



# THE WORKING CLASS

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## The Trade Unions and Assembly Elections

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THE trade union movement and the working class must unitedly face the Assembly elections in co-operation with the Left parties and Opposition secular parties. The Lok Sabha elections showed that the working class got divided and large sections out of concern for national unity rallied round the Congress(I) and its allies. The opposition parties were defeated and in the working class belt even the Left suffered reverses. Not that the working class completely swang over the Cong(I) in CITU dominated and Left-oriented areas, but a large section did vote for the Congress and together with other sections ensured its victory.

The CPI(M) candidates in two industrial seats of Tamilnadu were unsuccessful though they secured a big vote. In the industrial and urban centres of Kerala also the Left candidates were defeated by the Congress(I) alliance. In West Bengal in the industrial and urban belt of Howrah, Hooghly, Calcutta and 24-Parganas there were reverses notwithstanding the fact that the Left Front ministry had protected the workers' interests and stood by them during the last seven years. A number of prominent leaders of the CITU were defeated in these belts.

The cause of these reverses in the strong areas of the CITU must be properly gauged.

It was pointed out in one of the documents of the CPI(M), "The rise in the consciousness of the workers despite our mass struggles and political agitations and battles has not gone beyond Left Democratic consciousness so far as our immediate followers are concerned. As for the vast mass of the workers, trade union activity for them has no relation with any political activity. They look upon the trade union as an instrument of achieving immediate economic demands and consider themselves free to follow and political party of their choice which means in practice any bourgeois party including the ruling party". (Tasks on the Trade Union Front).

It should not be surprising if a large section of this mass swing to Cong(I) in the situation created

after the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi and influenced by the fear of destabilisation following it; no surprise if it thought that national unity can be entrusted to the care of the Cong(I) Government.

There are also some other causes which helped this swing. They flowed from the weaknesses of the trade union movement which the CITU has been pointing out and trying to rectify. The organised working class — the workers organised in trade unions form only a part of the working class in the industrial areas. There are other sections. There are the unemployed, the workers in the small and unorganised industries, and the young workers who have no trade union rights.

The trade unions neglect these sections. Their activities do not reach them, do not appeal them. They do not come forward to organise the workers in unorganised industries nor to carry forward struggle for the unemployed or the young workers. The trade unions also neglect the struggle for the rights and demands of women workers.

It was pointed out earlier, "The failure to link trade union with the demand for relief and other demands of the unemployed has been a major weakness of our trade unions, alienating large sections of the new entrants to the labour market from the organised movement of the working class. If continued, this policy will have incalculable consequences doing the biggest harm to working class unity and solidarity". (Tasks)

In all advanced countries the trade unions have special department to deal with young labour entrants. It is necessary now in India that all our trade unions pay special attention to them otherwise the future for movement will be compromised.

"Manoeuvring against the crisis, the Government and the employers are now intent on eroding the provisions of labour legislations and depriving a large section of workers of their rights. The young entrants in factories and concerns are the victims of these policies. The employers discriminate against

OBSERVE BHOPAL DAY ON FEBRUARY 4

the new entrants who are kept temporary for many years. In many places they are treated as contract workers, there is no provident fund, no gratuity, no E.S.I. for them.

“By and large there is a tendency to neglect the special demands of this section and concentrate on general demands which for the best part benefit permanent workers long in service. The young and militant section often gets frustrated, loses faith in the common movement and becomes a plaything of an anarchistic individualistic outlook. Their militancy get misdirected.”

It is not surprising that in the context of this weak link of the organised trade union movement with these sections, they should be swept away by the national wave. That this should happen in the midst of a deep-seated economic crisis with widespread lockouts and closures, with a huge mass of unemployed on the streets for all of which the policies of the ruling party are responsible, underlines the one-sidedness and failure of the organised trade union movement.

There are reports from several states that by and large the organised following of the trade unions voted for the Left. But the unemployed, the unorganised and the youth in large number voted for the Congress(I) and its allies. This fits in with the noted weaknesses of the trade union movement. At the same time one should not fail to note that all sections to a greater or smaller extent were affected by the national wave and Cong(I) drew support from all of them.

The CITU should examine the election swing in the light of these weaknesses and find out what role they played in the States to affect the poll outcome. Without such an investigation our trade unions would be groping in the dark and liable to repeat the mistake.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its communique of January 19 says the following about the reverse in West Bengal:

“The Central Committee noted at the same time that to have denied the majority of seats to the Cong.(I) in West Bengal was no ordinary achievement in the context of the tornado-like wave all over the country. The CPI(M) and its allies have also gained massive vote which showed the deep roots the Party has struck among the masses of West Bengal. The rural areas stood by the Party, the effect of the Party’s steadfast attention to the interests of the peasantry. The party was given a jolt in the industrial area which apart from other causes was particularly sensitive to the wave of national consciousness.”

It further states, “Despite several measures taken by the Left Front ministry of West Bengal to defend the interests of the workers and other sections of the people, there were signs of erosions of our influence in certain sections of the people which were visible

before the elections. The party lost three Assembly bye-elections to the Cong.(I) in the last year. This erosion was noted earlier by the State Committee but its causes could not be completely eliminated. The economic situation, the closures and lockouts against which the State Government had hardly any remedies under the present Constitution were part of the additional factors. At the same time it was noted that some measures like the educational policies were not understood and appreciated by the people. The efficiency and performance of some ministries needed improvement in the eyes of the people. In the present situation it was inevitable that when some down trodden sections were protected, some others got aggrieved. The expectations roused among the people were out of proportion to the power of the State Government. It was also found that there was some loss of contact with sections of the people.”

In Kerala the Left and Democratic Front lost all but three seats, yielding seventeen seats to the Cong.(I) and its allies. But the LDF got no less than 40 per cent of the votes which speaks of the strength of the left parties and their allies among the people, and which is the result of the incessant struggle carried on by the front and mass organisations in the interest of the people. The national wave alone was unable to defeat us in Kerala. It had to be bolstered by reliance on communal and caste combination. The ruling party not only relied on these forces but helped their polarisation by conceding many communal demands.

It was becoming clear that progress of Left forces in Kerala was not possible unless breakthrough was made in the following of the communal and casteist parties and a new correlation of forces was brought about.

The appearance of Hindu Munnani in this election is further evidence of the growing polarisation on communal lines. And it has affected the following of the Left also. The Hindu Munnani together with the RSS-led BJP polled more than 4 lakhs or 3.6 per cent of the total polled. A good part of its votes in Trivandrum (1 lakh 10 thousands) seems to have come from that section which normally votes for the Left. It is all the more necessary to carry on a determined fight against communal and casteist forces and enhance the image of the Left as unpromising secular forces.

While the CITU and its trade unions should consider how far these various causes affected their following in West Bengal and Kerala, they should also examine how far the weaknesses of the trade union movement affected the election results adversely.

Though these weaknesses cannot be overcome before the Assembly elections, they have to be remembered to have a proper approach towards all sections of the working class during the election campaign.

The working class must understand the importance of the Assembly elections. The massive majority of the Cong(I) in the Lok Sabha and weakened Opposition are developments dangerous for Indian democracy. If they are followed by similar majorities in the States they will easily lead to one party dictatorship under the protection of the Constitution. It is therefore necessary for the trade unions to be vigilant and help rally all the secular oppositional and Left and democratic forces to give a stiff fight to the Cong(I).

Understanding unity among the trade unions will help here. Their united voice will enable the Left forces to take the initiative to gather together all oppositional forces. Every effort should therefore be made by the trade unions to unite the strength of the working class which will facilitate the united rally of all secular and oppositional forces.

In these elections the question of national unity will no doubt be raised. The Cong(I) is bound to raise it and claim the confidence of the voters referring to the situation in Punjab and Rajib's promise to solve them. The trade unions, the Left and Opposition parties cannot neglect the issue. Its neglect by certain parties has proved ruinous in the Lok Sabha elections. The trade union, the CITU and the Left parties should patiently explain their stand, their criticism of Cong(I) policies and come before the working class as firm champions of unity and secularism and opponents of communalism, casteism and secessionist forces.

They will also have to warn the people against the dangers of imperialist conspiracies which led to the assassination of Smt. Gandhi. The arrest of more than ten persons connected with Prime Minister's and Rasthrapati's Secretariat for spying activities has revealed the role of imperialist agencies in undermining the security of our country. It seems, everything connected with Government's decisions, defence plans, economic decision, steps in relation to Punjab and Assam and foreign policy decisions were all revealed to the enemy by a number of treacherous officers purchased by foreign money.

That these treacherous activities should go undetected for such a long time shows the rot that has set in the administration under Cong(I) rule. Obviously, when persons in the highest positions are not free from allegations of corruption and favouritism the bureaucrats draw their own conclusions and indulge in anti-national activities without much fear.

The working class will have to raise its voice in defence of the non-aligned foreign policy and rouse the vigilance of the people for its maintenance and

fight against any compromise.

In these elections attention will be concentrated on immediate economic issues which demand an answer from the ruling party. The performance of the Cong(I) state ministries in the last five years has not only been miserable, but has heaped untold sufferings on the industrial workers and the rural masses. The problem of unemployment has become intractable and insoluble. Sickness of industries has become a common feature of all industrial cities. Closures and lockouts have thrown out tens of thousands of workers on the streets. The chemical holocaust in Bhopal is a sharp pointer to the disastrous policy of the Government to woo the multinationals whose sinister role in the third world countries like India was fully laid bare. The destitution in rural areas knows no limit. But the Cong(I) Government does not promise any departure from its policies of transferring the burdens of the crisis to the common man. The election manifesto of the Cong(I) does not answer any of these problems; brushing them aside it only talks of linking wages with productivity, a clear warning to the working class that offensive of increased workload and unemployment is going to be unleashed. There is no promise to withdraw the National Security Act, Essential Services Maintenance Act and there is no promise of granting recognition to unions who really represent the majority of workers. The demand for deciding recognition by taking ballot has been rejected. All these questions will come in the course of elections and the trade unions must unitedly raise them and expose the anti-working class and anti-people policies pursued by the Cong(I) Governments.

They must draw pointed attention to the fact that under the Cong(I) State Governments there is no relief for the unemployed through some kind of unemployment wages. The Cong(I) manifesto talks about relieving unemployment in the rural areas but has absolutely no plan to relieve the situation in the industrial cities. The trade unions therefore must raise the demand for including the right to work as a fundamental right under the constitution and pending its enactment demand immediate unemployment relief for the unemployed.

Raising these working class demands, raising the demands of the peasantry and agricultural workers, the trade unions should unitedly call upon the bourgeois opposition parties to lend their support to them and sponsor the 11-point charter adopted in the Calcutta conclave. This will ensure an effective unity of oppositional forces and enable all of them to give a stiff fight to the Congress(I) and scotch its plan of riding to victory.

## Observe Bhopal Day on February 4

**T**HE CITU Secretariat in its meeting held on January 16 decided to observe February 4 as Bhopal Day all over India. The programme was concretised in pursuance of the decision taken in the previous Secretariat meeting held on January 4 to gear up movements to explain to the mass of workers the sinister role of the Union Carbide which was criminally responsible for the chemical holocaust at Bhopal on December 3, 1984, killing thousands of people and maiming tens of thousands. The meeting directed the unions to simultaneously wage campaign against the multinationals in general and the policy of the government to woo the multinationals and give them a free hand, sacrificing all norms of industrial safety and environment at their feet, to use the country's resources as a part of their international racketeering at the cost of human lives.

February 4 should be observed by all the State Committees and affiliated unions of CITU by holding meetings, demonstrations, rallies, conventions, etc accompanied by mass postering on the issue drawing the cooperation of other trade unions. Resolutions should be adopted in the meetings and sent to the Union Labour Minister at New Delhi as well as to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh demanding of the Government take over of the company, adequate relief and proper rehabilitation of all the affected people and payment of full compensation to these people by the U.S. multinational Union Carbide. Copies of such resolutions should be sent to the Central Office of CITU. (*The draft resolution is being published hereunder*).

In pursuance of the decision taken in the previous meeting for holding a seminar on the Bhopal disaster at New Delhi, P.K. Ganguly reported about the steps taken in this regard. After having some initial talks with the Delhi Science Forum, he reported that the seminar could be held some time in April in cooperation with other Central Trade Unions. Efforts would be made through the Delhi Science Forum to contact other scientific and research organisations like the Indian Toxicology Research Centre, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Medical Research, etc.

The meeting also discussed about the position regarding submission of Annual Returns. Nrisingha Chakraborty circulated a state-wise list of the receipt of Annual Returns for 1983. The meeting directed all those unions which have not submitted the Annual Returns, to submit the same for 1983 immediately.

B.T. Ranadive informed the members that the AUCCTU, Soviet Union desired to send a delegation to visit India and have discussions with CITU, and that he on behalf of CITU had invited the AUCCTU to send a delegation to further strengthen the fraternal bond between the two organisations. The delegation is expected to come some time in March.

Vimal Ranadive pointed out that several state Committees had not yet sent the names of members

for the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women. The meeting requested the State Committees to send the names immediately so that a meeting of the Coordinate Committee could be called.

The Secretariat meeting was presided over by B.T. Ranadive and attended by Samar Mukherjee, E. Balanandan, Susheela Gopalan, Md. Ismail, S.Y. Kolhatkar, Sivaji Patnaik, Nrisingha Chakraborty, M.K. Pandhe, P.K. Ganguly, Niren Ghosh, R. Umanath, Ahiliya Rangnagar, Md. Amin, Ananda Pathak, Manik Sanyal, K.N. Ravindranath and Vimal Ranadive.

### DRAFT RESOLUTION ON BHOPAL TRAGEDY

This meeting of the union denounces the U.S. multinational Union Carbide for being criminally responsible for the death of thousands of people and maiming tens of thousands due to the leak of the poisonous gas from its plant at Bhopal. The multinational was running the plant without the necessary safeguards as its plant in the USA. Apart from this, there is widespread apprehension that the American employees of the company were conducting some research which had nothing to do with the manufacture of the pesticide but with lethal gases for chemical warfare. The chemical holocaust revealed the sinister role of the multinationals in the Third World doing experiments at the cost of human lives.

The meeting also condemns the Government of India for its policy of wooing the multinationals, sacrificing all norms of industrial safety and environment at their feet. It emphatically states that the culpability of the Government of India and the State Government of Madhya Pradesh is established. The factory should never have been allowed to be set up inside the city precincts. Despite a series of accidents the Government, not to speak of taking any step to enforce stringent safety measures, even refused to shift the factory outside the city boundaries.

The meeting demands that the Government take over the company and shift it to a safer side to ensure proper safety measures. The Govt. must ensure that the U.S. multinational pays full compensation to the families of those killed and those who have been affected.

The meeting further condemns the Government for hurriedly winding up the relief camp. The relief extended to the victims has been utterly inadequate. The Government also did not take any steps to protect the victims from the horde of U.S. lawyers who came down to Bhopal to cash in on the tragedy and dupe them. The meeting demands of the Government to undertake urgent measures to rehabilitate all the affected people.

The meeting extend heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and wishes speedy recovery to those affected by the poisonous gas.

# Government's Attempt to Suppress Facts

**T**HE Government of Madhya Pradesh is making a sinister attempt to suppress facts about the number of dead in the chemical holocaust created by the U.S. multinational at Bhopal on December 3, 1984. While showing lip sympathy for the victims it is resorting to subterfuges to keep the official figure of dead persons to the minimum. While the official figure is much below the 2000 mark, knowledgeable sources pointed out that the actual figure would be around 10,000. This has been confirmed by Delhi Science Forum and M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, who visited the place on December 29, as also by the Madhya Pradesh State Committee of CITU.

The official data relates only to those who died in the hospitals. The refusal of the Government to register the cases of the overwhelming number of dead persons who were not brought to hospitals is an attempt to deny legitimate compensation to the affected people and favour the multinational in this respect. Similarly, a large number of cases of permanent disablement is also sought to be suppressed by the Government. No record has been made of the large number of persons who escaped and later died and cremated without obtaining any certificate around the adjacent villages and towns. The jam packed Lucknow-Bombay Mail passed through the thick cloud of the gas and many people got down in way side stations and died in the villages. When their relatives came to record the dead persons, they were refused and asked to produce the railway tickets to prove that they travelled in the train.

### People Duped

The attitude of the Government is a sharp pointer to its character to subserve the interest of the U.S. multinational even during this grave tragedy. It also did not take any steps to protect the poor and illiterate victims from the horde of U.S. lawyers—ambulance chasers, as they are called—who descended on Bhopal like vultures to suck the victims—a typical capitalist style of “humanitarian service”. They took thousands of signatures, nay thumb impressions on agreements to receive “compensation”. It was reported that thumb impressions were taken on two “agreements”, one in Hindi and the other in English. The Hindi agreement said that the English one had been explained to the signatory, and the signatories knew nothing about the contents of the English agreement. And after these internationally famed U.S. lawyers completed the deals and flew off, the State Government announced its intention to file suit on behalf of the victims. The Attorney General has made a trip to USA to consult the same brand of lawyers. But till date no suit has been filed. Talks of “out of the court” deal between the Union Carbide and the Government of India is in the air. The workers should know that a few years back the Government of India had filed a suit against five U.S. drug multinationals for compensation against high pricing of drugs. But later, under pressure

from the Government of USA, it withdrew the case. They must remain vigilant against a similar surrender by the Government.

### Demand for White Paper

A deputation led by Motilal Sharma, the M.P. State secretary of CPI(M) along with CITU leaders met the Governor of Madhya Pradesh on December 16, 1984 and submitted a memorandum demanding submission of a White Paper by the Government to bring out all the facts connected with the gas leak, permission for the plant's installation, the safety standards and the so-called research work going on there. This is very pertinent in view of the multinational's manufacture of such a lethal gas, storing of the banned gas phosgene and the visit of a large number of chemical war experts from USA, U.K., Canada and West Germany. The memorandum also demanded take over of the Company and extension of all relief measures on war footing and payment of full compensation to the victims by the multinational.

### Fall Out of the Tragedy

The fall out of the tragedy is getting more gnawing with each day passing. A team of SFI surveyed the affected areas. After a whole month and with all the treatments, not a single soul has regained normal conditions. Those who have joined work, are unable to work continuously for even a minimum reasonable period. They have to frequently put off their tools complaining of palpitation, sweating even at this cold, weakness, head ache, giddiness, watering in the eyes and so on. Almost all the families have lost a number of wage earners. The rest have had to sell off their belongings in their struggle for existence. Loss of money, belongings, cattle etc have posed the question of life or death to these half fed, half clad people. Govt's tall claim of relief has been a mockery to them. While living in dark previously also, these people have been pushed into a darker future. Birth of still born babies have been already reported, and the fate of future pregnancies has become nightmarish.

### Relief Work by CITU

The CITU activists and SFI comrades extended all possible help in relief works. They joined hands with those of the BHEL Kamgar Union also and distributed medicines to the affected people. The BHEL management also supplied free medicines to the State victims. The CITU and SFI activists also mobilised other trade unions and workers along with the CPI(M) and extended all help to the victims in the hospitals, in the camp, for transportation, in collection of money and materials and other works. CPI(M), CITU and SFI also staged demonstrations and rallies and distributed leaflets appealing to the people to extend help to the victims and highlighting the demand for taking over the company.

## Food and Drinks Industries Committee

THE First Session of the Food and Drinks Industries Committee of ILO was held at Geneva from December 5 to 13, 1984. Joginder Sharma, Secretary, Delhi State CITU, represented CITU in the session. The other Central Trade Union represented was INTUC. Representatives of 26 countries attended the session, including representatives from the Ministries of Labour and Food, Government of India and the employers' representatives from the industry.

The plenary session discussed the general report placed by ILO which included reports of various Governments on effects given to the conventions and resolutions of the meeting of the Food and Drinks Committee in their respective countries. The main forum of discussions were the two sub-committees, one on social effect of technological development in the industries and the other on occupational safety, health and working environment. Participating in the first sub-committee, Joginder Sharma pointed out how with the introduction of new technology in India, the workers are faced with the problem of loss of jobs and freeze of future employment. He gave specific examples from bakeries, milk plants, sugar mills, tobacco industry, etc. The worker members of the sub-committee demanded that there should be prior negotiations with the unions before installation of new technologies and on their consequences with advance information about all the relevant details concerning the technologies. They also demanded that whenever technological changes led to increased productivity and consequently increased profits, the workers must share such profits through reduction in working time as a means of increasing employment opportunities. The demands raised by the worker members met with stiff opposition from the employers and Government representatives.

Joginder Sharma made a scathing criticism of the multinationals and the policy of the Government of India with regard to transfer of technologies. Some Government representatives from the third world countries also pointed to the unfavourable conditions under which such technologies are transferred to their countries. Joginder Sharma further highlighted the anti-labour practices of the multinationals and the similar role of the Government of India to subserve their interests. Negating the objection raised by the representative of the Ministry of Food, he cited anti-labour practices by multinationals like HMM (Horlicks), Glaxo, Liver Brothers, Britannia Biscuits, etc.

The final session adopted a resolution to strengthen ILO action for implementation of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and social policy and invited the Governing Body of the ILO to report to the next session regarding the progress of its implementation.

## Gramin Bank Employees on Strike

NEARLY fifty thousand employees working in more than 7000 branches of 172 Gramin Banks in India went on one day's strike on 28.1.85 in pursuance of their long pending demands such as equal pay for equal job; uniform pay structure and amenities; no segregation of existing Gramin Bank; creation of promotional posts for Branch Managers; regularisation of all existing messengers; creation of negotiating forum; promotion policy; withdrawal of deputed staff; house building loan; leave travel concession, etc. With these demands the All India Regional Rural Bank Employees Association (AIRRBEA) have been negotiating with Ministry of Finance, Govt of India and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development for the last few years but no solution has yet been made by the management. There is no official negotiating forum for Gramin Bank Staff organisations at the national level.

Though these banks have been established by Central Act and the Central Government is the major shareholder of these Banks, payscale of the Gramin Bank staff are equated to State Govt employees. Though the Gramin Bank staff are doing the same job of Commercial Bank employees, not only payscale but even amenities of Commercial Bank employees have been denied to RRB staff. Messengers have been working as sub-staff for the last 8 years without any confirmation or any pay scale. Branch Managers have been working from the year 1976 without any promotional post. AIRRBEA demanded more branch expansions but no segregation of existing Gramin Banks. All the study groups appointed by Govt of India/RBI have highly appreciated the works of Gramin Bank staff who have reached the door steps of rural poor in India. All the figures will go to prove that the Gramin Banks have the highest involvement in all the financial programmes launched by government for the rural poor. Credit deposit ratio has always been more than 100 in case of Gramin Banks. AIRRBEA demanded immediate settlement of all the long pending disputes in the interest of steady and effective economic development of all the rural poor in India.

### Rail Strike in England

Train Services in Central and Eastern England came to a stand still on January 17, when the railway workers responding to the call given jointly by the National Union of Railwaymen, Engineers' Union and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen went on strike reports A.P. The Strike call was given to protest against the assaults on railway workers in the area. It is understood that the railway workers refused to haul coal as a measure of solidarity with the Coal miners who are on strike for nearly one year for which such assaults were made.

# PANCHAYAT PAVES PATH TO PROGRESS IN RURAL BENGAL

At the time of independence, our objective was to achieve democratic decentralisation of power, by forming a Panchayat organisation. But this cherished goal remains yet to be achieved in India.

This bleak picture was altered in West Bengal when the Left Front Government came into power in 1977. A state-wide Panchayat Organisation with people's representatives, was established—driving administrative system down to the village level.

The rural life in West Bengal was regenerated through different plans and programmes of Panchayat institutions.



The programmes of the rural sector included distribution of homestead plots and ceiling surplus land among landless labourers, recording of rights of sharecroppers through Operation Barga, building of new roads, extension of education facilities and public health measures. Steps to increase agricultural production and implementation of small irrigation schemes yielded good results. In rural areas the co-operative services were further extended. Incentives were offered to development of Cottage Industry, improvement of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry. Payment of minimum wage was ensured to rural labourers. Special Assistance was provided to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and welfare measures were taken for other weaker sections of the community. Attention was also given to growth of social forestry and improvement of environment by afforestation.

We are committed to ensure the progress and prosperity of rural Bengal through Panchayats.

**Government of West Bengal**

## GREETINGS FROM AUCCTU

*The All Union Central Council of Trade Unions, USSR sent the following greeting telegramme to CITU on January 22 on the occasion of the Republic Day. The reply from CITU is also being published hereunder:*

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of organized factory, office workers and collective farmers, USSR, All Union Central Council Trade Unions sends hearty greetings to Indian Trade Unions and working people on occasion of your country's National date, 35th Anniversary of Republic Day.

We note with profound gratification that traditional friendly relationship between workers and Trade Unions of USSR and India is being steadily developed and strengthened. These relations are based on solid foundation of Treaty on Peace, Friendship and Co-operation signed between our countries, make important contribution to reinforcement of peace and stability in Asia and all over world. We wish Indian working people further success in carrying out socio-economic transformations in your country, in struggle for strengthening National Unity and Territorial Integrity of India, in country's development along path of Peace, Democracy and Social Progress.

### Reply

Dear Comrade,

We are extremely grateful to you for your warm message of solidarity and greetings on the occasion of the Thirtyfifth Anniversary of the foundation of our Republic.

We fully share your sentiments about the strengthening of the bonds of friendship between the working class and the trade unions of India and USSR. We are convinced that these bonds of fraternal relations will continue to grow further in forthcoming days. We are also happy to note the significant progress in further development of friendly relations between the CITU and AUCCTU in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

The Indo-Soviet treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation is the bedrock of the mutual relations between the peoples of our countries and we strongly feel that further strengthening of these relations will immensely contribute in the struggle against imperialist machinations and for world peace.

Recently, the CIA machinations in our country have now come to light very clearly and the entire country is conscious to defend its unity and integrity. The working class and the people of India will no doubt foil the game of these conspiracies and march ahead towards building a self-reliant economy. We value for firm support to the struggle of the Indian working class and the people for a socio-economic transformation in our country.

We take this occasion to wish the working class and the people of USSR all success in socialist construction and in the struggle for preserving world peace.

With warm greetings,

Yours fraternally,  
M.K. Pandhe Secretary,

## Attention of EPF Subscribers

### Scholarship for the Children of EPF Subscribers

*The Central Provident Fund Commissioner, New Delhi, vide its circular No. EI/27/8 Silver Jubilee/20330, dated December 6, 1984, has issued the following notification to the Central Trade Unions to bring the contents of the letter to the workers who are subscribers to the EPF. Members are advised to forward their applications according to this notification.*

"On the eve of the Silver Jubilee of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, the Central Board of Trustees, Employees Provident Fund, with the approval of the Govt. of India, instituted a Scholarship Scheme in 1980 to award scholarships to the meritorious children of the subscribers to the Employees Provident Fund. Under the Scholarship Scheme 15 scholarships for each year have been provided for the children of the subscribers who pursue their Medical Education in recognised institutions and 15 scholarships are earmarked for Engineering studies in recognised institutions. The children who are selected for award of scholarship on the basis of their own merits in the entrance examination to the above said professional colleges are eligible for a scholarship of Rs. 100 per month if they are non resident scholars and Rs. 120 per month if they are resident scholars. The scholarship once granted will continue to be paid depending upon the satisfactory performance of the candidates in regard to their discipline, punctuality in attendance and proficiency in their studies until they complete the course successfully.

2. The Scholarship scheme thus envisages grant of 30 scholarships every year (15 for Medical studies and 15 for Engineering studies) and for a period of six years the scholarship will continue to be increased to make the total at the end of sixth year to 180 scholarships. A scholar once selected will continue to draw the scholarship as already stated until he completes the course successfully.

3. You are requested to kindly bring the contents of this letter to the notice of your members and advise them to forward their applications for award of scholarship to their children through the respective Regional Provident Fund Commissioners to the Central Provident Fund Commissioner for being considered by a committee set up by the Central Provident Fund Commissioner for this purpose. It may please be noted that only such of the subscribers whose monthly emoluments do not exceed Rs. 1000 p.m. are entitled for the award of the scholarship."

# Women Workers in Plantation Industry

Vimal Ranadive

**A**FTER a report on "Socio-Economic Conditions of Women Workers in Plantation" which was published by the Labour Bureau, Simla in 1980, the Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation has recently published a "Study of the Working And Living Conditions of Plantation Labour in South India — Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in 1984". This study highlights the present conditions of wages, housing, medical, educational, welfare amenities etc. of the Plantation Workers in South. It has said that the Plantation Labour Act 1951 has not been properly implemented and there was a "need for strengthening the enforcement machinery under the Act so as to ensure that the welfare provisions of the Act are implemented effectively".

The information collected and observations made no doubt gives somewhat factual position of plantations in the South. We would like to deal with some of the aspects concerning women workers here.

## Employment

Plantation industry in the South employes a substantial number of women workers who account for more than 55 per cent of the total employment. Of 8 lakhs workers in Tea Plantations in the country 56 per cent are women, the share of women workers in coffee being 46 per cent. In rubber, women account for about 30-35 per cent of the total employment. It is true, when women have been thrown out from Jute, Textile, Tobacco, etc. on a large scale due to various reasons, in plantation industry women are still on a large scale. The reasons for the large employment of women in plantations is the unskilled, stereotyped work women are able to "perform better due to their nimble fingers", as is quoted by the plantation owners. In case of possible mechanisation in plantation women are bound to be out. With such a large employment of women, one would naturally expect better deal for women in plantation. But what is the position?

## Equal Wage for Equal Work

The report states: "There is no disparity between the wages of men and women and when the ratified minimum wages of the State Governments prescribed one single rate for adults in all the 32 selected estates, men and women workers were found to be getting the same wages. In fact, women in most of the cases were earning more than their men counterparts by way of incentive rates as women had a reputation of being better pluckers-pickers....".

Though it is true that the difference in wages between men and women workers is now less and equal wage is being implemented in some states like in

Kerala, it would not be correct to make a definite statement about equality of wages in men and women workers in plantation industry. Where ever pressure was brought from below by the movement of the trade unions the Equal Remuneration Act 1976 was implemented. It must be noted here that after the trade unions had intervened by way of struggles in West Bengal and Tripura, the employers agreed to pay equal wages. At the same time it is also true that in Assam, where the trade unions like INTUC work in league with the management, women get less wages despite the Equal Wage Act. The survey in plantations made by Labour Bureau, Simla in 1980 confirms this by stating that, "...however, the differentials in wage rates of men and women are found to be continuing in some of the sampled plantations even at the time of this study. In almost all the sampled plantations in Assam and Karnataka States, and in a few sampled Rubber Plantations in Tamilnadu and Kerala, the time wages of women field workers were observed to be lower than those of the corresponding men workers. Even after passing of the 1976 Act, such unfair practices continue in plantations..."

The Indian Labour Journal, October 1984, stated that "However, the practical experience in this regard is a little disturbing one. "At certain other places some employers were found using covert means of fixing lower wage rates. For instance, in some plantations in South India, certain jobs were found classified into grades, viz, Grade I, Grade II. Almost all the women workers except those engaged in plucking and picking operations were engaged in Grade II jobs and thus earned lesser wages than man..."

During seasons of plucking, women do earn more on piece rate basis, that too for 4-5 months. But what is the average monthly wage the plantation workers get? It is not more than Rs. 300-350, if the daily wages come to about Rs. 9-10. Comparing the present high prices of essential commodities in the market, Rs. 300-350 is not sufficient to purchase essential commodities. Therefore, plantation workers demanded Rs. 500/- as a minimum wage per month.

India ratified the ILO convention No. 100 in 1958. But there was no national law till CITU took up the issue. The Equal Wage Ordinance was enforced in the International Women's year in 1975. The legislation was passed in 1976 and the notification to the plantation industry was issued after 1977. But even after 10 years the unequal wage continues in plantation where women constitute a majority. It is not only in plantation industry alone but in beedi, construction, agriculture and in many other industries too, the wages are unequal. Unless, a sustained

campaign is taken up by the working women and the trade unions, the disparity in wages will continue.

### Creches

"The predominant share of women workers in the total workforce makes it obligatory on the part of employers to provide certain facilities to women one of which is creche for the children of workers". The Plantation Labour Act, Section 12 provides this. Moreover, "there should be enough space for children in the creche, children should be looked after by trained women...the employers are also required to provide fresh or prepared milk for the children refreshment...clothes for everyone, oil and soap..." The report further states "...while 71 per cent of the interviewed households in Kerala expressed satisfaction over the adequacy of creche facilities, only 40 per cent of the house holds in Karnataka and 50 per cent in Tamilnadu felt that facilities in the creche were adequate..." With regard to the maintenance the report says "creche was quite poor..."

Again the Indian Labour Journal, October, 1984 states, "...most of the creches in the Northern and North-Eastern Plantations were found to be not only below the prescribed standard of construction but also were found wanting in sanitation and cleanliness. In almost 88 per cent of the cases creches were being looked after by untrained staff. In some cases creches existed only in the form of tents..." With the result "only about 23 per cent of the eligible children were actually attending creches..."

This is the sad commentary made on the provision of creche not only by the government survey in plantations, but in the surveys in Mines, Beedi, Cashewnut, etc also. The actual conditions prevailing in the plantation industry with regard to creche are miserable. In most of the North East parts creche as such do not exist at all. Wherever they exist they exist on paper, or in a tent, or in a room. One may not even find children there. Milk supply is rare, clothes and cradles do not exist, the trained Ayahs are not employed. Compared to North the conditions in South are somewhat better no doubt. But the picture given in present report does not tally with the actual conditions even in plantations in South. Therefore, women have rightly replied that they do not keep the children in the creche, "since they are not likely to be looked after well."

The provision of creche, at present under the Factory Act, Plantation Labour Act and Mines Act, etc, should be made applicable to all the concerns where a large number of women are employed, as also to as the women in Secretariat, Banks, Insurance, etc. The demand is voiced by working women all over the country and the Government must seriously consider it.

### Medical Facilities

All the Government reports agree that the plan-

tations being far away from the cities, in the hills, there exists an urgent need for hospitals, medical units for the workers. But what are the facts? There are enough cases in plantations when workers have died due to non-availability of medical help. Children were born in plantations or on the way to the hospital which is far away, with no speedy conveyance to carry the patients. Trade unionists interviewed expressed dissatisfaction over the provision, the chief complaint being non-availability of doctors in times of need. They state the doctors are only visiting doctors. "The number of beds provided in hospitals as well as group hospitals are less than the minimum prescribed under the Act ... in certain cases dispensaries did not even have certain essential drugs...", workers complained that "there were no lady doctors at all in the hospitals excepting one state each in Kerala and Tamilnadu". Is it not surprising that lady doctors are not found in the hospitals where more than 50 per cent women are employed? According to the rules, larger plantations with 1000 workers or more are required to maintain garden hospitals, primary schools, etc.

As per the report published, "the workers and the trade union representatives alike expressed dissatisfaction over the absence of the doctors, medical aid, etc. In some estates there is only a compounder... Plantation areas being what they are, the doctors are not keen to stay in the estates as it would limit their career prospects and not all estates can afford them very attractive salaries... This is the situation where more than 10 lakhs workers are employed with their families, far away from the cities. One can not understand, why the doctors cannot be paid good salary by the plantation owners, whose profits are huge. In reality, the Central Government is subserving the interest of the employers when the question of implementation of any rules comes up. Many workers have fallen victims to the diseases without any medical help.

### Educational Facilities

According to the provision of the Plantation Labour Act there should be a primary school for the children of the employees. But as per the rule, the "employer however, need not provide for a school if there is already one maintained by the State...within a distance of one mile from the place of residence of the workers..." This limit is extended in Kerala for 2 miles. As per the survey, in many places there are primary schools within the estates. This is not correct. The children in plantations in the hills or tarai, have to walk more than one mile for the school, Government or Private. They have to leave early morning, returning late in the evening. A minimum one primary school is a must when the percentage of literacy among children, especially girls is very very low. The overall level as per the report of illiteracy in the 617 selected households in these states together was 48 per cent. In Karnataka it is the highest at 60 per cent among female workers. "A sex-wise

break up of children in school indicates that while 91 per cent of the male children in the school going age are attending schools, only 73 per cent of the female children in the age groups 6-16 are attending schools. The present serious situation in education among girls is accepted by all. Unless special efforts are being made, and a change in their economic conditions for the better is brought about, the education of the boys or girls is bound to suffer. Only data collections and committee formation is surely not going to help the workers. The report has admitted that the employment of children in plantations below the age of 14 is not found on records of the planters. How can it be found in the record of planters? It is a well established fact acknowledged by ILO and others, that India stands highest in employment of children. It is to be found in carpet, beedi, plantations, etc. The employers exploit child labour in a large scale by paying low wages, and imposing more hours of work.

### Housing

In the case of housing for the plantation workers, even the Government reports had to come out openly against the tactics of the employers, who do not abide by the rules, do not provide the prescribed standard of housing for the workers. The subsidy schemes are failure, loans are not taken by the employers despite the low interest. The result is that the workers are living in thatched, substandard houses without provision of water or latrines. The situation in the housing is such that the less spoken is better. The report has rightly commented on the sad plight of housing.

It is important to note that the cost of providing extra welfare amenities like creche, maternity benefits, toilets, etc. to women workers formed only 1.2 to 4.4 per cent of the total wage bill. The average annual expenditure per woman worker worked out to be only Rs. 80.89 which constituted about 2.1 per cent of the total wage bill. In spite of such a small amount spent on the welfare amenities, the employers completely ignore the rules of the Act with the result the women workers have to suffer. The question is what steps does the Government intend to take against these violations?

### Implementation of the Plantation Labour Act

The study report itself admitted as to how the rules are flouted in case of housing, medical facilities, primary schools, drinking water, etc. But the point to be noted here is that it is not only due to the lack of visits of the inspectors who are not able to travel due to the lack of conveyance, but that they are to travel in the jeeps of the planters and the managements and therefore cannot give surprise visits. This is what the report states. There is no reason as to why the government should not provide the jeeps to the inspectors or increase their conveyance allowance. It is an acknowledged fact that the inspectors are in league with the managements, do not give proper

reports on the basis of which enquiries could be made and the managers be punished. There is plenty of material published by the government as to the small number of cases launched in the court against the employers for the break of the rules of the Act. And therefore, the administrative set up for the implementation is not only faulty, but is to be completely overhauled. It is not merely a question of appointing "gazetted officers", or giving separate transport, etc. as it is made out in the report. The enforcement machinery of the government is favourable to the employers and goes against the workers.

### Economic Status

The study report ends by giving the economic status of the workers, the size of the household and the income. The average income of the household is different from state to state, but not more than Rs. 600-700. The bulk of the expenditure reveals that it is spent on 'food'. There is no saving in the plantation household, on the contrary indebtedness increases, "seen even for a day to day expenditure". This is true. The workers' households consisting of the family with the children earn about Rs. 600, when the prices of foodstuffs, medicines, etc. have gone up four to five times. The illness is on the increase. With these conditions in plantations, the suffering of the workers is bound to be on higher scale.

But though the purpose of the study was limited to the conditions of the plantation industry, one cannot deny the sustained increase in production, increase in export and fabulous profits the employers are making in plantation industry. It is reported that our country is the second highest in foreign exchange earning in the industry, and the tea export earnings in 1984 according to the latest information are Rs. 750 crores. It is only the women and men workers who suffer most who are deprived of the share of the profits earned on their labour.

### CITU Invites AUCCTD

Copy of letter dated January 9 from B.T. Ranadive, President CITU to S.A. Shalayev Chairman, AUCCTU, USSR.

Dear Comrade Shalayev,

Please accept my best wishes for the year to you and the AUCCTU. The CITU wishes the New Year brings further triumphs to the AUCCTU in its struggle for peace and Socialist construction.

We feel very much concerned with the recent development in the International situation and the growing danger of war. Your organisation is in the forefront of the struggle for peace. We would very much like to discuss with your organisation the problems posed by International developments. The CITU will be very happy to receive a delegation from the AUCCTU in our country.

Expecting an early reply,

## Stop These Atrocities on Women

VIMALA RANADIVE, Vice President, All India Democratic Women's Association and Secretary, All India Co-Ordination Committee of Working Women has sent the following letter to the Secretary General, United Nations on December 22, 1984 on the atrocities on women in Iran.

We, the women in India are deeply concerned and shocked to learn about the atrocities on women in Iran and demand your immediate intervention to bring normalcy in the day-to-day life of the Iranian people. Millions of women in Iran today are living under grave threats by the Islamic regime with the result that thousands of women and children are suffering and are tortured in jail without any inquiry in spite of the sacrifices they made in the revolution. Their significant role in throwing off the Shah of Iran is still in the minds of democratic people.

Women in Iran have no right to appeal if they have been divorced while men can marry any number of women and live with them. Under the Islamic regime, a bill has been introduced to remove women from the sphere of production by offering them part time jobs; women are deprived from jobs under the pretext of failure to observe the rule of using "chador".

What was the fault of these women who are languishing in jails for years together? They resisted the reactionary measures taken by the Islamic Government. And therefore, they are undergoing unprecedented tortures, physical and mental. Women prisoners are not allowed to meet their relatives or even lawyers. All these happenings are taking place in the Women's Decade, which is coming to an end.

We demand, and expect that those who stand for human rights and freedom should listen to the voice of Iranian women and people. It is urgent that we save the thousands of women rotting in jails.

The All India Democratic Women's Association and the All India Co-Ordination Committee of Working Women is concerned with the present serious developments under the "Islamic Regime" of Iran and demand the following:

1. Release of all the political prisoners including women and children.
2. Attacks on the democratic movement and on the Democratic Organisation of Iranian Women should be stopped.
3. End to Iran-Iraq War.

We hope as a representative of United Nations, you will intervene in the situation.

## Interim Order of the Supreme Court in Anjora Case

A writ Petition was filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court by Com. P.K. Maitra, General Secretary of M.P. CITU relating to the exploitation of the 95 workers of Anjora Animal Breeding Project at Durg of M.P. State Government. The workers of Anjora have been working in the Breeding Project since 10 to 15 years. It is a permanent set up of the Government of M.P. But these workers were being exploited to the extent that they were required to work from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. and many amongst them were required to work from 4 A.M. to 6 P.M. but without any overtime wages. They were not getting any paid holiday, weekly off and even they were required to work on 15th August, 26th January, in Dipawali, Dassehra etc without any extra wages. They have not been given any casual or earned leave ever and the female workers are not getting maternity leave. For 10-15 years they have been working on meagre daily wages. It was an unique example of treating workers as slaves by a state Government. Under such circumstances the Writ Petition was filed. On 6th January 1984 Supreme Court ordered to issue show cause notice to the State Government. Notice was served on State Government in February '84. But the State Government has not yet filed the counter affidavit thereby delaying the matter.

Hon'ble Supreme Court took note of it and passed an interim order stating: "It is shocking and a matter of deep regret though an order was made on 6th January 1984 for issue of the show cause notice and the show cause notice was served as far back as in February 1984, learned Advocate appearing on behalf of respondents was instructed to file their appearance in July 1984, no counter affidavit has so far been filed on behalf of respondents. We want to express our strong disapprobation on the conduct of the State Government in not responding to the show cause notice issued by the court even though the Writ Petition covering more than 95 workers in the Animal Breeding Project of the State Government. But despite this action on the part of the State Government we could grant time to the State Government to file counter affidavit. We would however propose to make an interim order directing the State Government to pay the workers employed with the Animal Breeding Project situated in Vill. Anjora, Dist. Durg minimum wages payable to workers according to the category in which they fall as also a weekly off and overtime wages at the statutory rates. The arrears and the differences between the wages paid to them and the minimum wages payable shall be calculated as from the date 1st January 1984 and shall be paid within one month from today and the minimum wages with weekly off and over time wages shall continue to be paid with immediate effect".

# Scope of Herb Based Drug Industry

Amitava Guha

MODERN drug industry, developed in the West has overshadowed the fact that the modern pharmaceutical industry has its origin in the ancient traditional medicines. Many established modern drugs have been developed basing on the concepts, existing from centuries, on the herbs available in Asia and Africa. Digitalis, a derivative from herbs has been used for treating the diseases of heart since many centuries. Even now there is regular use of the drug. Rauwolfia Serpentina (Swarpagantha) was in use in India even 3000 years before — “reserpine” is derived from this herb is widely used to treat high blood pressure. Bark of Cinchona was found to be used to treat fever in Inca civilisation. Now quinine is prepared from this tree. Trace of traditional medicinal herbs is almost lost due to the gigantic expansion of synthetic pharmaceutical industry developed by the Transnationals.

80 per cent our population are deprived of using any modern medicaments. 60 per cent of the population use Unani, Ayurvedic and Sidha medicines and rest 20 per cent have no scope to use any kind of medicines. For their serious ailments, death is the only remedy. Government data reveals that death rate in our country is atleast 18.7 per cent of the population, death rate of children are 139.9 per thousand and death rate for the school going children in our country is the highest in the world. But the Government statistics do not give any account for the death occurred due to rampant use of drugs, banned in other countries, due to erratic use of spurious, substandard drugs and permanent physiological damages caused due to prolonged use of toxic drugs.

In the Lisbon conference of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) it was established that India has 100 per cent technology for manufacturing all modern drugs. In spite of that, in 1979-80, the import of drugs was worth Rs. 95.27 crores and raw materials worth Rs. 45 crores. These have been mostly utilised to produce non-essential drugs. In 1981 Dr. Hafden Mahler, Secretary General of WHO said that 80 per cent of the drugs available in India are non-essential. Government of India recently have further liberalised import policies so that more drugs, discontinued in other countries can be widely marketed in our country.

The scope of developing traditional and herb based medicines in our country is immense. The Secretariat of UNIDO has reported that “higher plants have been one of the main sources of medicines since the very beginning of human civilisation. It is because of these reasons that folk medicine derived more than 90 per cent of their drugs from higher plants. In spite of the fact that there has been considerable development in synthetic drug chemistry, plants still continue as a major source of medicine. In both developing and developed countries,

“Omnipotent” drugs are now being found with grave concern that they are causative factors for new generation diseases, control of which are mostly unknown to the modern medical science. Therefore most effective medicines in future should be created precisely on the basis of the study of the structure and molecular mechanism of action of the compounds that were created by nature in the course of its evolution through many billions of years. Thereby, assimilation of them in human body will be in keeping with the process of evolution of nature.

Sri Anil Agarwal in his book “Medicine and the third World” has referred that about 25 per cent of all prescriptions of the total drugs in the United States contain one or more drugs of herbal origin. In USSR 40 per cent of the total drugs used are of herbal origin. Japan and West Germany can also be included in this list. China of course is topping the list. Developed countries are the major users and the importers of the medicinal plants. Value of import of seed, flower and parts of the plants had increased from Rs. 71.2 crores in 1971 to Rs. 217 crores in 1976.

UNIDO data reveals another striking fact that Switzerland, a tiny country under the typical European cold climate, exports alkaloids and glycosides of about Rs. 62.8 crores a year. This country imports raw herbs from the third world countries at almost throw away prices, processes them to higher pharmaceuticals and export at higher prices. Many foreign companies collect herbs from the Himalayan area and from the coastal regions of south, export raw extracts to their parent countries where they are processed to produce costly raw materials for the production of drugs in our country.

Another UNIDO study about the possibility of herb cultivation in our country states that “because of its large area and variation in climate and soil, India is one of the few countries where most of the plants used in modern medicines can be cultivated in one or another region of the country. It is because of this reason India is one of the countries which has a prosperous medicinal plant industry with an annual turn over more than Rs. 125 crores”.

Our ancient Ayurved science is about 5000 years old which mentions the use of at least 8000 herbs. There is no adequate arrangement for scientific research and development of this science in our country. As a result it is mostly confined to mere folk-lore traditional knowledge. There are few institutions in this sector which educates some doctors also and who mostly land up to practice modern medicine.

Our experience of development of herb based and

traditional medicines in USSR can be stated here. Under the Ministry of Medical Industry, All Union Research Institute of Medicinal Plants function. There are 20 firms concerned to herb cultivation and production of drugs from medicinal plants under this institute. This organisation also keeps contact with the 400 botanical gardens throughout the world. They collect information from the developing countries also on the traditional medicines and one of such institutes has been functioning since 50 years which has tried about 20,000 herbs out of which 500 were found to have some medicinal value. Medico-biological study of each new potential preparations are conducted for initial selection of physiologically active compounds, study of toxicity and specific mechanism of actions.

The cultivation of medicinal plants depends on careful consideration of a number of factors, because the value of medicinal plants depends on its active principal content and not on its wild growth, which makes it somewhat different from cultivation of agricultural crops. It is often found that the same plant grown in different localities differs widely from its medicinal value; for this reason, medicinal plants collected from different regions are found to differ in quality. Several factors such as soil, rainfall, altitude, method of cultivation, time of collection, storage, etc are continuously researched in these institutes.

One of such institutes is situated at Viller, near Moscow which maintains 45 hectares of covered garden and 150 botanical gardens. Artificial climatic conditions like tropical and sub-tropical atmosphere, artificial rainfall etc. are maintained in seven gardens. The institute also maintains 1,500 various species in the Seed Bank for exchange with other gardens. The institute has a large group of agronomists, engineers, botanists, physicians and technologists of other faculties.

After the analysis, the drugs are tried under a strict trial protocol. Different clinics attached to the hospitals try the drugs on the patients with their consent and the reports of the trials are scrutinised by the Ministry. The Ministry decides for commercial production of the drugs. Entire process require about 10 years. There is a separate pharmacopia for herbs in USSR. Tenth edition of this pharmacopia has been published. All medical students have to study compulsory papers on herbs. Medicines of all types are prepared with herbs—tablets, capsules, even injectibles. Raw herbs, either alone or in combinations are sold in packets. There are herbal drugs to treat cardiac and circulatory diseases. Herbal drugs to treat diseases of kidney and liver are highly popular in USSR. 'Silibin' derived from Silibo Marino is widely used in inflammation of liver; Dioscorea Nipponica is used in diabetes and Dioscorea Cocchia is used as contraceptives.

From the list provided in the UNIDO journal it

is found that at least 56 types of different medicinal plants available in India have good demands in the world market out of which 18 are having high demands. But the correct use of hundreds of plants available here are yet to be researched to find out their medicinal values. India is the most suitable place for such research. In a conference arranged by UNIDO, the Govt of India has informed that there are modern research centres on medicinal plants, three at Lucknow and one at Kashmir. But these centres could not be effectively utilised since 20 years. UNIDO is supposed to provide necessary technology and financial assistance particularly to the small scale companies for development and production of herb based medicines.

Some Indian companies are doing good business of herbal medicines. Some of their drugs are being prescribed like modern medicines. But these drugs have no scientific basis. Some companies market combination of herbs with modern drugs also. Basis of their success lies only on the expensive sales promotion effort. Govt. of India allows substantial relaxation to the manufacture of Ayurvedic medicines. Besides, these drugs are not under the Drug Price Control Order and their prices are no way less than the other drugs.

In order to develop self sufficient drug industry and to provide drugs of good effect and safety at low price, it is essential to build industry based on traditional medicines and herbs. This, of course, depends on a definite drug policy of the Govt. The following urgent measures should also be taken:

To ban direct import of herbs; Modern research on medicinal plants; Small scale sectors should be encouraged with technology and finance to produce herbal medicine; To prepare a separate pharmacopia on medicinal plants on the basis of informations available on scientific research; Compulsory papers should be introduced on study of herbal medicines for all medical students; Laboratories should be arranged for analysis and quality control of herbal medicine.

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# CITU IN THE EYES OF A TRADE UNIONIST OF ENGLAND

*(Brother Ian Williams, a representative of National Union of Railwaymen, an affiliate of Trade Union Congress of Great Britain, visited India and stayed for six months in 1984 when he attended CITU office and had discussion with Nrisingha Chakraborty and M K Pandhe, Secretaries CITU. He primarily visited the railway colonies and met the railway trade union leaders belonging to AIRF. But he visited some CITU unions and attended the second conference of All India Coal Workers' Federation. He had been writing in the "Transport Review", the organ of the National Union of Railwaymen about his experience in India. We are quoting some excerpts from his writings concerning CITU-Ed).*

**I**N the spirit of what's left of the Tripple Alliance, I was invited by the All-India Coal Workers Federation to their conference. After I had spoken they sent a telegram to the NUM expressing solidarity. They also have a new chairman (of the Railway Board) who is taking on the unions, his latest move to fine miners, eight days' pay for every day of strike or unauthorised absence!"

"One of their demands which he (the Chairman) considers so unreasonable, is for provision of drinking water to miners' living quarters. More familiarly, he also wants massive reductions in the workforce! He does, however, also want an increase in production" — Transport Review, June 22, 1984 Page. 8.

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"Home (Darjeeling), they told me, of the finest tea in the world, fit for the crews of APT's and HST's, fit for the men of of the Frontier Mail on its 2,000 mile peregrination from the mountains near Burma to the Sea by Bombay."

I could tell it was good stuff because India exports no less than 50 million kilos of Darjeeling Tea a year. Mind you, Darjeeling only grows 11 million kilos of tea a year, but then the High Himalayas are the home of miracles, of Shangri-La and the Yeti, so I suppose an everflowing tea-pot is only in the Fourth Division so far as miracles go."

"Which is one of the reasons why the Darjeeling tea plantations were allegedly on their uppers. But alas, according to the Tea Worker's Union's General Secretary, because the plantation owners had been siphoning off profits for decades and not reinvesting. Many of the bushes which coated the steep hill sides were over a century old, long overdue for replacement".

Unusually for Indian unions, and uniquely for an agricultural workers' union, the plantation workers provided all their own leadership, instead of relying upon lawyers and politicians. Indeed, they had provided the local MP who is their President and a tea garden worker himself".

"They organised almost all the tea garden workers, most of whom were Nepali, Gurkhas, and had just got a wage increase — up to 65p a day! They organised a visit to one of the local estates for me to meet their members and to watch the tea being processed. The manager lived in a palatial bungalow originally built for the then British owner. On the slopes were the 12ft. by 14ft. hutments for the workers.

"The rich man in his place, the poor man at his gate".

"The Darjeeling Club, headquarters of the planters' associations, was like a set from Jewel in the Crown. Along its balcony strode tweed jacketed, pipe smoking planters, brandishing their brollies at the lowering clouds."

Their accents even were typically British Upper. Their names and faces were Indian. Bosses of the World, Unite!

"For all their manifest faults they did recognise and negotiate with the union.

But then, wouldn't you if you had 20,000 Ghurkha Nepalis working for you, each with a kukhri hanging above his fire-place?"

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY "TRANSPORT REVIEW"

*The Transport Review, the organ of the National Union of Railwaymen of Great Britain (who had once worked out a tripple alliance of the unions in steel and coal workers in England) has acknowledged the solidarity support for British coal miners from India. We publish below the following excerpt from its October 19, 1984 issue.*

### "Support for Miners from India"

With much support from various groups within the UK, the plight of Britain's miners is also drawing attention and support from abroad. Responding to a vast appeal of solidarity with the miners, the Bank Employees' Federation of India appealed to its local organisations to collect foodstuffs for the miners, including tinned meat, fish, jam and dried fruit, etc.

In a letter to the NUM the Federation stressed: "The struggle as we see it is a fight between the policies of the government that represents the exploiting classes and the working class rising in revolt to protect its class interests. This brings us to join in the international working class solidarity with the British miners to see a victory for their heroic battle."

## Railwaymen to Decide Future Course: AIREC

**T**HE All India Railway Employee's Confederation (AIREC) working Committee will meet in Delhi on February 3, to review the situation following the assassination of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the aftermath of the Lok Sabha Polls. The Confederation had its 5th Annual General meeting held at Lucknow on 8-10 September 1984.

It issued a call for countrywide demonstration of railwaymen on December 17, 1984 to press their major demands relating to interim relief, DA, duty hours, publication of Pay Commission reports, victimisation, etc. Since most of the demands were yet to be fulfilled, the Working Committee, while reviewing the general situation, will also review the performance in regard to the 17th Dec. demonstration.

**AIRF:** A meeting of the working committee of All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) will be held a little later, on 26-28 February at Varanasi. The 58th AIRF Annual Convention was held at Puri on 10-13 December, 1984. The convention decided to observe a country wide protest day on January 29 in support of the 10 point charter of demands. Some of the issues are under negotiation with the Govt. of India and the rail authorities. The working committee, will review the progress in regard to the realisation of the demands and decide the future course.

### S.K. Dhar's Letter

S.K.-Dhar, Secretary General, All India Loco Running Staff Association in two separate letters recently addressed to Rail Minister, and the Prime Minister, has drawn their attention to the long pending grievances of loco running staff, the negative attitude of the former administration, large scale victimisation etc. and has demanded their intervention for early settlement of outstanding problems.

"Still they (Loco running staff) have to perform duty for 12 to 16 hours at a stretch", wrote Dhar to the Rail Minister, though their duty is of intensive nature and according to rules and norms it should be brought down to 6 hours. And yet whenever an accident occurs, immediately the blame is put on the loco running staff even before the fact finding enquiry, thus maligning the staff before the public and influencing the enquiry. Dhar informed the Rail Minister and the Prime Minister of the enormous number of Loco Running Staff victimised in various ways, like about 600 removed from services, about 7500 inflicted break in service and so forth. He has related how in 1973 a bipartite machinery was set up for settling the grievances of Loco Running Staff, but was wound up during Emergency. "The Committee was restored" he has stated, "in 1979 and a constructive approach was made in July 1980 for settling some of our basic problems ... but all on a sudden all those

were stopped" In this way a crisis was created in the industrial relation. Dhar, however, expressed his hope for a better deal from the government under the new Prime Minister.

### Gatemen, Gangmen, Oppose Violation of ILO Convention

The job of the gateman working at the level crossings particularly on the busy routes is an extremely responsible one. On busy routes, specially those along which super fast trains run, with frequency of trains high, the gate man has to remain alert every second of his duty. The Delhi/New Delhi-Mughalsahi Trunk route is one such route. One can imagine the ardousness of the duty of the gateman who has to walk, open the gates or close it every 5 or 10 minutes. This is not all. The gateman has to exchange signals with switchman of up and down cabins of both the sides of track for receiving directions for closing and opening of the gate. They have to keep record of trains. His duty is connected with safe running of trains, safety of the pedestrians and vehicles moving across the gate. But the gateman is not considered a skilled worker and is not given skilled worker's pay. And he has to do his work continuously for 12 hrs. This is violation of ILO convention No. 1. The gatemen on this route are therefore submitting demands to the authorities for placing them in the skilled category, declare them as 'intensive' with shorter duty hours, etc. They are also known to be raising industrial dispute in the matter before the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central). Since safety and security of human life and property are involved, it is a matter not only of workers' interest, but it is a matter of public interest. The gangmen on this route are also submitting demands to the authorities for proper duty hours and other legitimate facilities.

### Blind to Reality

The new Railway Minister appears to be going to take his first steps in the industrial relation with his eyes closed to reality. While addressing the working committee of the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen (INTUC), Shri Bansilal is reported to have referred to the category wise unions, as "mercenary organisations" saying that such organisations represented only an "ambitious few". He ignored some historical factors that led to the formation of these categorical organisation in the railways. While integration of their organisations is desirable in the interest of the workers themselves, no realistic labour policy can at the moment afford to count without these organisations. It has been proved that their existence as representatives of a bulk of railwaymen is too real to be ignored.

# AROUND THE STATES

## TAMILNADU

**Convention of State Sector Workers:** A State level convention of CITU unions in the State owned Corporations, Boards and industrial establishments was held at Madras on June 30. About 200 delegates from twentyfive establishments like electricity, transport, local bodies, water and drainage board, rubber plantation, cooperatives and small industries attended the convention. K. Vaithinathan, the State CITU Secretary presided over the convention and A.K. Padmanabhan, the State Assistant General Secretary moved the resolution. The resolution condemned the State authorities for their blatant attack on the elementary trade union rights of the workers. Their attitude in this respect had no difference with the private sector employers. In the Electricity Board even demonstrations, dharnas and meetings were punishable offences. Mass illegal transfers, even of women employees, were being resorted to. Vigilance officers of the Board under the Inspector General of Police were being deputed to do surveillance work over trade union activities of the workers. In the State Transport Corporation, dharna and demonstrations even after the duty hours were being treated as strikes debarring the workers from the annual incentive scheme. Over and above, the musclemen of the ruling party were being deputed to beat up the workers participating in such trade union activities. In the water and drainage board and in some local bodies circulars were issued banning the functioning of the CITU unions. The convention formulated a six-point charter of demands and a programme of actions in pursuance of the same, which included observance of July 15 as the trade union rights day and mass relay fast in all the state establishments on July 30.

**State CITU Meeting:** The State CITU met at Nagercoil from June 12 to 14 under the president-ship of M. Nanjappan. R. Umanath, briefed the new orientation of the economic policy of the Central Government in the light of the deliberations in the CITU Working Committee meeting. A.K. Padmanabhan placed the work report which dealt with the various struggles of the workers in the state. It extended support to the struggles and discussed plans to carry forward the struggles of the State sector workers. It called upon the unions to mobilise women workers for the success of the all India Demands on August 15 as decided by the AICWW. It was also extended support to the protest day to be observed by the handloom worker on July 8 and to the proposed indefinite strike by the textile workers. The meeting also adopted a resolution supporting the peasants' struggles in the state.

**Indefinite Strike by Textile Workers:** Over two lakh textile workers of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry

went on an indefinite strike from July 16, defying a ban order by the State Government. Called by the Joint Action Committee of all unions including that of AIADMK, the strike protested against scuttling the collective bargaining right of the workers and reference of the demands of the managements under SIMA, for adjudication under 10B of the I.D. Act, and demanded negotiated settlement of the workers' demands. Congratulating the workers for their valiant strike defying the ban orders, R. Umanath, General Secretary of the State CITU denounced the Government-SIMA collusion and demanded negotiated settlement. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU also issued a statement on July 19 extending full support to the strike and demanding a negotiated settlement of the workers' demands.

## ANDHRA PRADESH

**Police brutality protested:** At the behest of the management, the police brutally lathi charged and fired at workers who were agitating against the illegal termination of eight workers in the Venkateshwara Boiled Rice Mill. All the CITU unions in the West Godavari district demonstrated against the police atrocity.

**Repression on RMS, MMS Workers:** In a specially convened state level meeting, the RMS Employees Union chalked out a programme of relay hunger strike and non-cooperation in protest against the victimisation of employees for taking part in the all India strike on June 6. Six hundred RTPS and six hundred casual workers were not allowed to join duties for participating in the strike. In a letter to the Union Minister of Communications, P. Satyanarayana, President of the State CITU demanded immediate withdrawal of the victimisations and restoration of normalcy.

**Strike by Samrat Investment Employees:** On serving a charter of demand by the union, the management of Samrat Investments, Hyderabad transferred three main activists to Kashmir, terminated the services of another three and dismissed 60 casual workers. The management also deployed hired goondas to intimidate the workers. But the workers remained undeterred and went on one day's complete strike on June 25. All other unions have extended full support to the struggle.

**Meeting of State CITU:** The A.P. State CITU met at Vijayawada on July 10 under the Presidentship of P. Satyanarayana. N. Prasad Rao submitted a report. The meeting decided to convene a convention of all trade unions on closures and lock-outs. It also decided to observe August 6 and 9 as anti-nuclear bomb days and September 1 as Peace Day. The meeting also decided to hold state level meetings of Hamalies, municipal workers and textile workers separately and hold demonstrations of the work charge employees and working women at Hyderabad on their various demands during the Assembly session. The meeting also adopted resolutions on various issues facing the working class.

## UTTAR PRADESH

### Lockout in Jay Cylinders

In a desperate bid to break the consolidation of the CITU workers the management of Jay Cylinders, Sikandrabad declared an illegal lockout of the factory on December 22, 1984. The Engineering Worker's Union (CITU) submitted a charter of demands on behalf of the workers of the company to the management on October 11, 1984. But the management refused to talk to the union for a negotiated settlement.

All efforts having failed to induce the management to start negotiations or to make the labour department to take move on the matter, the union was compelled to launch agitational programmes. To punish the workers, the management closed one shift from December 16, 1984, throwing 125 workers out of employment. When the workers stepped up the agitations, the management deployed its hired gangsters to threaten the workers. In league with the INTUC and Congress (I) hoodlums the gangsters physically assaulted Surendra Singh, member of the State Committee of CITU and D.N. Giri, the Secretary of the Willard Employees Union (CITU) who had extended support to the struggle of the workers. All the unions of the industrial area jointly launched protest actions under the banner of the District Coordination Committee of CITU in the Bulandshar District. A massive protest rally was organised on December 20, 1984. The CITU coordination Committee met the district labour and Police Officers and demanded immediate arrest of the hoodlums and settlement of the demands of the union. But hand in gloves with the management, neither the labour department, nor the police took any steps to settle the demands and arrest the culprits. Taking filip from the government, the management declared the lockout on December 22, 1984. Undeterred by the government's pro-management attitude and the management's repressive actions, the workers in the industrial area under the coordination committee intensified the agitations. A 17 member delegation representing all the unions came down to Delhi to submit a memorandum to the new Union Labour Minister. Helped by the CITU Centre, the delegation met the Labour Minister on January 16, along with Basuden Acharya, M.P. CPI (M). The Labour Minister assured to contact the U.P. State Labour Minister to intervene to lift the lockout and settle the dispute. The coordination committee has decided to carry forward the struggle until the lockout is lifted and the charter of demands settled.

## DELHI

### Successful Struggles by General Mazdoor Lal Jhanda Union

Puran Chand, General Secretary of the General Mazdoor Lal Jhanda Union (CITU) has reported about several victorious struggles launched by the

workers organised under CITU in the industrial areas of Delhi.

The workers of Mayur Enterprise Printing Press carried forward a determined struggle and compelled the management to concede their demands for wage increase and bonus.

The workers of Sanky Electronic, Kirtinagar, after a continuous strike for fifteen days forced the management to settle their long pending demands.

The workers of Premier Plastics, Narayana waged a continuous struggle against illegal dismissal of thirty workers and ultimately compelled the management to settle the issue. All the dismissed workers were taken in again.

The Hindustan General Industries had unjustifiably suspended two workers. The CITU union launched determined struggle braving all repressions. Ultimately through court order the management had to withdraw the suspensions and take them back paying Rs. 5,500/- as compensation money. Addressing a victory celebration meeting, Chacha Shadiram, General Secretary of the Union and President of the Delhi State Committee of CITU, urged upon the workers to consolidate their unity and defeat the managements' onslaughts determinedly. He further called upon them to intensify the struggles in pursuance of the demand for Rs. 500/- as the minimum wage. He also urged upon them to step up their relief activities for the riot torn Sikh workers who were affected by the carnage following the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Workers from the industrial areas of Delhi, Okhla, Shahdara, Wazirpur, Karampura and other places attended the meeting.

### Pharmaceutical Workers on Strike Struggle

Organised under the Federation of Medical Representatives Associations of India (FMRAI) and All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees Federation (AICAPEF), pharmaceutical workers of several multinational, Indian monopoly drug concerns and of public sector are on grim struggle against victimisations.

The medical representatives of Raptakos Brett have been on struggle since the last one year against mass scale terminations and refusal on the management to settle their demands placed by FMRAI. After several strike actions, court arrest, etc. they launched a countrywide dharna and relay hunger strike on January 15. A massive dharna was staged before the Union Labour Ministry at Delhi on the day. While the plant and office workers of I.D.P.L., a Central Public Sector Undertaking compelled the management to settle their demands, the medical representatives went on a 48 hour strike on January 14 and 15 to press for settlement of their demands. Against closure and retrenchment, the workers of Indo Pharma launched hunger strikes and dharnas all over India.

Similarly workers of Abotts and Anglo French Co. have also launched strike struggle against victimisations and attack on trade union rights.

# Employees' State Insurance (Amendment) Act, 1984

**T**HE Employees' State Insurance (Amendment) Act, 1984 received the assent of the President on the 6th August, 1984. The salient amendments are as follows:

In the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act), in section 2, — (a) in clause (2), — (i) for the words "being not less than twenty-five but not exceeding twenty-seven consecutive week or", the words "being not exceeding" shall be substituted; (ii) in the proviso, the words "or shorter" shall be omitted; (b) in clause (5), — (i) for the words "being not less than twenty-five but not exceeding twenty-seven consecutive weeks or", the words "being not exceeding" shall be substituted; (ii) in the proviso, the words "or shorter" shall be omitted; (c) in clause (9), in sub-clause (b), for the words "one thousand rupees", at both the places where ever they occur, the words "one thousand and six hundred rupees" shall be substituted; (d) for clause (23), the following clause shall be substituted, namely:— (23) "wage period" in relation to an employee means the period in respect of which wages are ordinarily payable to him whether in terms of the contract of employment, express or implied or otherwise;

In section 17 of the principal Act, — (a) in sub-section (1), for the words "one thousand and two hundred rupees" the words "two thousand and two hundred fifty rupees" shall be substituted; (b) in sub-sections (3) and (4), for the words and figures "Class I or Class II", the words and letters "Group A and groupB" shall be substituted.

In section 39 of the principal Act, — (a) for sub-section (3), the following sub-section shall be substituted, namely:— (3) The wage period in relation to an employee shall be the unit in respect of which all contributions shall be payable under this Act.", (b) in sub-section (4), for the word "week" wherever it occurs, the words "wages period" shall be substituted.

In section 42 of the principal Act — (a) in sub-section (1), for the words "are below one rupee and fifty paise", the words "during a wage period are below six rupees" shall be substituted; (b) in sub-section (2), for the word "week", the words "wage period" shall be substituted; (c) sub-section (3) shall be omitted.

For section 47 of the principal Act, the following section shall be substituted, namely:— "47. A person shall be qualified to claim sickness benefit for sickness occurring during any benefit period if the contributions in respect of him were payable for not less than half the number of days of the corresponding contribution period".

In section 50 of the principal Act, for sub-section(1) and the proviso there to, the following

sub-section shall be substituted, namely:— "(1) An insured woman shall be qualified to claim maternity benefit for a confinement occurring or expected to occur in a benefit period, if the contributions in respect of her were payable for not less than half the number of days of corresponding contribution period".

In section 56 of the principal Act, in sub-section (3), for the word "week", the word "period" shall be substituted.

In section 78 of the principal Act, in sub-section (1), for the words and figures "section 195 and Chapter XXXV of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898", the words and figures "section 195 and Chapter XXVI of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973" shall be substituted.

In section 95 of the principal Act, after sub-section (2), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:— "(2A) The power to make rules conferred by this section shall include the power to give retrospective effect, from a date not earlier than the date of commencement of this Act, to the rules or any of them but no retrospective effect shall be given to any rule so as to prejudicially affect the interest of any person other than the Corporation to whom such rule may be applicable".

In section 96 of the principal Act, after sub-section (2), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:— "(3) Every rule made under this section shall be laid as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of the State Legislature where it is made, before each House of the State Legislature where it consists of two Houses, or, where such Legislature consists of one House, before that House".

In Section 97 of the principal Act,— (a) in sub-section (1), after the words "The Corporation may", the words "with the prior approval of the Central Government and" shall be inserted; (b) after sub-section (3), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:— "(4) Every regulation shall, as soon as may be, after it is made by the Corporation, be forwarded to the Central Government and that Government shall cause a copy of the same to be laid before each House of Parliament, while it is in session for a total period of thirty days, which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session of the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the regulation or both Houses agree that the regulation should not be made, the regulation shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that regulation".

In the First Schedule to the principal Act,— (a) for paragraph 1, the following paragraph shall be substituted, namely:— “1. The amount of contribution for a wage period shall be, in respect of — (a) employer’s contribution, a sum (rounded to the next higher multiple of five paise) equal to five per cent of the wages payable to an employee; (b) employee’s contribution, a sum (rounded to next higher multiple of five paise) equal to two and one-fourth per cent of the wages payable to an employee”; (b) in paragraph 2, — (i) in the opening portion, after the words “daily wages”, the words “during a wage period for the purpose of section 42 and sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 6 of this schedule” shall be inserted; (ii) in sub-paragraph (b) the word “first” shall be omitted; (iii) Explanation II shall be omitted; (c) after paragraph 2, the following paragraph shall be inserted, namely:— “2A. The average daily wages during a contribution period in respect of an employee for the purpose of paragraphs 4.5 and sub-paragraph 6 of this Schedule shall be the sum equal to one hundred and fifteen per cent of the

aggregate amount of wages payable to him during that period divided by the number of days (including paid holidays and leave days) for which such wages payable”; (d) for paragraph 3 and the Table thereunder, the following paragraph and the Table shall be substituted, namely:— 3. Daily rate of benefit (hereinafter referred to as the “standard benefit rate”) in respect of group of employees specified in the first column of the Table below shall be the amount respectively specified in the corresponding entry in the second column thereof.

<i>Group of employees whose average daily wages are</i>	<i>Corresponding daily standard benefit rate</i>
Below Rs. 6	2.50
Rs. 6 and above but below Rs. 8	3.50
Rs. 8 and above but below Rs. 12	5.00
Rs. 12 and above but below Rs. 16	7.00
Rs. 16 and above but below Rs. 24	10.00
Rs. 24 and above but below Rs. 36	15.00
Rs. 36 and above	20.00

For the Third Schedule to the principal Act, the following Schedule shall be substituted, namely:—

### The Third Schedule (See section 52A)

#### List of Occupational Diseases

#### *Occupational disease*

#### *Employment*

#### Part A

Infectious and parasitic diseases contacted in an occupation where there is a particular risk of contamination.

(a) All work involving exposure to health or laboratory work; (b) All work involving exposure to veterinary work; (c) work relating to handling animals, animal carcasses, part of such carcasses, or merchandise which may have been contaminated by animals or animal carcasses; (d) Other works carrying a particular risk of contamination.

Diseases caused by work in compressed air  
Diseases caused by lead or its toxic compounds.  
Poisoning by nitrous fumes  
Poisoning by organophosphorus compounds

All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.

#### Part B

Diseases caused by phosphorus or its toxic compounds  
Diseases caused by mercury or its toxic compounds  
Diseases caused by benzene or its toxic homologues.  
Diseases caused by nitro and amido toxic homologues.  
Diseases caused by chromium or its toxic compounds  
Diseases caused by arsenic or its toxic compounds.  
Diseases caused by radioactive substances and ionising radiations.  
Primary epithelomatous cancer of the skin caused by tar, pitch, bitumen, mineral oil, anthracene, or the compounds, products or residues of these substances.

All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the action of radioactive substances or ionising radiations.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.

Diseases caused by the toxic hologen derivatives of hydrocarbons (of the aliphatic and aromatic series).  
Diseases caused by the carbon disulphide.  
Occupational cataract due to infra-red radiation.  
Diseases caused by manganese or its toxic compounds.  
Skin diseases caused by physical, chemical or biological agents not included in other items.

All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.  
All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.

(Contd. on page 22)

# The Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Act, 1984

THE Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Act, 1984 received the assent of the President on the 12th May, 1984. The salient amendments are as follows:

In section 2 of the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act), in sub-section (1), in sub-clause (ii) of clause (n), the words "on monthly wages not exceeding one thousand rupees" shall be omitted.

For section 4 of the principal Act, the following section shall be substituted namely: (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the amount of compensation shall be as follows, namely: (a) where death results from the injury: an amount equal to forty per cent of the monthly wages of the deceased workman multiplied by the relevant factor; or an amount of twenty thousand rupees whichever is more; (b) where permanent total disablement results from the injury: An amount equal to fifty per cent of the monthly wages of the injured workman multiplied by the relevant factor; or an amount of twentyfour thousand rupees, whichever is more. Explanation I. — For the purpose of clause (a) and clause (b), "relevant factor", in relation to a workman means the factor specified in the second column of Schedule IV against the entry in the first column of that Schedule specifying the number of years which are the same as the completed years of the age of the workman on his last birthday immediately preceding the date on which the compensation fell due. Explanation II — Where the monthly wages of a workman exceed one thousand rupees, his monthly wages for the purpose of clause (a) and clause (b) shall be deemed to be one thousand rupees only.

(c) Where permanent partial disablement results from the injury: (i) in the case of an injury specified in part II of Schedule I, such percentage of the compensation which would have been payable in the case of permanent total disablement as is specified therein as being the percentage of the loss of earning capacity caused by that injury, and (ii) in the case of an injury not specified in Schedule I, such percentage of the compensation payable in the case of permanent total disablement as is proportionate to the loss of earning capacity (as assessed by the qualified medical practitioner) permanently caused by the injury. Explanation I — Where more injuries than one are caused by the same accident, the amount of compensation payable under this head shall be aggregated but not so in any case as to exceed the amount which would have been payable if permanent total disablement had resulted from the injuries. Explanation II — In assessing the loss of earning capacity for the purpose of sub clause (ii), the qualified medical practitioner shall have due regard to the percentages of loss of earning capacity in relation to different injuries specified in Schedule I.

(d) Where temporary disablement, whether total or partial results from the injury: a half-monthly payment of the sum equivalent to twentyfive per cent of monthly wages of the workman, to be paid in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (2).

(2) The half-monthly payment referred to in clause (d) of sub-section (1) shall be payable on the sixteenth day — (i) from the date of disablement where such disablement lasts for a period of twenty eight days or more, or (ii) after the expiry of a waiting period of three days from the date of disablement where such disablement lasts for a period of less than twentyeight days; and thereafter half-monthly during the disablement or during a period of five years, whichever period is shorter; provided that — (a) there shall be deducted from any lump sum or half-monthly payments to which the workman is entitled the amount of any payment or allowance which the workman has received from the employer by way of compensation during the period of disablement prior to the receipt of such lump sum or of the first half-monthly payment, as the case be; and (b) no half-monthly wages of the workman before the accident exceeds half the amount of such wages which he is earning after the accident. Explanation: Any payment or allowance which the workman has received from the employer towards his medical treatment shall not be deemed to be a payment or allowance received by him by way of compensation within the meaning of clause (a) of the provision.

(3) On the ceasing of the disablement before the date on which any half-monthly payment falls due there shall be payable in respect of that half-month a sum proportionate to the duration of the disablement in that half month.

In section 15 of the principal Act, in sub-section (3), for the words "His Majesty's Dominions or in any other foreign country", the words "in any foreign country" shall be substituted.

In section 35 of the Principal Act, in sub-section (1), — (i) for the words "to any part of His Majesty's Dominions or to any other country", the words "to any foreign country" shall be substituted; (ii) for the words "such part or country; the words "such foreign country" shall be substituted; (iii) for the words "in any part of His Majesty's Dominions or in any other country", the words "in any foreign country" shall be substituted.

*Schedule III (vide section 3) of the Act contains the list of occupational diseases and the corresponding employments. This is the same as in the ESI (Amendment) Act, published on page 20.*

**"Schedule IV"**  
(See section 4)

Factors for working out lumpsum equivalent of compensation amount in case of permanent disablement and death:

*Complete years of age on the last birthday of the workman immediately preceeding the date on which the compensation fell due*

not more than	Factors		
16	228.54	39	186.90
17	227.49	40	184.17
18	226.38	41	181.37
19	225.22	42	178.49
20	224.00	43	175.54
21	222.71	44	172.52
22	221.37	45	169.44
23	219.95	46	166.29
24	218.47	47	163.07
25	216.91	48	159.80
26	215.28	49	156.47
27	213.57	50	153.09
28	211.79	51	149.67
29	209.92	52	146.20
30	207.98	53	142.68
31	205.95	54	139.13
32	203.85	55	135.56
33	201.66	56	131.95
34	199.40	57	128.83
35	197.06	58	124.70
36	194.64	59	121.05
37	192.14	60	117.41
38	189.56	61	113.77
		62	110.14
		63	106.52
		64	102.93
		65 or more	99.37

*(Contd from page 20)*

Hearing impairment caused by noise.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Poisoning by dinitrophenol or a homologue or by substituted dinitrophenol or by the salts of such substances.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Diseases caused by beryllium or its toxic compounds.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Diseases caused by cadmium or its toxic compounds.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Occupational asthma caused by recognised sensitising agents inherent to the work process.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Diseases caused by fluorine or its toxic compounds.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Diseases caused by nitroglycerine or other nitroacid esters.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Diseases caused by alcohols and ketones.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Diseases caused by asphyxiants: carbon monoxide, and its toxic derivatives, hydrogen sulfide.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Lung cancer and mesotheliomas caused by asbestos.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Primary neoplasm of the epithelial lining of the urinary bladder or the kindly or the ureter.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.

**Part C**

Pneumoconioses caused by sclerogenic mineral dust (silicosis, anthraosilicosis asbestosis and silico-tuberculosis provided that silicosis is an essential factor in causing the resultant incapacity or death.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Bagassosis.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Bronchopulmonary diseases caused by cotton, flax hemp and sisal dust (Byssinosis).	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Extrinsic allergic alveolitis caused by the inhalation of organic dusts.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.
Bronchopulmonary diseases caused by hard metals.	All work involving exposure to the risk concerned.

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (General Provident Fund) Rules, 1973 shall be and shall be deemed always to have been as valid and effective as if the provisions of section 95 of the principal Act, were in force at the time when those rules were made.

# International Struggles

## Great Britain

Braving the mounting violence and repression unleashed by the Thatcher Government and despite the ruthless attack on trade union rights, the two lakh British Coal miners entered the 11th month of their strike on January 13. The miners rejected the Government's Christmas offer of 1400 pounds for return to work and the first full working week of 1985 started on January 7 with the overwhelming number of the miners outside the picket lines. Arthur Scargill, the President of NUM said in TV that no deal is possible with the Coal Board unless it is based on an expanding coal industry and not a declining one. He said that the union wanted to take the 10-month dispute to the negotiating table, but Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is refusing to allow the Board to negotiate. It is because she does not want just to close the pits, but to inflict a defeat on the National Union of Mine Workers. The adamancy of the Government had a damaging effect on the economy. The British pound exchanged at 1.45 dollars when the strike began. Now it is at its lowest of 1.13 dollars. The miners' wives are playing a vital role to keep up the morale of the strikers. Solidarity of a kind associated with war time has turned Dunscoft, the heart of South Yorkshire, the home country of Arthur Scargill, into a people's commune. A state within state, the "people's Republic of South Yorkshire," is the description used by the militant wives. Numerous unions have extended solidarity to the strikers. The TUI of Mining and Energy has called upon its unions to do everything possible to halt and oil exports from their countries to Britain and hold rallies before the British embassies protesting against the seizure of assets belonging to the NUM. Reiterating its support to the strikers the British TUC promised all necessary aides to the NUM.

## USA-Canada

A 12-day strike by 36000 workers of General Motors at Canada and U.S.A. compelled the management to come down and make settlement. The strike was called by the United Auto and Aerospace Workers of America (UAW) and AFL-CIO. However through determined and better bargaining the Canadian section of the union won 1.14 US dollars more than the US workers in addition to more Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) and two and half days per year of paid holidays. The Canadian agreement was ratified by the workers with 87 per cent votes, while the U.S. agreement was ratified by 57 per cent votes only.

## U.S.A.

Trade unions have moved into the front lines of struggles against apartheid in the USA against the imprisonment of South African trade unionists and the continued U.S. support to the brutal apartheid

regime. On November 23, the dock workers of International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) refused to unload South African cargo from a Dutch cargo ship in the port of San Francisco. On November 26, the police arrested the Vice President of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union when the members "illegally occupied" the embassy of the Republic of South Africa in Washington insisting to submit a memorandum demanding release of the arrested South African trade union leaders. The next day, the President of the Washington Teachers' Union was arrested for crossing the police cordon around the embassy for the same reason. Again on November 28, the Vice-President of the United Auto Workers union along with nine members were arrested.

## Canada

The Ontario Federation of Labour in its Annual Convention held at Toronto on November 19-22 decided a programme of actions to counter the deep economic crisis gripping the country and against plant closures. It demanded of the government to compel an employer to justify closure before a public tribunal with strong labour representations. The human cost of technological changes, plant shutdown and workers' displacement must be borne by the industry. It also demanded imposition of economic sanctions on transnationals if they propose to take their plants abroad. In bankruptcy cases, it demanded workers' wages and other entitlements to have the top priority.

## Denmark

Tens of thousands of blue and white collared workers took to the streets on December 4, when collective bargaining talks began at Copenhagen. Addressing a 4000 strong rally, the President of Plumbers' and Zinc Workers Union severely criticised the government's economic policies. He stressed that due to the anti-worker stance of the government, unemployment had doubled since 1975 while during the same period the wages of the workers, both manual and clerical, had fallen by 15 per cent.

## Japan

The Japanese Federation of Agriculture condemned the so called administrative reforms being carried out by the Nakasone government. According to this government programme, the number of public works, the only source of livelihood for large sections of peasants has fallen down. The Federation decided to go all out to stall this anti-people programme and demanded for more state credits to create jobs for workers in agriculture, increase their income and improve their working conditions and social security cover.

The "Stop-Education Reform" Coordination Com-

mittee held a mass rally at Tokyo protesting against the so-called reforms in education planned by the Nakasone government. The Coordination Committee was set up by the Japanese Teachers Union, SOHYO, the New Japan Women's Council and other democratic organisations. The reform has been designed to serve the big monopolies and undermine the democratic forces in education. The rally also adopted a resolution denouncing the chauvinist and militarist propanganda campaign in schools, colleges and universities.

### Brazil

Representatives of political parties, trade unions and youth organisations recently held a huge solidarity rally at Rio de Janeiro for the people of Nicaragua. The Brazilian Peace Centre which organised the rally condemned the Reagan administration for its intent to directly invade Nicaragua. The participants signed a document of solidarity with the people of Nicaragua stating "Nicaragua does not stand alone. To defend Nicaragua is to defend the freedom and independence of all Latin American Peoples".

### Italy

The workers of the transnational Massey Ferguson took to the streets enmasse protesting against the management's plan to make 1200 workers redundant. They demanded immediate intervention of the government to cancel the draconian measure. The demonstrators charged the management for violation of agreement with the union according to which it agreed to maintain the labour force in its factories. They denounced the management's plea of "financial difficulties" to justify the job cuts. In a massive rally held before the Ministry of Industry, Craft and Trade, the workers expressed their determination to carry forward the fight.

### Puerto Rico

21.7 per cent of the active population in the country are jobless, according to the Puerto Rican Ministry of Labour. Over 2,00,000 people out of a population of 9,25,000 are wandering in the streets of the country, colonised by the United States. Ronald Reagan has further ordered cuts in social spending to pay for the manufacture of his new weapons. The high rate of unemployment in the island has resulted in rising struggles. Simultaneously the crime rate and drug trafficking have also increased.

### Thailand

Members of the Thailand's National Labour Union held a big demonstration in front of the U.S. embassy on November 6 demanding ouster of John Sloan, whom they charged as being an agent of the CIA. Sloan is the Director of the Asian-American Free Labour Institute (AAFLI), an arm of the AFL-CIO. The AAFLI like the African-American Free Labour Institute and the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) has a long history of links with the CIA. The AIFLD was instrumental in the overthrow and murder of the

Chilean President, Salvador Allende in 1973.

### Lebanon

A general strike on November 20 brought the industries and markets to a standstill in the Israeli occupied towns and villages in South Lebanon. The strike was launched to protest against the reign of terror by the Israeli occupiers and their local henchmen and the murder of Abdel Latif Amin, a shiit religious leader. The strike action culminated with huge demonstrations in several towns in South Lebanon. The Israeli army brutally intervened against the demonstrators and arrested over 60 people. The people of West Beirut also joined the strike as a sign of solidarity.

### Portugal

Thousands of Portugese held a demonstration on November 26 at Lisbon for peace and disarmament. The demonstrators formed a massive peace cordon from Rossio Square to the City Hall. They adopted a declaration calling for a ban on transportation and stationing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass experimentation in Lisbon district and the region.

### Belgium

19,000 mineworkers in Limburg Province (North Belgium) went on strike on October 24 responding to a call given by the Belgian Trade Unions. The 24-hour strike was almost total in the five colliery areas around Limburg. The strike was called in protest against the plan of the Limburg Mines Board of Directors for gradual closure of the Winterslag pit and the loss of 3000 jobs by 1987.

### Colombia

The Colombian Trade Union Centres organised big demonstrations protesting against the increase in the prices of petrol and public transport announced by the Government. Demanding withdrawal of the price rise, the unions signed a joint declaration stressing that the increased price of petrol will increase prices of foodstuffs and staple goods, aggravating the situation for the workers, the economic situation already hitting the country.

### Great Britain

25,000 workers and employees of the Austin Motor Company in Birmingham and Oxford have launched a strike in both the plants demanding improved working conditions, an end to the employers' arbitrary actions against the workers and for wage rises in view of the spiralling rise in the cost of living.

### Phillippines

Waves of strikes have been sweeping Phillippines since, 1984 against price rise, growing unemployment, falling wages and for freedom, justice and democracy against dictatorship. More than 130 strikes were recorded during the first half of 1984 only, which involved the workers in banks, transport, hotels, resturants, food industry, pharmaceuticals, textiles, clothing and other industries. Wage rises in 1984 did not even cover 50 per cent of the rise in the cost of living. Solidarity actions and joint actions have simultaneously been rising.