and observed that it would inordinately delay the settlement of legitimate grievances of the workers. Unless the entire procedure is gone through by a union the case cannot be even referred to arbitration or adjudication.

The procedure for alternate chairman from the workers and the managements side has no meaning because the mechanism to choose workers' representatives was undemocratic. The Government has been consistently refusing to accept secret ballot to decide the genuine representatives of workers.

To day the workers are generally representing the grievances through their unions but after the new machinery the workers will have to go through the so called "workers' representatives" appointed by the management. This would therefore be an attack on the T.U. rights of the workers.

CITU therefore demanded scrapping of the rules proposed by the Govt. and evolve new mechanism of settling grievances of the workers expeditiously, independent of the I.D. Act.

The workers' representatives generally supported this criticism made by the CITU representatives. They pointed out that the Personnel Manager of a factory against whom a complaint will be made by a worker, will also be sitting in the Grievance Settlement Authority to decide the fate of the complaints. The provision that the decision of the Grievance Settlement Authority will be taken by majority will only give handle to the management to "win over" at least one member so that all decisions of the committee will be in favour of the management.

The representative of NLO, M.N. Barot pointed out that their union at Ahmedabad was settling 18000 grievances every year in textiles. Now with the cumbersome machinery the task would be difficult.

S.K. Sanyal (AITUC), Dharma Rao, (HMS) and R.K. Bhatt (BMS) opposed the introduction of the rules and advocated a new grievance settlement authority based on workers' representatives being elected through secret ballot.

While the managements in private sector advocated that the present grievance procedure and provisions of Standing Orders have been adequate to tackle the grievances of workers, the representative of public sector management suggested necessary improvement in the present procedure rather than going in for a new legal framework.

The INTUC representative Gopeshwar suggested that the Government should not take a hasty decision. He suggested that they would like to discuss with other workers' representatives the entire question.

Meanwhile it was revealed in the meeting that the Government machinery to monitor the "Model" Grievances Procedure has been practically wound up.

B.G. Deshmukh suggested that the entire question needs to be reviewed. The Government would not go ahead with the implementation of this particular section of the I.D. Act if it was felt that there should be no legal framework.

Before taking final decision another meeting would be called for further discussions on the subject. The trade union representatives would meet before that meeting and give their opinion on the subject.

The National Labour Institute will organise a Seminar on the subject in October to review the working of the existing grievance procedure. The implementation of Section 9 c of the I.D. Act has thus be shelved till the next meeting. The T.U. representatives in the next meeting will assert their opinion in the next meeting so that the Government will not be allowed to go ahead with giving effect to this section of the I.D. Act.

## Clarion Call for Unity of Railwaymen

THE 5th Annual General Meeting of the All India Railway Employees Confederation was held in Lucknow on September 9-10, at the Railway Institute.

This 5th Annual meet was not just an organisational routine. It was much more. The Conference presented a picture of wider unity and greater cohesion of railwaymen organised in categorywise associations. So long the Confederation consisted of eight categorywise Associations. Recently four other Associations, most notable among them being the All India Loco Running Staff Association have joined the Confederation making it a united platform of virtually all major categorywise Associations, capable of playing a more effective role in leading the railwaymen in their struggles.

The meeting was attended by 624 delegates, the quota of delegates having been fixed at 52 for each of the 12 constituent categorywise Associations. About a thousand visitors from the constituent organisations were also present in the sessions. The delegates and visitors came from all the Railways. The meeting was presided over by the President of the Confederation, C.M. Singh and the delegate session was inaugurated by Z.A. Ahmed, a veteran communist leader.

About 40 delegates participated in discussion on the report presented by the Secretary General, N.S. Bhango. While pointing out shortcomings that have to be removed, almost all the delegates laid stress on unity and consolidation of the organisation. The report was adopted unanimously.

The overpacked auditorium and the large crowd gathering outside the hall were swept by a wave of enthusiasm when S.K. Dhar, Secretary General of All India Loco Running Staff Association, acting as the election officer, (he did not offer his candidature for any office) declared that unity which is the source of strength of the working class was infinitely more important than any post in the organisation. An opposite trend of claiming some particular posts which was feeble and limited to a negligible section, was ultimately swept away by the overwhelming urge among delegates for unity to meet the challenge from the Government and the railway administration. The meeting unanimously elected its leadership with C.M. Singh as President and N.S. Bhango as the Secretary General.

In unanimously adopted resolutions, the meeting warned the workers about the war danger and the danger of the forces of disintegration of the country and called for vigilance and action. The meeting has extended its call to all trade union organisations

of railwaymen for united struggle to repulse the growing attack on the railwaymen as well as to achieve their long pending legitimate demands. The desire for strengthening the National Campaign Committee for Railwaymen was also been expressed.

The conference decided to hold demonstrations at Divisional Head Quarters to press the long pending demands of railwaymen.

The open session was addressed by various trade union leaders and Members of Parliament.

### Railway Authorities Violate I.D. Act

The South Central Railway Authorities terminated the services of V. Venkateswara Rao and 15 others, who were working under Bridge Inspector, Rajahmundry. The Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) did not take up the dispute for conciliation till a strike notice was served on 11th April, 1984 by the General Secretary, South Central Railway Employees Union (SCREU). In the conciliation proceedings conducted by ALC (C), Vishakapatnam the Railway authorities refused to participate on the ground that SCREU is an unrecognised union, though, there is no such provision under the I.D. Act. However, they met the ALC (C) separately and handed over a note claiming that the termination of the above 16 workmen are valid because the Supreme Court has upheld the right of the authorities to exercise their discretion while observing Section 25 (G) of the Act. The failure report therefore has been submitted on August 4th.

The CITU (Central) taking up the case has represented to the Labour Secretary that the authorities have prevented the facts of the case to come to light by refusing to participate in the conciliation. They have violated the Industrial Disputes Act on several counts and as such the case should be immediately referred to adjudication or arbitration because in a writ filed by the retrenched workmen earlier the High Court of Andhra Pradesh had passed an order that facts should be considered by the industrial relations machinery and if it is not settled, the workmen can come to the High Court for relief.

Samar Mukherjee M P has taken up the case with both the Railway Ministry as well as the Union Labour Ministry.

### Ranaghat Convention

The eighth annual convention of the Ranaghat Branch of the Divisional Joint Council of Action of the Railwaymen was held in the Harvey Institute, Ranaghat, Eastern Railway, on 5th September follow-

(Contd. on page 20)

## Reinstate the NTR Ministry

### Delhi Women Court Arrest

THE blatant attack by the Centre on the verdict of the people culminating in the dismissal of the N. T. Rama Rao ministry in Andhra Pradesh produced a wave of revulsion among the women in the country's capital as reflected in the series of demonstrations held between August 20 and 25.

Even though there was hardly any time to campaign and mobilise the membership, the Janawadi Mahila Samity units in Delhi enthusiastically participated in the struggle. On August 20, at the call of the CPI (M), CPI and RSP, women joined the courting arrest programme to demand the immediate dismissal of the Bhaskar Rao Ministry and reinstatement of NTR as the Chief Minister. In spite of the pouring rain women, many with children in their arms, courted arrests. The following day a large section of women attended the rally organised by the opposition parties at Ramlila Maidan.

On August 25, the women organised under the Janawadi Mahila Samity participated in the Save Democracy Day programme in a large number. Along with the students and the youth they marched from the India Gate to the Rashtrapati Bhawan to submit memorandum to the President demanding reinstatement of the NTR Ministry. The procession however was stopped by the police at the Boat Club and all the women courted arrest along with others. The State Committee of the JMS met on September 1 and decided to carry forward the agitations till the NTR Ministry was reinstated.

### Bombay Women Lathi Charged

Large sections of women joined a huge procession taken out from Grant Road to protest against the dismissal of the NTR ministry. The march was organised jointly by CPI (M), CPI, Janata, Congress (S), Peasants' and Workers' Party and the Republican party. The wrath of the Congress (I) Government against the democratic demands of the people was exposed when the state police brutally lathi charged the demonstrators, not sparing the women even. The women leaders like Ahiliya Rangnekar (CPI-M), Tara Reddy (CPI) and Mrinal Gore (Janata) were seriously injured. A number of people were hospitalised. In a protest meeting held later the deliberate lathi charge was condemned by the leaders. In a statement issued from Calcutta, Manju Gupta, President of AIDWA also condemned the lathi charge.

### Rasta Roko at Andhra Pradesh

The women volunteers of the different political parties made it a Women's Day on September 1 at

Andhra Pradesh, when the CPI (M), CPI, Janata and Telegu Desam jointly organised the Rasta Roko programme. Over 700 women demonstrated outside the General Post Office at Abid Road, Hyderabad. The heavy traffic in the entire area around Basbirebag, Manpally, Koti and Majanjahi markets got jammed for several hours. Ultimately a strong contingent of women police came and arrested over 250 women when the jam was cleared.

### Dharna at Calcutta

Organised by the 24-Parganas District Committee of Ganatantrik Mahila Samity (AIDWA) a large number of women staged a day long dharna in front of the Sealdah Railway Station at Calcutta on September 1. They demanded sacking of the usurper Bhaskara Rao and reinstatement of the NTR ministry. Women from various places came in a number of processions to participate in the dharna. Various fraternal organisations and trade unions extended support to the programme. The dharna was addressed among others by Shyamali Gupta, General Secretary of the W. Bengal State Committee of AIDWA, Kamal Sengupta, Rekha Gooswami, Sadhana Mukherjee, Maya Sarkar and Hemanta Ghosal. The speakers also explained the 9 point people's demands made by the left front Government to the Centre. The programme was carried forward in other districts also till September 8.

## Women Court Arrest in Tamilnadu

On August 14, a day before the Independence Day, about 3,200 women belonging to the DWA picketed the State Government Offices in all the districts of the State — in 50 centres — and courted arrest. The picketing was organised demanding supply of the essential commodities through Fair Price Shops. The essential commodities asked for included 20 kg. of rice per card per month, all varieties of Dal, Oil, Firewood, essential medicines, baby food and cheaper varieties of cloth. About a year ago rice supplied in ration shops was cut from 20 kg to 12 kg in cities and to 6 kg in other areas due to drought. The Centre did not increase the rice allotments to the State. The women also demanded of the Government to set up vigilance committees for ration shops, reconstitute the existing few with representatives of women's organisations that were acting in the area and ensure that the committees were convened regularly and run effectively.

Apart from above, in the months of July and August the Tamil Nadu unit of the DWA, conducted two important statewide campaigns concerning  
(Contd. on page 20)

# Decisions of Punjab State Committee of CITU

**T**HE meeting of the Punjab State Committee of CITU held at Jullundur City on 9th September under the presidentship of Kishori Lal, demanded payment of wages to the workers during the curfew period in the state recently. Despite repeated demand by the workers the Govt. of Punjab has been refusing to concede this legitimate demand.

The meeting also criticised the refusal of the army authorities to permit holding of gate meetings and demonstrations and to carry out other legitimate T.U. activities and demanded immediate restoration of freedom for T.U. activities.

The meeting condemned the role of the extremist elements for their disruptive role at the behest of foreign powers and called upon the working class to fight for unity of workers of all religions and for preservation of unity of the country.

The meeting demanded a minimum wage of Rs. 600 to the unskilled workers and Rs. 2 as DA per point rise in consumer price index number. It decided to launch a statewide movement in co-operation with other trade unions to achieve this demand.

The meeting expressed its grave concern at the prevailing crisis in textile industry and held the Central Government's policies responsible for the crisis. It also condemned the Punjab Government and the textile managements for the paying lowest rates of wages in the country. An unskilled worker in Punjab textile mill is paid less than half the wage of a Bombay worker. The meeting therefore decided to hold a state level convention of textile workers at Rajpura in October so that united movement is launched in the state to increase the level of wages and other benefits to the textile workers.

The meeting condemned the policy of retrenchment of hydel workers in the state who had worked for several years. The meeting demanded that the workers should be absorbed or be given alternate jobs. It congratulated the workers for their relentless struggles to protect their job security.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU explained the efforts made by the CITU in building united movement of workers in the country and how response to the policy of unity and struggle has been evoking good enthusiasm among the workers. He pointed out the need for massive educational campaign among the workers to explain the situation in Punjab and launch a movement for a political solution to the problem of Punjab. He also pointed to the growing attacks on the democratic rights and need to strengthen the struggle for preservation of parliamentary democracy.

The meeting decided to bring out a booklet on the situation in Punjab and to launch a statewide campaign

on its basis. A programme of holding educational class for the workers was also discussed by the Committee which decided to hold T.U. class in all the industrial centres in the state at an early date. The meeting discussed the policy of the CITU on verification and considered steps to maintain proper reports and submission of annual returns by all the unions.

## CITU Congratulates the Workers for Their Struggle

**B.** T. Ranadive, President, Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement on September 12:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions warmly congratulates the workers who have joined the one-day general strike in Tamilnadu, Bundh in Bihar and who have come out in protest demonstrations in Delhi and several other centres of the country in protest against the anti-labour policies of the Government and their attempt to scuttle democracy braving arrests and repression.

The CITU denounces the Government of Tamilnadu who in order to ruthlessly suppress the call for one day general strike in Tamilnadu against the anti-labour policies pursued by both the Cong(I) Government at the Centre and the AIADMK Government in Tamilnadu arrested thousand of workers as a measure of striking terror in the hearts of the workers. It is gratifying to note that the working class with the broadest possible support of the left and opposition parties in Tamilnadu have responded enthusiastically to the call of strike despite repression.

The CITU condemns the Government of Bihar for its failure to implement the earlier agreement with its own employees including secondary and primary teachers which has forced them to go into an indefinite strike from September 4, 1984. It demands that the Government of Bihar should immediately settle the demands through negotiation with the leaders of the strike. It congratulates the working class of Bihar in responding massively to the call of Bundh given by the eight left and opposition parties.

The CITU congratulates the workers of Delhi and all other centres of the country who have come out on the streets protesting against the attacks on democracy and trade union rights by the Congress(I) Government at the Centre.

### Special Issue of Working Class

The November issue of the Working Class will be a special issue. The price will be Rs. 2 per copy. Please send indents for extra copies immediately.

# HEC Workers' Rebuff to Agreement with Scab Union

THE strike of 17000 workers in Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi achieved remarkable success and the management had to settle the issues with the "unrecognised unions" on 30th August 1984, tearing asunder the anti-working class agreement signed with the scab INTUC union.

Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU visited Ranchi to study the strike situation. He was warmly received by the workers of all affiliations who called upon the workers to remain united till the achievement of their demands. Md. Ismail, President, Hatia Mazdur Union (CITU) was in Ranchi when the news of settlement at Patna in the office of the Labour Commissioner reached the HEC township on 30th August. He congratulated the workers for the success achieved as a result of unity of the workers and complete isolation of the INTUC union.

The management had to agree to pay the arrears of HRA and CCA, revise the promotion scheme, restore the T.U. facilities arbitrarily withdrawn recently and discuss other outstanding issues with the non-INTUC unions. M.K. Pandhe met the Union Industry Ministry officials and requested them to settle the strike on the minimum proposals suggested by Samyukta Abhiyan Samiti.

The success of the strike has once again proved that by encouraging the scab unions the public sector management cannot run the undertaking smoothly. It has to deal with genuine representatives of the workers. M.K. Pandhe issued the following statement to the press congratulating the HEC workers on September 1:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions congratulates the 17000 workers of Heavy Engineering Corporation Ranchi, for the successful twenty days strike under the joint leadership of 10 non-INTUC unions since 9th August, 1984.

The strike in this major public sector undertaking was prolonged inordinately due to the refusal of the HEC management to negotiate with the non-INTUC unions. The proposals given to the management as early as on 17th August by the workers ultimately became the basis of settlement of the strike. The wait and see policy adopted by the Central Government has led to the loss over Rs. 10 crores of production, when the order position of the undertaking was extremely good. The management had to accept improvement in the promotion policies, payment of arrears of HRA and CCA, restoring of facilities to non-INTUC unions which were earlier withdrawn at the instance of INTUC and withdrawal of victimisation of workers. The settlement is a rejection of the INTUC agreement which was signed by a scab leadership behind the back of workers. The strike has convincingly proved that the "recognised" INTUC union has lost all its influence among the workers.

The CITU demands of the HEC management to settle the other outstanding issues through direct negotiations with the genuine representatives of workers so that the working of the plant is improved at an early date.

## International Symposium on Environment and Industrial Safety

A three man delegation from China will be participating in the International Symposium on Environment and Industrial Safety to be held in New Delhi on 13-15 November 1984. The Symposium is being organised by the National Safety Council. The delegation will be led by Comrade Cai Shixiong, Member of the presidium of the All China Federation of Trade Unions and Associate Fellow of National Institute of Medical Prevention Centre of China. The other members of the delegation would be comrade Zhang Yousi, Deputy Director of Industrial Safety Department of ACFTU and Comrade Wang Jisheng, Interpreter of the International Department of the ACFTU. A delegation from CGIL, Italy will also be participating in the Symposium.

Com. Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary CITU will read a paper in a panel discussion on "Contribution of Trade Union Movement in Tackling the Industrial Environment and Accident Problems." Com. M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU has been nominated by the National Safety Council as Rapporteur for the same session. Over 400 delegates from India and abroad are participating in the symposium.

### Errata

\* In the August issue on page 13 under the sub-heading "Victory of Hosiery Workers", in para 2, 4th line, it has been published, "After six months, it will be Rs. 2 per point rise". (Source: Ganashakti of July 6). Com. Raghunath Kushari, Working Committee member, CITU has pointed out that it would be, "DA will be revised half yearly", instead of what has been published.

\* In the report of the Assam State Council meeting published in the August issue on page 17, the 20th line of the second para reads, "But it is nevertheless a fact that all our unions in organised sector have been thus demolished". Com. Amal Ghosh Dastidar, General Secretary of the Assam State Committee has pointed out that no union has been demolished. Two of our unions have been forcibly occupied and some of the other unions which were friendly to us have been disrupted.

The errors are regreted—Ed.

## Govt. Withdraws Age-old Customary Bonus of State Bank Employees

**G**OVERNMENT of India, by introducing Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill 1984 has done away with the customary bonus which the employees of Imperial Bank (Now State Bank) of India had been getting from 1943. This blatant attack on wages of the employees was sought to be justified on the plea of "Equal Work Equal Pay", vulgarising this important provision of the "Directive Principles of the State" as embodied in our Constitution.

The Bill came up for discussion in Rajya Sabha on August 27. Mostafa Bin Quasem (CPI-M) opposed the bill and said that this customary bonus was paid in 1943 and since then despite various laws it was paid to the employees. Tracing the history as to how the employees had been fighting against the withdrawal of this bonus during internal emergency he explained the difference between the customary and profit-sharing bonus. The case went up to Supreme Court under whose direction was referred to a tribunal which gave its verdict in favour of the employees. Govt. has gone into an appeal in Madras High Court. This Bill, therefore seals the process of justice also. He said "I think that this piece of legislation is nothing other than an act of conspiracy designed by the Govt. of India to snatch the rights of several thousand employees of the State Bank of India and I cannot consciously associate myself to such a conspiracy. So, Sir, echoing the voice of protest of thousands and thousands of State Bank employees raised by them outside the Parliament, I inside the Parliament, strongly protest against the Bill and I protest mainly on two counts. In essence and in effect, this legislation is tantamount to making an attack on the legitimate long standing rights of the employees of the State Bank of India and secondly, in view of the fact that the writ appeal is still pending in the Madras High Court, this piece of legislation amounts to unnecessarily disturbing and interfering with the process of the judiciary in our country thereby making the present process of law a mockery."

Congress (I) M.P. N.K. Bhat, ex-President, INTUC also could not support the Bill. He pleaded that let the Bill be made applicable to the new entrants.

The opposition called for a division while voting. As the Bill was passed by majority (Congress-I and AIADMK) the opposition M.P.s staged a walk out during second reading of the Bill. Thus by law the earnings of the State Bank Employees have been depressed.

## Stop Bankers' Move to Reduce Maternity Leave

**V**IMALA Ranadive, Secretary, All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women issued the following statement on September 10:

The All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) strongly protests against the attempts of the Indian Banks Association to reduce the maximum Maternity leave from twelve to six months and pre and post natal leave to below 3 months for women bank employees.

During the last five years, nearly 70 per cent of the new employees taken in the urban centres in banks are women. It was surprising therefore that the All India Bank Employees Association and the National Confederation of Bank Employees in their negotiations with Bankers have accepted the condition to reduce the maternity leave to half without considering the opinion of over 60,000 women employees. The Indian Banks Association has taken this step despite the U.N. Women's Decade and bypassing the ILO Convention in this regard as also the Constitution which has accepted as sacred the protection of motherhood. The All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) condemns the move of the Bankers and calls upon the Trade Unions and the working women to raise their voice against this injustice and to compel the Indian Banks Association to withdraw the provision.

### Secretary General Metal TUI Visits CITU Office

Comrade Alain Stern, Secretary General of the Trade Union International of Metal Workers visited the CITU Central office on 3rd September 1984 and had a discussion with the CITU leaders on the problems in Metal industry and the united movement launched by the workers. Com. Stern assured that the Metal TUI would express solidarity with the Indian metal workers during their struggles. He was also happy to note the growing relations between the Metal TUI and the Steel Workers Federation of India. From the side of CITU M. K. Pandhe, Nrisingha Chakraborty, P. K. Ganguly and Vimala Rsnadive participated in the discussion.

# Demand for Nationalisation of Bengal Potteries and National Tannery

On behalf of different unions of Bengal Potteries Ltd., representatives of the INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS local units and the Officers' Association met the Prime Minister in a delegation on August 29 with a memorandum for nationalisation of the Bengal Potteries.

The delegation was composed of Bhajan Das Gupta, Badal Kar Sunil Mahanta, Tapan Chatterjee, Mohit Biswas, T.K. Ghose and was led by Indrajit Gupta, Dwipen Ghose and Geeta Mukherjee-M.Ps

The Prime Minister gave a sympathetic hearing and being informed about the viability and market potential she said that it should be expedited. The delegation also met the Finance Minister earlier along with Samar Mukherjee, M.P. and be assured that a decision will be taken very soon.

The delegation also submitted a memorandum on the nationalisation of the National Tannery Company to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister.

*(from page 15)*

ed by the Joint Convention of Railway passengers and Railwaymen on 6th September, 1984.

The Divisional Joint Council of Action, Sealdah, was one of the first joint platforms of category wise Associations of Railwaymen which were born through united struggles in the country in early seventies. It is at Ranaghat on 5th September, 1971, that the first joint zonal convention of categorywise organisations was held.

This convention while highlighting the local grievances of the Railwaymen, drew their attention to the anti-labour and anti people policies of the Government and laid stress in the importance of total unity not only of Railwaymen but of the entire working class of the country to combat those policies.

The joint Convention of passengers and Railwaymen which discussed the rail commuters' problems called for unity of passengers and Railwaymen for joint effort to force the railway authorities to remove their difficulties for which the railway administration is solely responsible.

The open session was addressed among others by Dipen Ghosh M.P., and S.K. Dhar, Secretary General, AILRSA.

*(from page 16)*

matters of immediate concern to the people. A month long signature campaign in July culminated in demonstrations in front of Panchayat unions and District Collectors' Offices. About 7000 women participated in the demonstrations held in 57 centres. 1,13,555 signatures were presented to the Nitritious Meal Minister on August 1 by a delegation of the DWA in Madras.

## Ranchi Women's Solidarity with HEC Workers

Working women and housewives in HEC township played a notable role in the recent three week strike of the workers of Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi, Bihar, on 19 point charter of demands. Immediately after commencement of the strike on August 9 about 3000 women with babies in arms demonstrated before the office of Chairman of HEC and demanded settlement of the Charter of Demands. The Chairman had to come out his office and meet the women workers who explained their grievances to the Chairman. Bad maintenance of housing quarters and acute scarcity of water in the colonies have been agitating the minds of the women for a considerable period of time. The women workers also were campaigning against the black legs and prevented them from joining duties. They also helped in foiling the game of the INTUC leaders who repeatedly tried to disrupt the united strike. Women were largely attending the rallies of the striking workers held almost daily. Several processions taken out by the women also helped in keeping morale of the workers during the strike. A large number of women came to the forefront as activists and campaigned from house to house to maintain the unity of the striking workers.

The Hatia Mazdoor Union is taking initiative to form a unit of AIDWA so that these women are brought in an organisation and the movement of toiling women is further strengthened in the HEC township.

### Cochin Port workers Contribute to CITU Fighting Fund

Cochin Port Employees Organisation has contributed Rs. 2000 towards the CITU Fighting Fund out of the collections made from among the Port and Dock workers after the recent agreement. The Organisation has also contributed Rs. 3000 towards the Fighting Fund of the Water Transport Workers Federation of India.

## Strike Preparation on Raptakos Issue

**T**HE Federation of Medical Representatives' Associations of India (FMRAI) in its extended meeting of the Working Committee held at Patna on September 7 and 8 called upon all the medical representatives to launch one day's strike on the issue of the mass scale victimisations in Raptakos Brett & Co. Ltd., a monopoly drug house. It is to be noted that the medical representatives of the company are organised under the FMRAI, and on simply serving a charter of demands by FMRAI on behalf of them to the Company in July, 1983, the management took a vindictive stand and terminated the services of about 130 medical representatives, including the important union functionaries all over India. It has also illegally withheld the salaries of another large number. In order to break the employees' consolidation under FMRAI, it floated a scab union and tried to impose the agreement arrived at with it on all others.

During the entire period the medical representatives waged unremitting struggles, courted arrest and made repeated representations to the Union Labour Minister and the Chemical & Fertiliser Minister. About 60 Members of the Parliament submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister last month. CITU and National Campaign Committee extended full support to the struggle. But the Government of India is still sitting silent refusing to intervene in the struggle on the specious plea that it is a "state subject".

Although the management was unable to contain the rising struggles of the medical representatives even by deployment and recruitment of anti-social elements the recalcitrant attitude of the Central Government gave a flip to it to renew its efforts to tear asunder the united fabric of FMRAI. It has concentrated its evil designs with all unfair labour practices in W. Bengal, Rajasthan and other places.

In this background the Working Committee of FMRAI gave the call for preparation of the countrywide strike. It has also decided to approach the All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees Federation (AICAPEF) so that all workers of the industry — in the plants, offices and field join the strike to make it a pharmaceutical industry bundh day. The date will be fixed in consultation with the AICAPEF.

### Strike in Indo Pharma

The Indo Pharma Employees Union gave a call for one day's strike on September 21 in its plant at Bombay. The call was given demanding reinstatement of the medical representatives of the Company. The Company had closed down its Marketing Division and retrenched all the 154 medical representatives of the company in June on the plea of "loss". All negotiations having failed the union was compelled to launch the strike action. FMRAI observed solidarity actions in all the states in support of

the strike.

## IDPL Workers on Struggle

The workers of the Rishikesh plant of Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd., a Central Public Sector Undertaking are on the path of struggle in pursuance of the 10-point demands submitted by the IDPL Kamgar Union (CITU). Apart from the local demands of the plant workers, the union has demanded negotiations on the charter of demands submitted by the All India IDPL Kamgar Federation to which it is affiliated.

The union organised huge gate meetings and dharnas during the August end. To intimidate the workers the management called the CISF and three truck loads of armed PAC. Having failed to provoke the workers, it deployed anti-social hirelings when the workers started relay hunger strike from September 10. The drunken hoodlums beat up the General Secretary, R.K. Dasgupta and two other union leaders, S.S. Rawat and Khandari, snatched the mike and damaged the tent of the hunger strikers. The undeterred workers however retaliated and the hoodlums had to beat retreat. The federation in its Working Committee meeting held at Delhi on September 15 and 16 condemned the management and called upon all the affiliated unions to lodge protest memoranda to the management. A delegation led by Sushil Bhattacharjee, M.P., President of the federation met the H.O. management at Delhi on September 15. The management was ultimately compelled to call five representatives of the federation including the General Secretary of the Rishikesh plant union for negotiations which commenced at Delhi on September 21.

Meanwhile, the medical representatives of IDPL at the call of FMRAI decided to go on strike any day after October 10 demanding settlement of their charter of demands submitted by FMRAI in 1982.

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## AROUND THE STATES

### TAMILNADU

#### Statewide General Strike

Jointly called by CITU, AITUC and LPF (DMK), a successful general strike was observed in the state on September 12 protesting against the anti-labour policies of the Central and the State Governments and demanding reopening of the closed and locked out establishments. The state Government let loose its repressive machineries and arrested several thousands of workers all over the state. The police resorted to a brutal lathi charge and burst tear gas shells at the BHEL complex at Tiruchi and injured a large number of workers. The police even entered the residential quarters of the workers and intimidated the inmates. Despite the intimidations the strike was nearly complete in most of the big and small industrial units. About 10 lakh workers joined the strike in the state. In a joint statement R. Umanath, General Secretary of the State CITU, A.M. Gopu (AITUC), and C. Kuppuswami (LPF) condemned the police actions and demanded a judicial enquiry into the BHEL incidents. In a statement issued from Delhi, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, while condemning the police actions, congratulated the workers for the successful strike and called upon them to prepare for further actions to fight back against the offensive of closures and lockouts.

#### Hosiery Workers End Strike

The 129 days long strike of 20,000 hosiery workers of Tiruppur was withdrawn on August 27 after an agreement. The strike was jointly called by CITU, AITUC, LPF (DMK) and the AIADMK unions from April 20 in pursuance of the demand for increase in wages and payment of DA linked with the price index. The employers remained adamant and refused to pay DA. The state Government ultimately washed off its hands by invoking Section 10 (b) of the I.D. Act and ordered for 10 per cent increase in wages and a D.A. of Rs. 46 and referred the dispute for adjudication in tribunal. The employers refused to pay this amount also and tried to break the strike and take away the machineries. But the workers resisted the designs of the employers. Massive rallies and solidarity actions continued. A successful bundh was observed at Tiruppur. The workers started picketing the Taluk offices from August 16. More than 3000 workers were arrested. Meanwhile a number of employers came forward to settle the issue on the basis of the government's order and ultimately all of them agreed to implement the Government's order and the strike was called off from August 27.

### Bonus Struggle by Tea Plantation Workers

The tea plantation workers in the state have launched united struggles for bonus from September 18. The call for the struggle was jointly given by CITU, AITUC, LPF, HMS, TNTUC, INTUC and the AIADMK unions under the banner of the Joint Council of Trade Unions. The managements being adamant to pay bonus according to the demands, conciliation proceedings were drawn up by the Deputy Labour Commissioner at Coimbatore. In the meantime the planters unilaterally declared 8.33 per cent bonus based on incorrect accounts. The unions challenged the accounts produced by the managements and demanded the accounts to be verified by the Central Government. In pursuance of the demand, the unions decided to launch relay hunger strike from September 18 and also work to rule. The managements still remaining adamant the unions have started preparations for indefinite strike.

### DELHI

#### Weeklong Protest Actions Against Closures, Lockouts

The Delhi State Committee of CITU launched a week long protest actions against lockouts, closures and retrenchments in the Industrial belts of Delhi, Ghaziabad and Faridabad from September 6 to 12. Over 20,000 workers have been affected in these areas. Over 15,000 leaflets were distributed during the period. Gate meetings street corner meetings, processions and rallies were organised with massive participation of the workers. The programme culminated at Delhi with a procession of over 2,000 workers including a large number of women workers, which marched from the Boat Club to Udyog Bhawan where a rally was held. A delegation led by Md. Ismail, M.P., Vice-President of CITU and Sushil Bhattacharjee, M.P. General Secretary of the State Committee met the Secretaries of the Commerce and Industry Ministeries and submitted memoranda to them demanding reopening of the closed and locked out units. In a statement issued to the press, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU congratulated the workers for carrying forward the struggles against closures and lockouts.

### BIHAR

#### Massive Rally at Patna

Lakhs of people participated in a massive central rally at Patna on September 12, jointly organised by nine opposition parties, viz, CPI(M), CPI, Janata, RSP, FB, DSP, Congress(J), Congress(S) and Marxist Co-ordination. CITU and other trade unions extended full support to make the rally a big success. The rally was organised in protest against the toppling of the duly elected Governments of Farooq Abdullah and NTR, against the rising prices and growing unemployment, increasing police inter-

vention against mass movements, against the growing offensive of closures and lockouts, for speedy land reforms, against eviction of share croppers, for remunerative prices to the peasants, for minimum wage to the agricultural workers and against the continuous power crisis.

Despite severe floods in several parts of the state, workers, peasants agricultural labourers, women and tribals came in large numbers from all the districts to demonstrate their anger against the misrule of the Congress(I). A massive demonstration was first held before the Assembly. Thereafter the huge mass marched to the Gandhi Maidan for the rally. Addressing the rally, Samar Mukherjee, M.P., General Secretary of CITU made a scathing attack on the authoritarian drives by the Centre headed by Indira Gandhi. He said, the toppling of the Governments of Farooq Abdullah and N.T.R. were open trampling of the verdict of the people and a drive for one party dictatorship. Regarding the economic policy of the Government, he said that the capitalist-landlord system does not adopt policies for the benefit of the workers, peasants and the toiling people. The policies are politically exercised in favour of the landlords and the monopolists. Basic land reforms are not implemented, which leads to growing pauperisation of the landless poor. It is in pursuance of this pro-landlord and pro-monopolist policies that growing attacks are inflicted on the people to suppress their democratic struggles. The only way out for the workers and the people is to forge impregnable unity and step up united struggles against these anti-people policies. This unity and united struggles have to be translated into practice in every town, every village and every industry to launch mass actions against the Government. The rally was also addressed by Indradeep Sinha (CPI), Nani Bhattacharjee (RSP), Chitta Basu (FB), Jagjivan Ram (Cong. J), Karpoori Thakur (Janata) and Tarakeshwari Sinha (DSP). In a statement issued from Delhi, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU congratulated the workers for their massive participation in the rally.

### **Railway Workers Fight against Corruption**

The railway workers in Jamalpur workshop are on struggle against open corruption in recruiting Khalasis and Apprentices. Bypassing the employment exchange, the authorities have been indulging in back door methods of recruitment. In a statement, the General Secretary of the Mazdoor Kalyan Sangharsh Samity and Retired Rail Mazdoor Union has alleged that while out over 30 thousand applicants for Khalasis 13 thousands were called for interview recently, none was selected. The posts however have been filled up. The applicants are being coerced by the hoodlums and agents of the managements for bribes to the tune of several thousand rupees for getting a job of Khalasi. When the workers started protest agitations, the management hireling threatened them with dire consequence. On September 3 and 4, when the workers

were holding gate meetings, the hoodlums attacked them with rods, cycle chains and pistols. Later on, after the gate meeting they chased the union activists and beat up and severely injured K.N. Kanth and Vivekanand who were admitted in the railway hospital. Condemning the management the union has demanded of the General Manager, Eastern Railway actions against the local management. Undeterred by the goonda attacks, the workers have intensified their struggle.

## **ORISSA**

### **Continuous Strike by Teachers**

Teachers of about ten thousand non-Government schools and colleges in Orissa have ceased work from September 5. The struggle has been launched by the All Orissa Federation of Teachers' Organisations in pursuance of their 11-point demands. On September, 10 thousand of teachers of Puri District courted arrest in front of the Legislative Assembly. The teachers of Cuttack circles thereafter courted arrest on September 11, 12 and 14. The Government of Orissa and the State Education Minister, instead of settling the demands of the teachers amicably have adopted a policy of confrontation against them. Branding the movement as "politically motivated", the Government has floated a scab Congress(I) Teachers' cell to split the movement. The retrograde action of the Government however failed to wean away the teachers from the united movement. All fraternal trade unions, students and opposition parties have extended full support to the movement.

## **KERALA**

### **Construction Workers' Convention**

A statewide convention of construction workers was held at Calicut on July 22, which was presided over by K.P. Sahadevan. The Convention was attended by 270 delegates from ten districts of the state. After the welcome address by M. Vasu, Chairman of the Reception Committee, Debanjan Chakrabarty, convenor of the All India Co-ordination Committee of Construction Workers' Unions inaugurated the Convention. He pointed out the main problems of the construction workers like service security, lack of legal protection, son of the social bias in employment opportunities, sub-contract system etc. and called for consolidation of unity among the workers and building up united struggles in defence of their interests. He highlighted the initiative taken by CITU to organise the construction workers on all India level and build up their struggles.

T.H.K. Warriar placed the report for discussions. Ten comrades from different districts participated in the discussions and narrated their experience of exploitation by the employers and expressed their urge for co-ordinated movements under central guidance. P.G. Bhaskaran Nair, Vice President of

the State CITU, addressed the delegates. The Convention formed a 15-member state Co-ordination Committee with T.H.K. Warriar as the Convenor. The Convention adopted resolutions demanding setting up of a Wage Board for the construction workers and a central legislation.

## **ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS**

### **Protest Day Observed in A&N Islands**

At the call of the Andaman & Nicobar State Organising Committee of the CITU, 1st August was observed all over the Islands as Protest Day against the indifferent attitude of the A&N Administration towards the various demands of the working class, such as regular shipping services to and from mainland and arrangement of sea passage; against price rise; enhancement of minimum wage, etc. The day was observed by wearing black-badges and by organising work-spot demonstrations, mass dharna, processions and public meetings.

In Port Blair a Mass Dharna was staged in the Saheed Park. Later, a huge procession was taken out which culminated in a mass rally at Ratnam Market. N. Vasudevan, President, local CITU presided over the meeting. In his presidential address, he called upon the working class of the Islands to fight out the anti-working class policies of the Govt. and prepare themselves for sustained struggles in the coming days for realisation of their demands. B. Chandrachoodan, General Secretary, A&N State CITU and S.K. Wazid, Gopal Bhattacharjee, Mohammed Ali also spoke on the occasion. The day was also observed in various other parts of the Islands like Diglipur, Myabunder, Little Andaman, Billiground, Katchal, Car Nicobar, Great Nicobar, etc.

## **ASSAM**

### **State CITU's Demands to the Government**

A delegation led by Amal Ghosh Dastidar, General Secretary of the State CITU met the State Labour Minister on August 8 and submitted a memorandum which included demands like 20 per cent bonus for all tea garden workers; undisturbed supply of rations to plantation workers which is a part of their wages; withdrawal of all prohibitory orders imposed against normal TU activities; disbanding the armed gangs raised by some tea garden managements in the name of VDP; reopening of the closed mills; early agreement on the upward revision of wages of plywood workers; immediate intervention into the anti-labour practices adopted by the managements of BUILDWELL, National Construction, Kamrup Paper Mill, NBCC and Nanak Singh Sujan Singh Sadna of Gauhati; strict implementations of all Labour Welfare laws like Plantation Labour Act, Shops & Establishment Act, Factory Act, etc and immediate withdrawal of police cases against all the CITU activists particularly in the Tea Gardens.

## **Conference of Jute Mill Workers**

On the occasion of 3rd Conference of the Brahma-putra Jute Mill Workers Union held on 28th and 29th July last, Laxmi Saigal President of All India Jute Workers Federation called upon the workers to fight unitedly to defeat the anti-people policies of Indira Gandhi's Government. The conference was held after long 5 years due to the political situation not being congenial to hold the same during the period. The conference started with the hoisting of red flag by Ganesh Das, the oldest worker of the mill. The Conference adopted resolutions against price rise, attacks on democratic rights, against war danger, closure, of Silghat Jute Mill, etc. An eleven point charter of demands for the jute workers was also adopted.

On 29th July a large public meeting was held under the presidentship of Amal Ghosh Dastidar. Besides Laxmi Saigal the meeting was addressed by Nandeswar Talukdar, Secretary of the State CPI(M), who dealt at length with the problems of Assam and Punjab, development in Kashmir, etc. and called upon the democratic people to organise themselves and fight unitedly in defence of democracy, unity and integrity of the country.

## **Peace Day Observed**

In pursuance of the call by CITU, the International Day for Peace and Trade Union Action was observed on September 1 at various places in the country.

W. Bengal State CITU organised massive rallies and processions throughout the state. Gate meetings were held in all the industrial centres at Calcutta and other places. A huge procession of several thousand workers were organised jointly by the Merchantile Employees Federation, the Bank Employees Federation and other trade unions at BBD Bag. At Patna, CITU along with several trade unions of NGOs, Bank, LIC, Transport workers, Pharmaceuticals, Rickshaw pullers, etc. took out a procession and held a rally near Patna Junction railway station. The rally was presided over by Srikant Sharma, Treasure of the State CITU and addressed among others by Yogeshwar Gope, the State President. At Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh, G. S. Balaji Das, Vice President of the State CITU presided over a public meeting held at Vikamamahal on the occasion. Among others who spoke were M. Nageshwar Rao (CITU), C. Prabhakar Chowdhury and Padala Rama Rao (AITUC) and B.B. Naidu, leader of the Paper Mill Staff and Workers' Union. Processions and rallies were organised by CITU in the industrial centres of Delhi, Ghaziabad and Faridabad. A big public meeting was held at Okhla Industrial Belt of Delhi. The day was observed by various unions at different parts of the country. The meetings urged upon the workers to step up the struggle for peace to stall the war manoeuvrings of the U.S. imperialists.

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situation in the rural areas where unemployment continues to increase and assets are not built. In the first place only a part of the huge sums spent on the programme reaches the poor and produces jobs for them. A substantial part is sequestered by officials. The job creation claims have been exaggerated.

No doubt a few have certainly benefited. But this is far from tackling the unemployment programme and creating a new basis for economic advance.

The claim that the employment scheme will automatically lead to revival of handicraft, of establishment of new agro-based industries has no basis in fact. The handicrafts and hand looms and other small industries are in complete ruins. Tens of thousands small concerns are closed and millions are unemployed. The claims that the employment scheme will repair these ruins and revive these industries is asking for the moon. As matters stand the employment schemes cannot be anything other than just relief work, affording some temporary relief but totally incapable of changing the life status of any section of the people.

The stress on self employing industry is a convenient way for the state to escape its responsibility for providing jobs. A few thousand rupees are to be given to some people mostly favourites in the name of self employment. This is the basis of the bank-melas organised by the Indira Government. It is only intended to bolster the electoral prospects of the ruling party. Besides once you distribute the sums you can claim that so many lakhs have been properly employed. The objective of providing productive jobs for everyone who needs it is going to remain a distant dream.

While the approach paper declares the laudable objective of providing jobs for everyone who needs it does not seem to cover the two crores of unemployed in the cities, industrial unemployed workers. There is no reference to this section anywhere. All schemes of employment are mentioned in relation to the rural unemployed. There is no mention of tens of thousands thrown out of jobs due to closures and lockouts and what is to be done with them.

On the contrary the employers and the government repeatedly talk about modernisation, computerisation and automation to prop up industry—all of which means further attacks on jobs. A recent statement emanating from the labour department of the Government of India gives a green signal to computerisation and removes the earlier restriction on the import and use of computers. It was accepted till now that computers should not be introduced without the consent of the trade unions concerned. Now it seems the trade unions are only to be informed and nothing more need be done.

The approach document claims to devote greater attention to rural housing, very good. But what about housing in the cities, housing for industrial

workers? They are asked to live in slums. Slums will not go, only they will be improved and basic amenities will be provided. It was estimated that by the end of the sixth five year plan more than 30 million people will be living in the slums of Indian cities. No one knows how many more millions will be added to this figure at the end of the seventh plan.

The approach document promises no relief to the people and the working class of India; on the other hand it holds out the prospect of further deterioration in the living condition of the workers and the people.

### Fight Authoritarianism, Divisive Forces

Last two years have witnessed unprecedented developments in our country but the trade union movement has hardly noticed them and much less has it done to combat them.

The challenge of divisive forces has become menacing, with secessionist elements helped from abroad trying to break the unity of our country. The Government on the other hand is worsening the situation by resorting to administrative remedies only and adopting measures which assail the democratic rights of the Indian people. Shades of some thing worse than emergency are already there. The amendment to NSA, the Special Court Act, with the onus to the accused to prove his innocence, the provision to extend the Ordinance to any state, the abuse of Governor's powers in Kashmir to illegally dismiss the Abdulla Govt. and the misuse of his authority in West Bengal and Andhra, and finally the deployment of armed forces in wide areas and during communal riots all portend a situation worse than the emergency. But the organised trade union movement has hardly done any thing to meet this attack. Unless it throws its organised strength to fight the authoritarian drive it will be guilty of letting down the Indian people.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi continues her authoritarian drive with the illegal and outrageous dismissal of the N.T.R. Ministry which continues to have the majority support in the legislature and among the people. This is the second illegal dismissal of a non-Congress(I) government within a period of few weeks.

This wanton and unscrupulous attack on the constitution and state democracy with aid of unscrupulous Governor proves that Srimati Indira is determined to extinguish all democratic norms and opposition and create a situation worse than the emergency. The entire people of Andhra are in revolt. The first protest led to killing of 14 people. The protest must continue. The entire working class and the CITU unions all over the country must join the protest. The illegally established Ministry in Andhra must be deposed and the unscrupulous Governor must be sacked.

In West Bengal and Tripura the Central Government discriminates against the Left Front Governments of the two states in matters of financial

resources, relief and industrial developments, and at the same time the ruling party gives licences to its followers to indulge in anarchy and violence in cooperation with any reactionary force.

The Government of India has robbed Rs. 2000 crores of all the states by refusing to implement the recommendations of the 8th Finance Commission this year. West Bengal alone has been deprived of about Rs. 300 crores and Tripura Rs. 46 crores. It is the duty of the working class and the people of the two states to defeat Congress(I) efforts at destabilisation. In the coming Parliament election the Congress(I) party must be defeated.

Dangerous is the challenge of divisive forces.

For the battle is not against an employer or even against the Congress(I) Govt. We and the Indian people are face to face with international imperialism which is now out for its old mission of subjugating peoples of other countries. And for this purpose it requires disunity and discord in the newly liberated countries, the weakening, partitioning and dismemberment of big countries like India before it can swallow them.

The experience of both Assam and Punjab proves this. If in Assam the seemingly innocuous demand for settling the foreign entrants issue was used, in Punjab there was an open appeal to religious fanaticism and secession with the raising of the slogan of Khalistan.

The working class must take full note of the imperialist hand behind these appeals and movements. The USA's role in Assam has been already exposed. Its role in the Punjab developments stands equally exposed with the encouragement to spurious leaders of Khalistan by high U.S. dignities, the discovery of millions of U.S. dollars in the Golden Temple. Other imperialist powers like Britain do not lag behind in encouraging the Khalistanis. And the Pakistani Dictator Zia plays the same role. It was reported in the Press that special training camps for Khalistani commandos were organised in Pakistan.

The picture of conspiracy is thus complete. Anyone who either disposes of these developments as simply a distorted manifestation of economic discontent or discontent due to unequal treatment, etc., fails to note the deep rooted plan behind it.

These divisive forces are effective in misleading large sections because they exploit some genuine grievances or backward consciousness for their purpose. The backwardness of certain regions under the capitalist path, the uneven development, the mounting problems of unemployment and economic misery under the bourgeois-landlord Government are not seen as common problems to be solved by joint class struggle of the exploited sections of the Indian people, but are presented as injustice done to one particular region, community or caste. People steeped in caste or communal consciousness or suffering from regional outlook fall easy victims to these appeals, especially when they are going through some acute economic difficulty.

The imperialists are exploiting the weaknesses and backwardness that are inevitable under a bourgeois-landlord State in a newly liberated country. This alliance of exploiting classes is neither able to push forward the economic development of the country, nor overcome the backward looking religious, communal and caste consciousness. Its policies maintain their existence and it is not unwilling to use them to divert the attention of the people from class and democratic battles. The utter bankruptcy of Congress rule is expressed in this. Its class policies are leading to the disintegration of Indian national consciousness.

Both Punjab and Assam have become running sores because the Congress (I) Party, guided by its limited class interests is unable to make a political bid for the masses and isolate the forces of secession and disruption. It cannot give a political battle to these forces. It must therefore rely on administrative measures and make the question of people's unity a law and order question.

In Punjab the isolation of the extreme secessionists and their political defeat was possible if the Congress (I) Government had heeded the voice of the CPI (M) and other Opposition parties to settle the demands which were in the interests of the people of Punjab as a whole. But this did not suit the electoral interests of the Congress (I) party and therefore considerations of national unity were sacrificed to the electoral needs of the Congress (I) party.

This, however, is inevitable. The bourgeois-landlord combination unwilling to uproot old land relations, is also unable to fight anti-national and fissiparous tendencies. This is the experience of all newly liberated countries.

That is why the working class and its organised trade union movement has to play a crucial role in the fight for the unity of the people and the nation, for national integration. Without this the country will rapidly lose its sense of oneness and unity.

Here lies a basic weakness of the Indian situation. The working class is neither vigilant nor even aware of the political developments and its responsibilities towards the people, the peasantry, the freedom of our country. Without this awareness of its responsibility the trade union movement becomes an exercise in protecting minor economic demands of the workers accompanied by utter blindness to the new dangers facing the country.

The trade union movement must overcome this weakness and rouse the workers to fight all divisive, communal and secessionist tendencies. The trade union movement, with its organised might, must lead the fight against the anti-national forces and by its organised intervention must inspire other sections of the people to take up the challenge. This is an urgent task facing the trade union movement in the new situation.

*August 24, 1984*

# Implement ILO Convention on Hours of Work

Nrisingha Chakraborty

**I**N the very First Session of the International Labour Organisation held in 1919, the first international standard was set up concerning Hours of Work (Industry) and is known as ILO Convention No. I. The main provision of the Convention was that, the hours of work of all workmen in all industries should be limited to 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week. It also provided for principle of averaging for two to three weeks subject to that, no workman should be forced to work beyond 9 hours on any single day. It also provided differential rates of payment for working overtime, half an hour rest after 5 hours of work, etc.

There were, however, some exceptions. In Article 10 of the Convention, for British India two exceptions were granted, namely (1) for those who are covered under Factories Act, the limit of duty hours should be 60 a week and (2) in other respects the provisions of this Convention shall not apply but further provision shall be considered at future meeting of the General Conference. In Article I (2) of the Convention it was stated that the provisions related to transport by sea and on inland water ways shall be determined in a special conference dealing with employment at sea and on inland waterways.

Government of the then British India ratified the Convention which was registered in April 1921 and the Factories Act was amended in 1922 limiting the duty hours to 60 hours a week. During the British regime itself the hours of work of factory workers were progressively reduced to 48 per week. But all those who were not governed under the Factories Act were excluded and they had no specific duty hours, provided under law.

In the Central Legislative Assembly while amending the Factories Act in 1922 an assurance was given that for railway workers a separate Hours of Employment Regulations (HOER) will be introduced considering the continuity of the operations, meaning that the railways had to work round the clock. Only in January 1931 the HOER was brought into force, by which time the working hours under the Factories Act were reduced to 54 hours a week. Since then while the Hours of work under the Factories Act were reduced to 48, the HOER continued to remain unchanged. Even at that stage several categories of railway men were left out of the purview of the HOER for which the matter had to be adjudicated in 1946 by Justice Rajadhyakshya.

In 1947, when India attained freedom this discriminatory Article 10 should have been treated as void automatically because, British India was split into free India and Pakistan. Especially, after the Constitution of India was adopted in 1950, in which two fundamental rights were granted, namely,

'Equality of all citizens in the eye of law vide article 14 and prohibition of forced labour vide Article 23, the Government as well as International Labour Organisation should have openly declared that Article-10 of ILO Convention No. 1 no longer applies to the workmen in free India and all discriminations are removed. This was not done. It is also not known whether the General Conference had at any stage dealt the question of Hours of Work of the workmen in industries other than those under the Factories Act.

Under Article 22 of Rules of Procedure of ILO, the Govt. of India is required to submit a report about implementation of ILO Convention No. 1 concerning Hours of Work (Industry) 1919 for the period from 1.7.1980 to 30.6.1984 and the Govt, as laid down in the procedure would have to consult the workers' organisations in India before submitting its report.

The CITU therefore, has submitted an exhaustive report in regard to the discrimination, non-implementation and violation of this particular Convention in India. In a memorandum dated 3.9.84 it has pointed out to the Govt. of India that although agriculture had been taken in the schedule of industries, there is no order in regard to the hours of work, as a result of which the workers are being forced to work from dawn to dusk in many cases. Similarly, all those who are engaged in loading and unloading operations in all industries, are sometime forced to work in a period spread over up to 24 hours, though, according to ILO Convention such spread over cannot be for more than 10 hours.

It has been pointed out that in the Piece Rate System, even in the industries governed under Factories Act, differential rates of payment for the turn over in overtime hours are not ensured. It has referred to the fact that the working hours in almost the entire transport industry is discriminatory and violative of the Convention. In the Road Transport, the hours of work are sometimes spread over to 12 to 13 with 9 hours of work every day. The duty hours of the fishermen in the trawlers which sometimes go to high seas for fishing and the workmen in the Inland Water Transport system are not regulated at all. The entire period for which they are supposed to be in the boat at the instance of the employer, is not treated as duty and overtime wages, etc are not paid, apart from the fact that their living conditions in the boats are very bad.

As far as the railway workers are concerned there are violations galore. The CITU memorandum points out that the HOER is a discriminatory statute and should be removed from the statute book. It has pointed out that the railwaymen had struck work on all India basis in 1960, 1968 and in 1974 for intro-

(Contd. on page 29)

## Modification of the Procedure for Verification

The National Campaign Committee after threadbare discussions has rejected the present procedure for verification of membership of the central trade unions and suggested modifications thereof. The following memorandum was submitted to the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) on September 15, signed by M.K. Pandhe (CITU), N.K. Siddhanta (AITUC), Brij Mohan Toofan (HMS), R.K. Bhakt (BMS), J.S. Dara (ITUC), Pritish Chanda (UTUC-LS), Pratul Chowdury (UTUC) and A.P. Chakravarty (TUCC).

THE National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions in its memorandum dated April 7, 1984 to the Union Labour Minister pointed out, inter alia, that the present verification is most unscientific as it does not exactly assess the actual strength of the unions and the present machinery is open to bias and partiality by the verifying officers and there is no way to prevent this contingency. Besides, the records kept by the Registrars of Trade Unions are not upto date and accurate. In certain states unions fail to get registration number for months and even years on despite fulfilling all required formalities.

Although all unions are expected to keep their records properly and upto date, the records themselves and their maintenance are not a proof measuring the strength of a union. A suitable mechanism has to be evolved with regard to record checking machinery. This apart, the system of random sampling as well as of spot verification are the two areas which are open to abuse and provide room for arbitrary discretion exercised in a partisan manner. They cannot be checked either by the Union or by the workers concerned.

The Memorandum therefore suggested that mutually agreed new procedure for verification should be evolved through discussion with the central trade unions.

We still adhere to the principle of secret ballot as the only scientific and democratic method of determining the strength of each union. The recognition of a union should be decided only by taking opinion of the workers.

Although the majority of the trade union centres have expressed their opinionous time and again in favour of secret ballot as against verification of membership rolls, the Government of India is not yet prepared to accept this reasonable proposal.

The outline of modified proposals in the overall interest in coming to a consensus on this vexed question is given below only for purpose of verification of membership of the central trade union organisations:

1. The verification of membership of Central Trade Union Organisations should be conducted once in 3 years.

2. We already suggested in October 1981 that all cases of disputes or objections raised by trade unions should be resolved by means of secret ballot of workers of the unit or undertaking concerned. For the purpose of coming to an agreed position we are prepared to limit the areas of such cases by taking such disputes or objection for secret ballot which involve membership of 500 and above and where records of employment are statutorily maintained. While raising objection to the membership of a union, some reasons should be adduced.

3. When membership of unions is being verified on the basis of claims put forth by each central trade union organisations, copy of Annual Return for the relevant year or receipt of submission of annual return should be considered enough to show that the union is registered and submitted the Return for a particular year.

Where the application for registration of a union has been pending for more than three months despite fulfilment of all formalities, such union should be deemed to be a registered union for the purpose of verification. This provision is necessary in view of difficulties faced by unions in certain states despite completion of all formalities.

4. The chance of abuse of the existing method of spot verification can be minimised if the sampling figure is increased from 10 per cent to 20 per cent and the verifying officer discusses before hand the matter with the representatives of the concerned unions whose membership is being verified in a particular unit or establishment and finalise the details of place, time, random numbers etc.

5. The existing method of physical verification to determine the affiliation of a worker is the most crucial part of the whole process of verification which has attracted criticism and doubt of the unions. To minimise the room for abuse of this method, *firstly* it is necessary that the verifying officer does not conduct physical verification inside a factory premises or establishment or in presence of any management representative, *secondly*, the physical verification is conducted in presence of representatives of unions concerned so as to check that whatever the worker says is recorded correctly by the verifying officer and no undue pressure is exerted on the workers.

6. A committee of Central Trade Unions participating in the verification should be set up to decide the timetable of verification, periodically monitor the

progress of verification and to deal with the problems which crop up during the course of verification.

7. In case of prolonged lock-outs, closures, strikes or arrests in a particular unit which prevented the union from submitting the Annual Return for the relevant year, the annual return for the previous year should be taken into account for the purpose of verification. The spot verification should be conducted from amongst the workers available in such cases.

8. Where verification of a union for any purpose whatsoever has been conducted in the particular year

for which verification of central trade union organisations is being undertaken, the membership of a union as already verified shall not be subject to re-verification or to any objection.

9. The periodicity of collection of subscription of a union should be according to the provisions of the union constitution and not according to any set rules fixed by the verifying officer.

The above are our preliminary proposals for modification of the existing verification procedure and we might supplement our suggestions in course of discussions with the Government.

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duction of 8 hours day and 48 hours week for them. All these struggles were ruthlessly suppressed.

As far as the maximum period of duty at a stretch is concerned, the railway authorities violate the HOER, awards of different tribunals and the ILO Convention. The Guards in 1955 and the Loco Running Staff since 1967 have repeatedly struck work demanding reduction in their maximum hours of duty at a stretch. On 13.8.1973 the Government entered into an agreement with the All India Loco Running Staff Association (AILRSA) about limiting their maximum duty at a stretch at 10 hrs from 'signing on' to 'signing off'. This has not been implemented. Citing a memorandum submitted by the Secretary General, AILRSA, the CITU memorandum points out that the instances quoted therein

indicate that the Locomen have been forced to work 13 to 15 hours a day on an average. Such over work of the staff violates every national and international law. If workers refuse to continue to work even after 14 to 16 hrs of duty, they are penalised so that the protests by the staff are stifled. This has reduced them to the status of forced labour violating Article 23 of the Constitution of India.

The CITU has also approached the Director General and the Chairman, Governing Body of the ILO to take appropriate action in this regard.

(The memorandum is being published in a pamphlet form so that the workers may raise their voice of protest to force the Government to reduce the duty hours which will create hundreds of thousands of job and alleviate the problems of the unemployed to some extent.)

## Consumer Price Index Numbers

Base 1960

State/Centre	Apr. 1984	May 1984	June 1984								
				Bangalore	625	626	628	Coonoor	633	628	627
				Chikamagalur	594	590	585	Madurai	601	596	615
				Kolar G.F.	571	590	585	U.P.			
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>				<b>Kerala</b>				Kanpur	515	517	548
Gudur	498	497	502	Alleppey	636	636	674	Saharanpur	545	550	556
Guntur	585	598	614	Alwaye	610	619	637	Varanasi	634	627	627
Hyderabad	548	561	572	Mundakayam	577	579	603	<b>West Bengal</b>			
<b>Assam</b>				<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>				Asansol	541	541	559
Digboi	568	587	602	Balaghat	574	585	602	Calcutta	536	539	574
Doom Dooma	453	478	475	Bhopal	596	592	605	Darjeeling	452	457	464
Labac	459	467	475	Bhwalior	554	561	575	Howrah	496	498	525
Mariani	486	494	505	Gwalior	596	600	606	Jalpaiguri	441	445	456
Rangapara	475	479	500	<b>Maharashtra</b>				Raniganj	500	500	512
<b>Bihar</b>				Bombay	586	595	604	<b>Delhi Territory</b>	570	575	589
Jamshedpur	511	509	517	Nagpur	570	584	585	<b>Other Centres</b>			
Jharia	503	498	506	Sholapur	588	598	601	Berhampur ('49)	750	773	788
Kodarma	582	579	583	<b>Orissa</b>				Cuttack ('49)	707	716	732
Monghyr	551	537	556	Barbil	515	517	527	Jabalpur ('49)	746	762	778
Noamundi	524	524	527	Sambalpur	593	603	608	Beawar ('51-52)	627	625	663
<b>Gujarat</b>				<b>Punjab</b>				Tripura ('61)	529	548	545
Ahmedabad	551	557	564	Amritsar	554	551	551	H.P. ('65)	406	408	414
Bhavanagar	562	554	550	<b>Rajasthan</b>				Goa ('66)	412	416	431
<b>Haryana</b>				Ajmer	542	544	561	Bhilai ('66)	368	373	380
Yamunanagar	559	561	577	Jaipur	556	567	585	Bhilwara ('66)	328	327	332
<b>J. &amp; K.</b>				<b>Tamil Nadu</b>				Chhindawara ('66)	301	300	390
Srinagar	626	636	641	Madras	556	550	559	Kothagudem ('66)	351	357	374
<b>Karnataka</b>				Coimbatore	605	615	607	Rourkela ('66)	367	372	383
Ammathi	573	587	586					All India ('60)	559	562	574

(Figure in bracket indicate base year)

The day to reaffirm our pledge

**Protect the pillars of our freedom**  
**UNITY**  
**EQUALITY**  
**FRATERNITY**  
**PEACE**



On the 37th anniversary of our Independence, once again we pay our homage to the martyrs and millions of people who fought relentlessly and valiantly in the struggle for independence. When the fires of disruption are raging in different parts of our country, it is incumbent upon us to combat the forces of disintegration, destabilisation and separatism. And the prime need of the hour is to preserve the pillars of our freedom—Unity, Equality, Fraternity and Peace among the people.

The Left Front Government is determined to keep West Bengal

free from regional, communal and caste conflicts. A significant struggle ahead of us is to uphold the spirit of true federalism and to establish healthy relationship between the Union and the States which will forge greater unity among the different segments of our society.

We are committed to the democratic values and ideals, and we shall continue our struggle against injustice, exploitation and vested interests.

On this day of reckoning, we reassert our pledge to serve the people, and to safeguard the unity and integrity of the nation.

**GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL**

# International Struggles

## Great Britain

The strike of the nearly two lakh British coal miners entered the seventh month on September 13. The strike was precipitated when Ian MacGregor, Chairman of the National Coal Board whom Thatcher imported from the United States, clearly from the instruction of the Government tore up the agreement with the National Union of Mineworkers on the "Plan for Coal" and peremptorily closed down the running Cortonwood pit where the miners had been promised security for years ahead. The Government moved to close down 20 pits thereafter affecting twenty thousand workers. According to the agreement, the NCB and the union had agreed to close down only the exhausted pits.

The strike which is the largest in England, has seen unprecedented scenes of violence by the armed and mounted police. Several workers have been killed and thousands including the wives of the miners have been arrested and kept without trial. Picket line violent clashes with the police and the organised strike breakers are now a daily feature of the strike continuing in several parts of England.

It is a deep rooted realisation that the miners while resisting the closures of the pits are fighting a battle for the whole working class and save the industry from being handed over the private sharks. The deliberate policy of the Government is to cut costs in the state owned industries by reducing the labour force and to encourage the private employers to do the same. The only criterion for the Government is profitability. This explains the unprecedented support that the coal workers have received from various trade unions. While the dock workers at Liverpool, Hull and all the twelve ports in Scotland have struck work for the second time from August 25, the British Trade Union Congress (TUC), representing 10 million workers also decided to extend support to the miners as decided in its week-long Annual Conference held at Brighton from August end to early September. The Conference of TUC decided to defy the anti-trade union law passed by the Thatcher Government which imposes heavy fines on trade unions for extending support to the struggles of other trade unions. The unions representing the railwaymen, dockers, seamen, lorry drivers, printers, town hall workers, etc, have all extended help to the miners. A union of lorry drivers was fined 50,000 pounds by a South Wales court. But it refused to pay the fine as per decision of the TUC. The court has threatened seizure of the assets of the union. Even the money collected from the public for the starving families of the miners have been seized. A Labour Member of the Parliament, Clive Soley was arrested for collecting money for the starving miners' families.

The class hatred of Margaret Thatcher towards the miners and their supporters was revealed when

she remarked that they were a "scar on the face of the community and the enemy within". Going a step forward, her Finance Minister, Nigel Lawson commented that the cost to the nation which was estimated at 300-350 million pounds (others put it at more than 1000 million pounds) was a "worthwhile investment" to destroy the trade unions. However, despite the rude response of the Thatcher Government, the strike continues unabated. The crisis that has precipitated and the fall of the Edward Heath Government in 1972 by the same coalminers' strike which is haunting Margaret Thatcher, have forced her to cancel her tour to Far East. With the support of the TUC, the prospect of widespread industrial actions is in the offing.

The strike has drawn in international support. From India CITU has extended support. In a communique to the National Union of mine workers on September 10, the Bank Employees' Federation of India has extended support. It has also called upon its members to send gift food packets for the striking workers.

## U.S.A.

The coal industry in U.S.A. is in deep crisis. After the 1973-74 Arab oil embargo the USA began championing self-sufficiency in coal as the future source of energy. Although the consumption went on declining, through increased workload and productivity the USA has stockpiled enough coal to last many many years. The two biggest customers of coal, the utility industry and the steel industry have cut their requirements while production is still increasing. While the industry is turning to more and more exports, competition from the other coal producing countries is getting ever keener.

In such circumstances, the employers are resorting to more stringent measures against the workers in order to pass on them the burden of the crisis. Since 1978, the industry has closed down about 3000, i.e. nearly 50 per cent of the mines. Apart from thousands of workers retrenched thereby, more than one-quarter of the total number of miners have been laid off.

In this background continues the wage negotiations in the industry, the current agreements expiring on September 30. With the capitalist crisis deepening, the coal workers had to go on six indefinite strikes for wage increase during the last 17 years. Hectic negotiations are going on since the last six months between the employers and the United Mine Workers to avert the seventh strike. However, the prospects are bleak, since the employers are bent upon to impose a reduced wage packet to increase their profitability. The workers have started preparations for the strike.

### South Africa

Violent demonstrations marked the tri-cameral Parliament elections in South Africa at August end. To give a semblance of a "democratic" change, the apartheid regime of Botha envisaged the constitution of three separate Houses in the Parliament—one for the Whites, one for the Asians (mainly of Indian descendants) and the third for the colourds (mixed race.) But the Black constituting 73 per cent of the population was excluded. The diabolical plan backed by the Western imperialists was in fact chalked out to institutionalise colonialisation. But the people could not be fooled and violent demonstrations erupted. About 80 per cent of the Asian and coloured voters boycotted the elections. The police confronted the demonstrators with unprecedented violence killing a large number. The police violence continued unabated after Botha took over the post of the President from Prime Ministership. Thousands of blacks confronted the police around Sharpeville and Johannesburg protesting against rent hikes imposed by the new "democratic" Govt. in early September. Again a large number was killed. The black students also rose up in protest against the apartheid policies. Thousands of the Black students boycotted classes protesting against the excessive corporal punishments, lack of pupil representative councils, age regulations putting a bar on their educational facilities after 21 and the rigging of the examination results in favour of the white students. The police clashed with the students using whips, tear gas and the latest military weaponry to crush their protests. In this backdrop of mass protests and ruthless repression the Black trade unions in five gold mines served notice to go on strike on September 17 as the owners closed the negotiations rejecting the worker's demand for pay hike. Entrenched in its own economic and apartheid policies, the minority white regime is faced with the prospect of losing a quarter of its gold earnings at a time when it is required most because of the depressed prices of gold following a 25 per cent fall in the value of Rand as against the US Dollar.

### Argentina

At the call of the General Labour Confederation, the trade unions in Argentina launched a general strike on September 3, protesting against the economic policies of the Govt. The Confederation accused the Govt. of bowing to IMF pressure for an austerity programme and maintaining the economic policies of the former military Govt. It said the Govt. had failed to meet the workers' demands for wage increase to protect them from the 615 per cent annual inflation rate.

### Uruguay

Massive movements are continuing in Uruguay demanding restoration of democracy, trade union rights, release of political prisoners and unconditional election by November. After a massive strike on June 27, thousands of workers and the common people held a series of demonstrations in the streets

braving police repression. The militant and united agitations compelled the military Govt. to open talks with the political parties on August 3 and agree to a time table envisaging elections in November. Agitations however are continuing for the release of Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, the Presidential candidate and other political prisoners.

### Chile

Mass agitations have been stepped up in Chile against the military rule. The police fired rubber bullets at the demonstrators in the working class suburbs of La Victoria in Santiago in early September injuring a large number of workers.

### Bangladesh

A complete half-day general strike called by the opposition parties swept the country on August 27. The strike was called demanding immediate end to the Martial law and formation of a neutral caretaker Govt. to supervise the elections scheduled to be held in December. While confronting the workers to break the strike 18 cops were hurt due to retaliatory actions taken by the undeterred workers. As the military ruler Ershad still refused to withdraw the Martial law before elections, the opposition parties decided to resort to another strike action in September.

### Peace Rallies: Hiroshima Day

\*To commemorate the death of more than 2 lakh people in the world's first atom bombing by the USA at Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 respectively 39 years ago, a memorial service took place at Hiroshima on August 6 in the city's peace memorial park. About fifty thousand people joined the service including members of the bereaved families.

\*Thousands of demonstrators gathered in the major U.S. cities to observe the day. Four members of an environmental protest group scaled the Statue of Liberty in New York and unfurled a banner calling for an end to the nuclear weapons. A large number of women demonstrators rallied before the Seneca Army Depot in West New York, which is a store house of nuclear weapons.

\*Over ten thousand people formed a human chain around the ancient Acropolis Hill in Athens, lighting candles at dusk and chanting anti-American slogans. The three day celebration was addressed by the U.N. Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar.

\*At Madrid a large number of demonstrators hung a banner reading "Never again Hiroshima" and demanded Spain's withdrawal from NATO and closure of the US bases in the country.

\*Four leftist women's organisations held a convention at Calcutta and observed the day denouncing the US imperialists' war pursuits. Four student and youth organisations jointly observed the day at various places in Tripura calling a halt to the nuclear war designs by the U.S.A.