

CORONATION WORKERS GET ORGANISED

The Coronation Hospital Workers Committee (CHWC) was formed partly in response to the strike by Baragwanath Hospital workers in November 1985; but establishing this Committee also meant that Coronation Hospital workers could voice their own long-standing grievances which relate mainly to poor wages and working conditions.

The Coronation Hospital Workers' Committee was formed at a meeting of hospital workers on 20 November 1985. The meeting was called by concerned individuals at Coro. Representatives from most groups of workers (domestics, porters) were elected onto the Committee. The Committee further includes representatives from other hospital staff (clerks, nurses, and doctors).

At the initial meeting, the workers present decided that the first task of the Committee should be to concern itself with the appalling working conditions of the non-classified workers at Coronation Hospital. Representatives from the non-classified workers asked their fellow workers about their grievances. They drew up a list of grievances from each category of non-classified workers. From these lists, a document was drawn up, entitled "Working Conditions of Local- Rate-of-Pay Workers at Coronation Hospital". This document was handed to the Superintendent. The Superintendent was asked to attend a meeting with the Committee in December 1985.

At this stage, the hospital authorities started reacting to the Committee in a hostile way by attempting to divide the workers. The authorities called one meeting with the non-classified workers and a separate meeting with the sisters. At these meetings, separate committees were formed which were partly elected and partly appointed by the authorities.

On 5 December 1985, the CHWC met with the hospital au-

thorities. Each point on the lists of grievances was discussed. The authorities promised to look into the problems, both locally and, if necessary, through the central authority. The Superintendent also announced a pay rise for the non-classified hospital workers.

The CHWC then invited all hospital workers to a report-back meeting. Workers present at the meeting voted unanimously in favour of a central committee which would have monthly meetings with the Superintendent and which would represent the workers in negotiations with the central authority. This Central committee was to have various subcommittees for the different groups of workers at the hospital.

Since that time, the Superintendent has refused to meet the Central Committee, maintaining that the workers prefer to have separate committees.

CORONATION HOSPITAL WORKERS COMMITTEE

WHO IS THE COMMITTEE ?

- It is a group of representatives of hospital workers, concerned with the welfare of patients and hospital employees.
- It includes members from all categories of workers: domestics, porters, clerks, nurses, doctors.
- It was elected at a meeting of hospital workers.
- Its most immediate concern is the unacceptable work situation of the local-rate-of-pay workers.

