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Com. Jyoti Basu addressing the mass rally at Mela Maidan, Durgapur on 5.2.96

RAMIFICATION OF THE HAWALA SCAM

The Hawala scam has brought into sharp focus the nexus between the Hawala racketeers and corrupt politicians. When the country is facing acute resource crunch the scam has underlined the free flow of huge funds into the coffers of bourgeois politicians. The Jain diary has mentioned Rs.65 crores of bribes paid to several political leaders of different political parties. However, there are several payments which were not recorded in the diary and it is estimated that the total payment is about Rs.125 crores, a part of which has been detected by CBI itself.

The heads of several Cabinet Ministers have rolled on while some of the opposition leaders particularly of the BJP have also come in the legal proceedings and charge sheets have been issued against them. L.K.Advani cut a sorry figure in the court when he tried to come out of the case on political grounds. Except Devilal and Sharad Yadav all denied having received any payment but the world very well knows that such payments are always being made to politicians in return for political favours.

The word Hawala itself means the transactions are made without any record. It violates Foreign Exchange Regulations Act and Income Tax Act. Every year thousands of crores of rupees worth foreign exchange is funneled out of the country through the device of under-invoicing and over invoicing of foreign trade transactions. The Government of India and the Finance Minister is very well aware of this phenomenon but deliberately ignore it since the ruling party gets a share of this ill gotten wealth. All the income in Hawala transactions is tax free since it does not find any mention in the income tax returns.

The bribe of Rs.125 crores had been given by Jains to several political leaders in return for favour. The amount involved in illegal transactions for which the bribe was paid must have run into thousands of crores of rupees.

It is a well known fact that Jains have been operating for a long time. The CBI has got the diary for only a particular period. What about other transactions of Jains?

Another question arises: Jains are not the only Hawala dealers. There are hundreds of Hawala operators in the country who have paid similar bribes

to various political leaders in return for favours. What the Jain diaries have highlighted is only a tip of the iceberg. The real ramifications of Hawala are yet to be unearthed.

The Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao himself is tainted with Hawala funds. He controls the CBI and it is futile to expect that CBI will find any fault with him. Unless he steps down it would be impossible to have impartial investigation in the entire Hawala scandal.

The use of Hawala money to purchase some opposition MPs during the non-confidence motion in 1993 has been made under direct instructions by the Prime Minister himself. He is supervising the work of CBI and selective action is being taken by the Prime Minister to save himself from the charges of corruption.

The use of Hawala money during elections has been very well exposed before the country. For Congress and BJP Hawala money has been a major source of funding. The foreign funding is also being made through Hawala operators. The corruption in the entire electoral process has vitiated the reflection of real will of the people during the elections. The portents for Indian democracy will be extremely alarming if stern action is not being taken against the criminals who are occupying high places in the country.

The Hawala money has been found in the activities of terrorists in the country. This security angle is very harmful for the future of the country.

The trade union and democratic movement in India must demand stringent actions against all those who are involved in the Hawala scam. However, the action must begin with the resignation of the Prime Minister who has become the fountain head of corruption in the country. So long Narasimha Rao occupies the chair of the Prime Minister he will never allow whole truth to come out since he himself is one of the largest beneficiary of Hawala money.

The corruption in high places is eating the vitals of our national economy and no perceptible growth can be ensured so long this Hawala curse is not eliminated from the Indian soil. It is only a powerful popular movement that can effectively fight all the the ramifications of the Hawala scandal in Indian soil.

NATION WIDE MAGNIFICENT STRIKE OBSERVED AGAINST GOVERNMENT'S PENSION SCHEME

So far reports received, workers all over the country have responded in a massive way to the strike call on 23rd February, 1996 and expressed their strong opposition to the Government design to take away the right of Contributory Provident Fund (CPF) and have asserted their demand for a truly beneficial Pension Scheme without infringing upon their right to CPF.

The strike call was given by CITU, UTUC, UTUC (LS), AICCTU and IFTU. However, Central trade unions like INTUC, AITUC, HMS and BMS, since supporting the introduction of the Govt. Pension Scheme, opposed the strike. But reports confirm that in many places unions affiliated to these central trade unions also have participated in the strike. Therefore, it is clear that the intensity of the strike has definitely exceeded the support base of Central Trade Unions who sponsored the strike.

The attack on CPF has evoked so serious indignation amongst the workers that in many places 'SAVE CPF COMMITTEE' has been jointly constituted by unions and workers cutting across the barrier of affiliation. In many industries, strike notice has been jointly served by unions affiliated to AITUC, HMS, INTUC, BMS etc. along with those who sponsored the strike. It is but natural that the strike call has evoked wide spread response irrespective of different positions taken by some Central Trade Unions.

As per reports, the strike was total in the states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and workers of all affiliations joined the strike enmasse. The strike was wide-spread in the states having a strong democratic Trade Union movement, such as Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. In the states of Karnataka and Industrial areas of Delhi the success of the strike was far beyond expectation. The strike also received good response in the States of Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa, Assam and Madhya Pradesh. In industries like, Steel, BHEL, Fertilizer, Electronics, Food Corporation, Engineering, small scale industries and in the unorganised sector, the strike was massive.

As per the decision, huge demonstrations have been organised by the striking workers all over the country. The workers of industries like Coal, Port and Dock, Bank, LIC, who are outside the purview of the

Govt. Pension Scheme, have extended solidarity support by holding demonstrations, day-long dharnas including wearing of black badges in many cases. In Public Sector undertakings, the officers extended solidarity support by joining the strike in many industries and in others they wore black badges and organised demonstrations.

We congratulate the workers for their massive response to the strike call.

The State and Industry wise position of the strike as per reports received upto 2.00 pm is as under:

In the Steel plants located at different places of the country, the strike was much bigger than earlier occasions. In Durgapur Steel Plant and Alloy Steel Plant, the strike was more than 80% whereas in IISCO at Burnpur, more than 60% workers joined the strike. In Bokaro Steel Plant in Bihar, more than 70% workers joined the strike. In Rourkela Steel Plant, Orissa, the strike was around 40%. In Salem Steel Plant, 90% workers joined the strike. In the iron ore mines at Kalta, Bursua, Tensa, Barbil and Keonjhar, the strike was almost total. In Fertilizer industry also reports are received from various fertilizer units regarding massive participation in strike by workers. In the Fertilizer Plants at Namrup, Assam and at Haldia & Durgapur and Panipat the strike was almost total whereas fertilizer units at Barauni, Gorakhpur, majority workers joined the strike.

As reported by Construction Workers' Federation of India, in HSCL, NBCC, BRAITHWAITE, Tata Devy, CEM (India), the strike in the Calcutta offices and the construction sites in West Bengal, Assam, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Haryana was almost total.

DELHI:

The industrial areas of Wazirpur, GT Karnal Road, Tughlakabad, Okhla, Rama Road, Jhilmil, Friends Colony, Ioni Road, were almost closed due to workers joining the strike enmasse. The strike was total in Birla Mills and more than 60% in Ayodhya Textile Mills. 100% loading and safai workers in Air Port struck work. In the Headquarters of Hindustan Fertilizers Ltd. and Power Grid Corpn. Ltd. in Delhi, the strike was total. In the Industrial areas of Ghazia-

bad and Sahibabad, the strike was total. In Hero Cycle, Dabur, Bhushan Steel, Paharpur Industries, Modern Industries and all textile mills of Mohan Nagar, the strike was 100%. Medical representatives joined the strike enmasse.

In NOIDA phase-I, Sector 1 to 4, workers of all the factories were on strike and rallied round the area with huge procession. In Greater NOIDA, Surajpur Industrial Area strike was 80%. In Public Sector units of BEL strike was more than 85%. IN CEL strike was above 95%.

U.P.:

In the Industrial centres of Kanpur, Saharanpur, Ferozabad, Varanasi, overwhelming majority of workers joined strike. In Indian Explosives Ltd and Indian Chemical Industries and Duncan Brothers, the strike was almost total. In Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. at Lucknow, the workers sat on Dharna in front of the Factory Gate. In BHEL unit of Jhansi, 95% of the workers joined the strike and in BHEL Hardwar, strike was above 50%. In Deheradun, in 17 factories, strike was around 70%.

RAJASTHAN:

All over the state the response to strike was good. In all the Distilleries and godowns all over the state, strike was total. In Kota, all the factories of M/s J & K were closed due to strike. In small scale units of Kota, 70% workers joined the strike. In Ganganagar, workers of Textiles and Sugar Mills struck work in overwhelming majority. In all the FCI godowns, strike was 100%. In Udaipur and Jaipur, workers of small scale industries joined strike in good numbers.

HARYANA:

In the Industrial areas of Faridabad, DLF area and Badarpur Boarder, industrial workers struck work and held demonstrations. In Hissar, in the textile mills, Haryana Concast Steel Mill, strike was total. Forest workers and construction workers and the workers of brick klin struck work in full. In Jind, strike was 100% in India Gypsum Ltd, Haryana Leather and Chemicals and 12 brick klins. In KC Textiles, strike was above 90%. In Punchkula, more than 50% of BEL joined strike. In small scale units, the strike was more than 60%. In Sonapat, strike was almost total in Hindustan Everst Tools, Jalani Tools, Indo-Asian Switchgears, Haryana Conductors, Goel Spinning, Hilton Rubber, Kiran Leather and Atlas. In Panipat, in National Fertilizers Ltd, Sivalkar International and

Sawhney Woolen Mills, the strike was 100%. In Ambala, the Swastik Woolen Industries was closed due to strike.

MADHYA PRADESH:

In M.P., reports received reveals that in Indore Industrial area, majority workers joined strike and held procession. In Bhopal, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, the strike was 40%. The coalmine workers held demonstration in solidarity. In Gwalior Industrial Area, the workers joined strike in good numbers.

TRIPURA:

Workers in Tripura Jute Mill, Tripura Road Transport Corpn. Industrial Development Corporation and Tea gardens struck work enmasse. In ONGC, workers staged massive Dharna.

KARNATAKA:

Industrial workers in Karnataka including the unorganised sector responded to the strike call in a massive way. The industrial areas of Peeniya, Mysore Road, Krishnarajapuram Whitefield area were completely closed. In Bangalore, in ITI, MICO, Kirloskar, Minarva Mills, BEL and BHEL, strike was total. In Mangalore and also in Kolar gold fields strike was more than 60%. Besides Beedi workers and garment factory workers all over the state joined the strike enmasse. A procession of 10,000 workers rallied around the city.

BIHAR:

Reports has been received from Bokaro Steel Plant that 70% workers struck work. In the industrial areas of Ranchi, overwhelming section of workers joined strike. Reports of strike was also received from HEC, MECON, Fire Bricks Factory. In Jamshedpur Industrial Area also, goods response to strike was reported.

ANDHRA PRADESH:

Workers all over the State responded to strike call in a massive way. In Hyderabad strike in BEL was 100% and in BHEL, ECIL strike is around 50%. In Visakapatanam, 80% workers of HSCL struck work whereas in Steel Plant around 40% workers joined the strike action.

In the industrial estates all over the state, workers joined the strike enmasse. For example, 10 industrial estates in Hyderabad alone were completely closed.

ORISSA:

More than one lakh workers participated in strike. In Bhubaneswar 500 workers were arrested. In Iron ore mines, there was total strike. In Balasore striking workers organised Rail Roko. In Cuttack, workers in small scale units and transport have joined the strike in a big way.

PUNJAB:

All over the state, the strike was massive. In Textile, Engineering, Brick Klin, FCI godowns and other food agencies, overwhelming majority of workers joined the strike. In NTC Mills, AITUC and HMS unions joined the strike. In all the cities of Chandigarh, Amritsar, Ludhiana and Pathankot, workers rallied round the city in procession and submitted memorandum to Regional PF Commissioner.

TAMIL NADU:

Throughout the state, response to the strike call was overwhelming and much beyond the support base of the CITU. Many non-CITU unions joined the strike action. Among them are Ashok Leyland, Ennore Foundries, ICL, ITC, WIMCO, Enfield India, Carborandum Universal, MRF, KCP, National Carbon (Union Carbide), B&C Mills, English Electric, IOCL, Facit Asia, India Meters, Best & Crompton Group of Companies, Sivanda Steels, Agro Engines etc. where workers struck work enmasse. In the Madras Export Processing Zone (MEPZ), about 4,000 workers struck work and held rally. In the Industrial Estates of Ambattur, Thiruvannamiyur and Guindy, majority of the workers struck work.

In Hindustan Teleprinters, Salem Steel, 90% workers joined the strike. In Hindustan Photo Films and Andrew Yule, majority of the workers struck work. In BHEL units of Trichy and Ranipet, the workers joined strike in large numbers. In Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy and Pondicherry also the response to the strike was good. Large number of workers in Textile, Hosiery and engineering have joined strike. Strike was successful also in Madurai Coats, SIMCO Meters and Lipton. In Kanyakumari District, 100% cashew workers were on strike. Four thousand workers in Rubber plantation also struck work.

GUJARAT

Successful strike was observed at Ahmedabad, Bhavanagar, Surat, Junagad, etc. in Textiles, Transport, Nylon Plants and other industries. More than 1000 worker's were arrested.

FMRAI

Nearly 40,000 Midical Representatives and other pharmaceutical workers went on strike in the country.



AIDWA DEMONSTRATES AGAINST GOVT. PENSION SCHEME

All India Democratic Women's Association decided in their Central Executive Committee to demonstrate against the Govt. Pension Scheme designed to loot the workers' PF in the name of Pension throughout the country on 12th February.

In Delhi a five hundred strong women's rally thronged inside the Shram Shakti Bhawan on 12th February and held dharna for a couple of hours. The rally was led by Brinda Karat, General Secretary, AIDWA, Vimal Ranadive, Vice President, AIDWA and Secretary, CITU, among others.

The demonstrators were addressed by Brinda Karat, Vimal Ranadive and Kalindi Deshpande. At the end, an effigy of Pension Scheme was burnt by the demonstrators.

JAC OF TEXTILE WORKERS CALLS FOR MASS DHARNA BEFORE PARLIA- MENT ON 11TH MARCH, 1996

The Joint Action Committee of Textile workers in its meeting held at Delhi on 24th February reviewed the serious situation in the four NTC Mills subsidiaries of UP, West Bengal, M.P. and Gujarat because of the directives of the BIFR to withdraw the loans from NTC mills and refusal of the Govt. of India to do so, or even to convert the loans to equity.

Consequent to this, the BIFR has issued show cause notices to the four subsidiaries, which are now threatened with winding up orders. Despite several representations made to the Govt. by the JAC, the Govt. has not written off the loans.

Under the above circumstances the workers in all the NTC mills have jointly launched agitations in various forms.

The JAC in its meeting decided to organise a Mass Dharna at Jantar Mantar Park, New Delhi, on 11th March, demanding of the Government to write off the loans. Workers of all the NTC mills in the country, especially from the four subsidiaries irrespective of affiliations are called upon to reach Delhi on 11th March and stage the Dharna at Jantar Mantar at 11 a.m. All unions are called upon to send teleggrams to the Prime Minister demanding writing off the loans. Additional agitational plans should also be carried forward in the states. On that day, a delegation of the JAC will also meet the Prime Minister.

B.D.JOSHI	P.K.GANGULY	V.TIAGI	S.N.RAODY
.GEN.SEC.	SEC.	SEC.	SEC.
AITUC	CITU	HMS	INTUC

AITUC'S UNFOUNDED CRITICISM OF THE CITU'S STAND ON PENSION SCHEME

□ M.K. PANDHE

The CITU's campaign against the pension scheme introduced by the Government of India has gone well among the workers who are coming forward in larger number of oppose the scheme. Massive rallies are being held all over the country and the preparations for strike on 23rd February are going on well. Several local unions of non-CITU Central T.U's, have issued joint strike notices in several undertakings all over the country.

The National press have written editorials sharply criticising the scheme as a gimmic by the congress party to get electoral advantage. That was the reason the scheme was announced by the Narasimha Rao Government through an ordinance without discussing with the Central trade union organisations.

What however is being pointed out by the bourgeois press is not being realied by some of the opponents of the ruling party including those claiming themselves to be leftists.

The Congress party has made its pension scheme as an election plank and the leadership of the AITUC is unfortunately helping the ruling party to get credibility among the working class during the coming Parliamentary elections. Without spending a single paisa additionally by the central government or the employers, the Government of India is trying to get credit for the pension scheme which is based on the workers' own Provident Fund money.

In an article in New Age organ of the CPI datedK.L. Mahendra has criticised the CITU for opposing the pension scheme. He commenced the article by expressing his annoyance at the media publicity received by the CITU. He says:

"The CITU is opposed to the provident Fund Pension Scheme and has received a lot of media attention. In contrast to this the national dailies blocked out the demand of four central trade union organisations viz AITUC, INTUC, HMS and BMS for implementation of the scheme and the concrete improvements suggested."

Mahendra has not a word to say about the false propaganda made by the Govt. of India through electronic media and full page advertisement in news

paper media.

The national press have clearly noted the deep resentment among the workers about the pension scheme and they see that the CITU is the only major central T.U. that is expressing this resentment. If Mahendra cannot see this, his own colleague in the AITUC, Parduman Singh has admitted this discontent in the following words.

"However a large section of workers in the organised and big public or private sector have strong reservations about the scheme and are exercised over the fact that 8.33 per cent of their Provident Fund is being diverted to the Pension Fund, which they can otherwise invest to utilise as they wish and earn better benefits as they imagine".

The CITU is therefore justified in demanding that the scheme should be optional to the workers, but the Government of India wants to make it statutorily binding on them.

Mahendra has charged CITU for illusory statistics which actually is based on facts. His argument is that the CITU calculation does not take into account the income tax deductions. Even if that is taken into account, workers stand to lose. Moreover overwhelming majority the workers who do not come in the category of income tax-payers are not affected by Mahendra's logic.

Moreover if the scheme is not beneficial to the organised sector workers now can it be beneficial to the unorganised sector workers. In the unorganised sector the employer of the workers is changed frequently some time as many as 20 time during the working life of a workers. Only a small number of the employees are covered by the PF Scheme while overwhelming majority are not. This would create serious difficulties for the unorganised sector workers who will find it extremely difficult to get a pension. A large number of unorganised sector workers could not even claim their PF, a big part of which was pocketed by the corrupt PF officials. The present PF organisation is totally incapable of handling the monthly pension of a large number of workers and the unorganised sector workers would be worst hit, since there is absence of T.U., and many do not know how

to get the money from the PF organisation. Most of them being illiterate are cheated by PF bosses. This hard reality of the PF organisation must be understood and CITU has rightly demanded creation of special machinery for a new pension scheme. Hence the argument of the AITUC that the scheme would benefit the agricultural and construction workers is unfounded. Moreover a small section of these workers are covered by the Pension Scheme while the seasonal nature of their job is making the operation of the scheme difficult for them.

The CITU has demanded that the workers who are below the poverty line, their entire contribution should be paid by the Government but the AITUC is not prepared to support this demand. Those who have no money to feed their family members cannot have resources to contribute for the pension fund. The opposition to the pension scheme has come out in a forthright manner in the organised sector because of their capacity to ventilate the feelings of the workers. The CITU, whenever has gone to the unorganised sector, the workers have also come out against the scheme.

Out of the total of one crore and 80 lakh PF subscribers generally 10 lakh go out due to death, superannuation, retrenchment, resignations etc. every year. Out of these 10 lakhs, only 10 thousands have received pension so far according to official announcement. Out of these 10 thousands, workers are only 4 thousands, while 5000 are widows and about 1000 are children. The electronic media propaganda blitz that shows that all retired workers are getting pension under the scheme is therefore totally not correct. Yet AITUC leaders are virtually trotting the argument of the Government of India to justify the Pension Scheme.

Mahendra observed that the CITU has been making contradictory statements on pension scheme. However, he has not given a single example of such contradictory statements. Since inception of the scheme the CITU had been stating that it did not accept it in its present form and given a number suggestions for radical improvement.

The argument of Mahendra about implementation of the scheme now and improving it later, does not hold good. The experience of the Family Pension Scheme shows that the revision was made by the Government of India only after 16 years, that too after the Court order.

The Government of India is making piecemeal improvements in the scheme only when they are forced by the opposition to the scheme. The credit for

this should not be claimed by those who supported the scheme and were prepared to give statutory authority to the Government of India to the Pension Scheme. It is only when the nationwide opposition came to the forefront, the Government has been offering concessions. However, these concessions have not basically altered the scheme.

Opposing CITU's demand for pension as the third retirement benefit in addition to PF and gratuity Mahendra notes,

"The real position is that at the present stage of economic development pension as an extra benefit for all the workers including those of small scale and medium scale industries or workers in the unorganised sector is not possible".

Mahendra is virtually speaking as a spokesman of the employer or the Government.

The CITU was prepared to accept as a compromise the demand of pension as a third retirement benefit in a phased manner, but it does not find favour with the AITUC leadership. All that Mahendra has to say is, "In the prosperous industries if the scheme can be worked out they can get exemption". This is the typical argument the officers of the PF Commissioners are giving while explaining the scheme. In the public sector the government has given directive that it can contribute only Rs.100/- towards pension fund. The steel and coal agreements where management agreed to give matching grant to pension fund, was not approved by the Government. Therefore, a statutory provision for the third retirement benefit would facilitate the implementation of the Pension Scheme as a third retirement benefit. If the concept is statutory introduced it can be extended gradually to all the sectors. However, Mahendra thinks that demanding Pension as a third retirement benefit or the scheme to be made optional is only diversionary any tactics.

Mahendra while criticising the actuary has correctly pointed out, "From shifting positions of the actuary it is clear that instead of being transparent he is only placing arguments which are in line with the thinking of the Government." This justifies

the need for proper evaluation of the scheme which cannot be done by merely appointing 3 actuaries. All of them may jointly do the same what one actuary has done. Mahendra should have taken into account the basic fact that the whole scheme is in line with the the thinking of the Government of India. If all the Central Trade Unions fight for the following demands jointly, it would be certainly possible to

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SIXTH STATE CONFERENCE OF WEST BENGAL CITU

□ Tarapada Roy Chowdhury

Durgapur, the Ruhr of West Bengal, was the host of the sixth State Conference of the West Bengal CITU from 2nd to 5th February, 1996. The Conference place and venue was named after the two leaders of working class movement namely Comrade Manoranjan Roy and Comrade Robin Sen.

INAUGURATION CEREMONY

During these days the entire town along with adjacent areas were adorned with 30 attractive hoardings and 12 gates covered with red clothes to commemorate and pay respectful homage to the martyrs. The entire town was filled with line of chain flags. On 2nd February, the inaugural day of the conference, 22 Brigades named after 22 martyrs, carrying blazing torches from 22 different centres and roaming all quarters of the town converged at the venue of the conference and handed over the torches to the leaders of the working class. Thousands of workers mustered strong to witness the inaugural session of the conference. The notable feature of the rally was the presence of women in vast numbers. Indeed Durgapur wore festive mood on this day and the workers joined their working places wearing conference badges.

Comrade Niren Ghosh, President of the State CITU, inaugurated the Conference by hoisting flag. Thereafter, along with him, Comrade Samar Mukherjee and other leaders placed wreaths on the Martyr's column.

The 6th Conference was presided over by Com.Niren Ghosh. Comrade M.K.Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU Central Committee attended the conference. Condolence resolution, resolution to commemorate the martyrs, resolution demanding immediate resignation of Rao Ministry and supporting the call of 23rd February Industrial strike against the Central Govt.'s New Pension Scheme were unanimously passed by the delegates. Thereafter comrade Samar Mukherjee announced the publication of the book titled "Mrityoonjayee Robin Sen" a memoir on Comrade Robin Sen. Then Comrade Haradhan Roy delivered his welcome address on behalf of the Reception Committee.

Inaugurating the Conference, Com.Niren Ghosh said that the New Economic Policy of the Govt. of

India had dragged India into debt trap. Disinvestment of 49% equity shares of profit earning undertakings at throw away prices to the national and international monopolists had already threatened India's independent economic growth. Since the days of Nehru, Central Govt. used two sticks, viz. Licensing Policy and the Freight Equalisation Policy in respect of Coal/Iron/Steel to stall the industrial growth of West Bengal. Since the last two decades the Left Front as well as Left Front Govt. were fighting against this policy of Central Govt. Currently, both the policies were partially changed. It has opened some scope for West Bengal. People of West Bengal must strive to use this opportunity for the industrial development of the state. On the question of the recent disclosure of Hawala Scandal, Comrade Ghosh commented that this was our national disgrace and BJP was also equally involved in this scandal. He demanded immediate resignation of Rao Ministry and declaration of Parliamentary Election date. He said by sowing the seeds of communal discord BJP was destroying the fabric of national integrity. He said that the Congress and BJP were acting as twins to destroy the policy of self-reliant economic growth and strengthening the Public Sector. They wanted to mortgage India's freedom in the hands of foreign multinationals. He gave a clarion call to the delegates to unite the teeming millions to inflict defeat to the above parties in the ensuing Parliamentary election.

Fraternal delegates, Comrade Kamalapati Roy from AITUC, Comrade Sailen Dey leader of TUCC, Com.Bhajan Das Gupta of HMS, Com.Ashok Ghosh of UTUC and Com.Md.Badaruddin from UTUC (Lenin Sarani) greeted the Conference.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

General Secretary Com.Chittabrata Majumdar placed his report. In his report he focused at the adverse impact of the new economic policy on the working class of the State. Closures and sickness of Industrial Units had become the main feature of the Policy. Work force in organised sector had come down from 24.94 lacs in 1991 to 23.88 lacs in 1993.

He also pointed out that the major industries of the state, viz. Iron and Steel, Port & Dock and Tea have been facing acute crisis because of the new

economic policy. Notwithstanding the above crisis, no serious attempt has so far been made by the Central Govt. to revamp these industries. Oil exploration activities have virtually been withdrawn from West Bengal, though oil was found in Bengal Basin. He brought to the notice of the delegates how corruption had swallowed the Central Govt. He also explained the background of the current Industrial Development Statement of Left Front Government and how the working class should stand by it with their class outlook.

ORGANISATION

He mainly dealt with the organisation. He said that the 5th State Conference of CITU laid down certain guidelines, to create awareness among the workers about their outlook on the Left Front Govt., their responsibility on Public Sector and taken over units, approach to new technology, to production and productivity, to peasant struggle, their responsibility in essential service sector etc. He reported that there had been significant growth of CITU among working women and unorganised Sector. CITU had advanced in all industries and its membership had touched the figure of 11.71 lacs. The report laid greater stress on the democratic functioning of the Unions, on Trade Union education, on literacy campaign among workers and on intensifying cultural activities in labour front. He urged the delegates to make indepth study of the report and concentrate discussion giving emphasis on the issue of organisation. One and half days were devoted to the discussion on General Secretary's report and 39 delegates participated and enriched the Report with their experience.

DISCUSSION IN COMMISSION

An important feature of the conference was discussion in Commission and industry wise report. 10 Commissions were constituted on the following problems faced by the present Trade Union movement:

The problems related to technology and role of working class, sick and closed industries, working women, social security system, service sector, casual and contract labour, unorganised sector, endeavour of Left Front Govt. for industrialisation, the state undertakings, environment pollution and occupational diseases. One full day was devoted for discussion. Three hundred comrades deliberated in the 10 Commissions and shared their experiences.

COM.M.K.PANDHE

Com.M.K.Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU

addressed the conference on 3rd February. He said that along with new economic policy corruption had also entered in our body polity. He said the new economic policy had given good-bye to the concept of self reliant economy. Owing to the entry of powerful multinationals, big industries were also becoming sick due to uneven competition. For the revival of the industries, the Central Govt. was unwilling to provide any fund on the plea of fund crunch. On the other hand, thirty eight thousand crores of rupees were given to private investors by Bank, were lying unrecovered and Shri Manmohan Singh was unwilling to disclose the name of the defaulters. He said that the market economy had not affected us only, it had also affected the working people of the developed countries. Recently an agreement was signed where Govt. employees of Germany would work six months and the remaining six months they would have no job. Similarly, various labour organisations of Germany had also signed agreements with their employers where workers would get 4 hours duty in a day with reduction in the wages to half. In India currently employers had adopted a policy of recruiting contract workers in perennial jobs. This was threatening the job security of permanent workers and creating conflicts among the two sections of workers. He stressed that united struggle was required to contain the multinational attacks. He pointed out that still a large section of labour was outside the purview of the organised trade unions. Extensive efforts should be made for bringing them in trade union movement.

COMRADE SAMAR MUKHERJEE

Comrade Samar Mukherjee called upon to establish greater unity with the workers and campaign for the formation of a Confederation of all Trade Unions. He also said that unions should also be motivated not to fight for their case alone, they must also take interest in the national issues.

COM.JYOTI BASU:

Com.Jyoti Basu addressed the delegates session. He said that workers should raise demands to their employers for investing their profit in the states. He urged upon the workers to be conversant with production and productivity. He assured the delegates that State Govt. would take positive steps on the issues discussed in the Commissions including the issue of casual and seasonal workers. He told the leadership of the Unions to keep close contact with the various departments of the Government. He called for building united struggle of the working class

to challenge the brutal oppression of the Centre.

On the concluding day of the session, while replying to points raised by delegates on his report the General Secretary again stressed that workers' opinions must be given due weightage in decision making. Thereafter, General Secretary's report and Accounts were unanimously adopted by the Conference.

The Conference also adopted a number of other resolutions, viz, against imperialism, against price rise, against attack on trade unions, on General Election, on Left Front Govt. and the Working class, on Worker-peasant alliance, against the economic blockade on Cuba by the USA.

The Credential Report was placed by Com.Ajit Choudhury. 1120 delegates attended the Conference from 19 districts which included 72 women delegates.

The Conference elected a 30 member Secretariat with Com.Niren Ghosh as President, Com.Chittabrata Majumdar as the General Secretary and Com.Somen Kundu as the Treasurer. It also elected a State Council consisting of 416 members and one Working Committee of 174 members from among the Council of Members.

FORM IV
(See rule B)

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OPEN SESSION

On the afternoon of 5th February, an open session was held at Durgapur Mela Maidan. There was a mammoth gathering of 2,50,000 people. Numerous processions of toiling men and women from the industrial areas of Burdwan, Ranigunj jubilantly attended the conference, converting Durgapur into a town of processions. Com.Jyoti Basu, Com.M.K.Pandhe, Com.Chittabrata Majumdar, Com.Niren Ghosh, Com.Haradhan Roy addressed the session. Com.Jyoti Basu, criticising the new economic policy of the Central Govt. and exposing the curruptions of the Central Govt. and BJP, gave a clarion call to the people to inflict crushing defeat to the Congress and the BJP and to bring into power a Third Front comprising the forces belonging to Left & National Front to reverse the anti-people policies followed by Congress.

PENSION SCHEME—

[From page 7]

prepare a good scheme through untied movement:
1. Pension as a third retirement benefit to be implemented in a phased matter without affecting the PF contributions.

2. The scheme should be made optional to all workers.

3. The pension quantum to be linked with Price Index.

4. The rate of interest on Pension fund should be 15% as offered by public sector and commercial banks.

5. A separate trust to be created for running the Pension Scheme in which workers representatives should have more powers to run the scheme.

6. Entire administrative expenditure of the scheme should be bourne by the Central Government.

7. Proper evaluation of the scheme should be made providing higher pensionary benefits to the workers. 8. The scheme should be applicable to the entire unorganised sector.

The CITU has been campaigning on these issues and a call for one day strike on 23rd February has been given to press for these demands. However, the AITUC instead of supporting the movement, is only relying on making representations to the Government and emphasizing the improvement in the scheme in a gradual manner.

We only hope that the AITUC leadership will review their stand and agree for a joint movement on the pension scheme so that through sustained struggle it would be possible to achieve a real social security scheme for the working class of India.

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS
(BASE 1982 = 100) Centre**

	Linking factor for Old Base			Linking factor for Old Base			
	Oct '95	Nov. '95		Oct '95	Nov. '95		
All India	321	317	4.93	311	312	5.00	
Gudur	324	318	4.33	Rourkela	295	292	3.59
Guntur	324	320	5.60	Amritsar	287	281	5.19
Hyderabad	296	298	5.23	Ludhiana	299	291	—
Visakhapatnam	310	314	—	Ajmer	316	310	5.01
Warrangal	315	312	—	Jaipur	302	302	5.17
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	297	293	4.05	Coimbatore	314	313	5.35
Guwahati	332	329	—	Coonoor	337	336	4.80
Labac-Silchar	287	275	3.96	Madras	342	338	5.05
Mariani-Jorhat	314	313	3.95	Madurai	328	331	5.27
Rangapara-Tezpur	313	306	4.29	Salem	341	329	—
Jamshedpur	297	294	4.68	Tiruchirapally	341	341	—
Jharia	281	274	4.63	Agra	300	294	—
Kodarma	280	273	5.43	Ghaziabad	310	310	—
Monghyr	308	304	5.29	Kanpur	322	310	4.69
Noamundi	287	286	4.58	Saharanpur	296	291	5.06
Ranchi-Hatia	312	306	—	Varanasi	327	325	5.12
Ahmedabad	317	313	4.78	Asansol	304	299	4.77
Baroda	321	314	—	Calcutta	344	334	4.74
Bhavanagar	334	331	4.99	Darjeeling	287	287	4.55
Rajkot	313	310	—	Durgapur	341	333	—
Surat	335	335	—	Haldia	353	347	—
Faridabad	312	304	—	Howrah	352	341	4.12
Yamunanagar	304	296	5.53	Jalpaiguri	303	288	4.16
Srinagar	311	309	5.47	Raniganj	296	292	4.40
Bangalore	314	313	5.66	Chandigarh	309	307	—
Belgaum	341	339	—	Delhi	340	332	4.97
Hubli-Dharwar	322	324	—	Pondicherry	365	364	—
Mercara	319	320	—				
Alwaye	322	321	5.19	Additional series of Labour Bureau			
Mundakayam	327	332	—	Kothagudem	322	319	3.25
Quilon	327	337	—	Himachal Pradesh	304	299	3.75
Trivandrum	334	340	—	Bhilwara	316	314	3.20
Bhalaghat	316	311	5.24	Chindwara	334	332	2.59
Bhilai	284	284	3.49	Tripura	323	316	4.37
Bhopal	325	322	5.46	Goa	348	351	3.40
Indore	328	323	5.18				
Jabalpur	330	326	6.41	Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by			
Bombay	352	346	5.12	multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the			
Nagpur	326	320	4.99	linking factor given and rounding off the result to			
Nasik	334	329	—	nearest whole number.			
Pune	349	345	—	—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series,			
Solapur	341	338	5.03				

THE EMPLOYEE'S PENSION SCHEME—1995

THE TRUE PICTURES

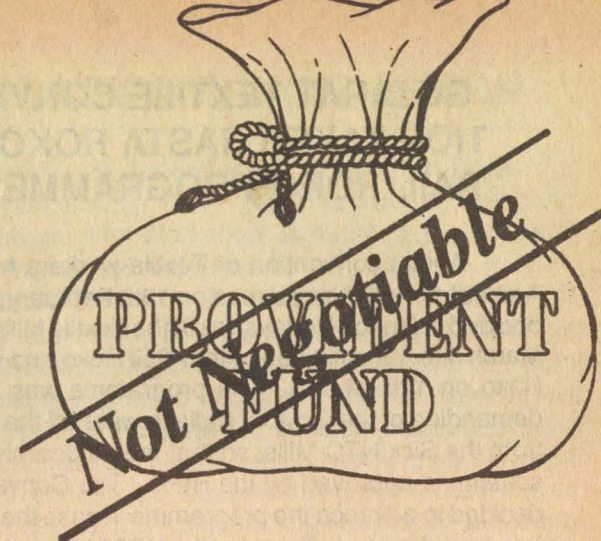
A Few Selected Thought Provoking Cartoons/Caricatures
 Depicting the Evils of the Employees' Pension Scheme



THE TIMES OF INDIA, Mumbai, Tuesday, January 23, 1996



My dear fellow... our endeavour is only to see you living a happy retired life.



Rao : Cash crunch Mr Clinton? Very simple remedy, divert provident fund of all American workers into govt. treasury. Problem solved.

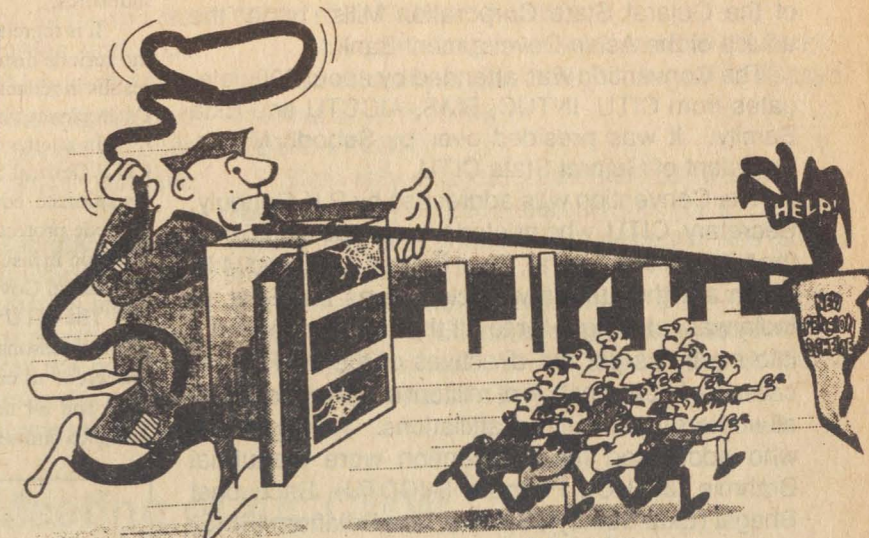
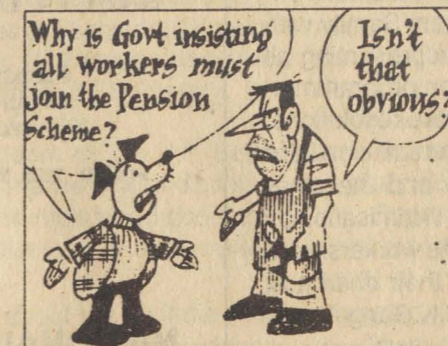
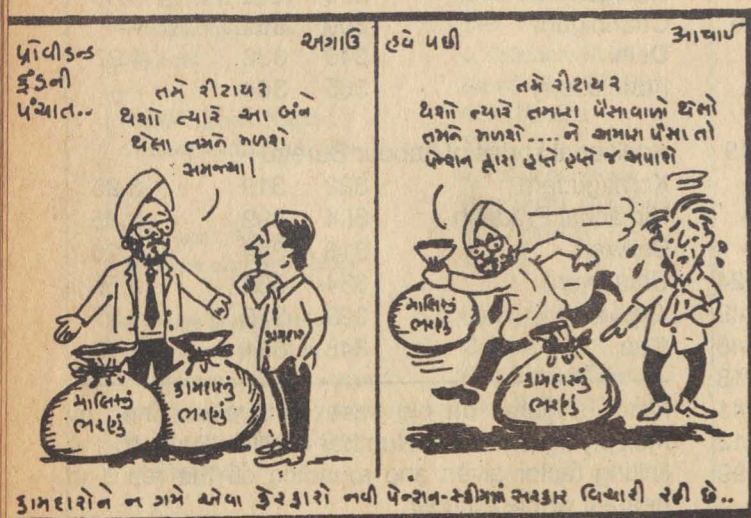


Illustration: AJIT NINAN & ABEL ROBINSON

Indian Express - Sunday, April 18, 1993.



GUJARAT TEXTILE CONVENTION TAKES RASTA ROKO, RAIL ROKO PROGRAMME.

A joint convention of Textile workers held at Ambedkar Hall, Ahmedabad on 19th February, 1996 decided to launch Padayatras in the Textile Mills from March 5 to 12, culminating into Rail Roko and Rasta Roko on 12th March. The programme was taken demanding of the Govt. of India to write off the loans from the Sick NTC Mills, so that their modernisation scheme is approved by the BIFR. The Convention decided to advance the programme in case the BIFR issues notice of winding up of the NTC Mills during the period.

The Convention further demanded of the BJP State Govt. of Gujarat to withdraw its order of closure of the Gujarat State Corporation Mills under the advice of the Asian Development Bank.

The Convention was attended by about 200 delegates from CITU, INTUC, BMS, AICCTU and Ekta Samity. It was presided over by Subodh Mehta, President of Gujarat State CITU.

The Convention was addressed by P.K.Ganguly, Secretary, CITU, who briefed the serious situation in the NTC Mills in Gujarat, West Bengal, U.P., and M.P. which are threatened with closure as the Govt. of India was refusing to write off the loans or convert it into equity as per the directives of the BIFR. He called for intensification of militant united agitation by all workers irrespective of affiliations. Among others who addressed the Convention were Manubhai Brahmin (INTUC), Pahgare (AICCTU), Bachubhai Bhagat (Ekta Samity), Sampat Rao Dolatram (BMS) etc.

Raghuvir Prasad Mali, the State CITU General Secretary moved the resolution adopting the action programme. According to the resolution, the Convention formed a Broad Samyukt Sangram Samity with five representatives from each Mill representing all the unions, to carry forward the action programme.

The Convention adopted two more resolutions, one calling upon the workers to join the strike on 23rd February against Pension Scheme and the other demanding Bonus and withdrawal of victimisation by Arvind Mills (Private Sector), where the workers were staging relay hunger strike. Earlier, their dharna at Arvind Mills gate was addressed by P.K.Ganguly and others. Subodh Mehta summed up the deliberations.

CITU Supports the Struggle of Insurance Employees for Just and Proper Wage Revision

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) congratulates the insurance employees on the continuing struggle to secure just and proper wage revision for LIC and GIC employees, due from August, 1992. The CITU expresses support for the one-day strike by the insurance employees all over the country on February 14 against the Government's move to unilaterally impose without the improvements as demanded by the All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA).

The Government's insistence on granting only 10.5 per cent wage rise to insurance employees on the specious plea that the same rate of wage increase was given in Banking industry is atrocious. Quite apart from the fact that the bank agreement has been repudiated by the signatory unions themselves and the whole issue of wage revision is before a 3-man committee, there are vast differences in profits, productivity and paying capacity of the two industries.

It is regrettable that the Government has refused to remove the serious distortion in structuring payscales and D.A. which results in reduction of take-home pay for all Class III and Class IV employees in all stages of basic pay.

In a letter to Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the CITU General Secretary, Com. M.K. Pandhe has requested for dispassionate consideration of basic issues raised by AIIEA and concede protection of take-home pay as was done in a similar situation in insurance in 1985 and by the Fourth Pay Commission for Central Government employees.

The CITU again urges the Finance Minister to concede this just and reasonable demand of insurance employees in the best interest of all concerned. The CITU also appeal to the working class and all trade unions to extend their full support to the demands and struggle of insurance employees.



SILVER JUBILEE OF NATIONAL SAFETY DAY CELEBRATIONS

PLEDGE YOUR COMMITMENT
TO AN ACTION PROGRAMME
FOR SAFE WORKING

ROUND THE YEAR IN EVERY WORKPLACE



NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

F.B. NO. 26754, C.L.L. BUILDING, SION, BOMBAY - 400 022.

ANDHRA PRADESH CHILD LABOUR WORKSHOP

The Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU organised the CITU-ILO State level Workshop on Child Labour in the unorganised sector at Hyderabad on January 26 and 27. The Workshop was attended by 24 delegates and a few observers from 9 districts of the State representing the industries of Beedi, Construction, Hotel & Restaurants and Handloom. Four participants were working women from the Beedi industry.

The Workshop was presided over by Com.N.Prasada Rao, President of the State CITU and inaugurated by Shri Prasad Rao, the State Joint Labour Commissioner. Shri M.P.Joseph, the Programme Coordinator from the International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), ILO, addressed the Workshop and briefed about the IPEC Project. Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, CITU, briefed about the problems of working women and child labour. P.K.Ganguly, Secretary, CITU, explained the approach of the CITU on the issue and emphasised on alleviation of poverty and the socio-economic problems in the unorganised sector, which were the reasons for the child labour.

Com.Hemlatha, the State CITU Secretary, placed the Theme Paper of the Workshop which was followed by general discussions and question answers. The workshop was divided into four groups on the second day which discussed in depth the guideline points given by P.K.Ganguly. The group discussions were conducted in the four above industries by E.Pulla

Reddy, M.Adinoryana Murthi, Y.Raju and S.Nagashwara Rao. After reporting by the group leaders, the Workshop formulated the following demands and action plan:

DEMANDS:

Land reforms; need based wages; employment generation programme and right to work; free compulsory education to working children; special free schools in child labour infested industries; equal wages to working children and working women at par with adult males; 6 hour working with recess, leaves, holidays etc. to children; implementation of labour laws, social security measures; free medical care; housing; suitable amendment of the Child Labour Act to incorporate the provisions of the National Policy on Child Labour.

ORGANISATIONAL TASKS:

Drive for increase in membership in the unorganised sector by at least 20%; holding of TU classes in the unorganised sector.

ACTION PLAN

State rally of unorganised Sector workers before Assembly on 26th February; district level rallies before that and wall writing, postering and street corner meetings.

Vimal Ranadive concluded and Hemlatha summed up the deliberations. Parsa Satyanarayana, who presided over the second day deliberations, gave the concluding speech.

Meeting of AICCWW

The meeting of the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women was held at Hyderabad on December 2 and 3, 1995. The meeting was attended by 19 members from the states of Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, W Bengal, Haryana, Bihar and Orissa. Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, attended the meeting from the Centre.

P Satyanarayana, President of the AP State Committee of CITU addressed the meeting and briefed about the work done in AP. He mentioned about the growth of membership, particularly in Anganwadi, which rose to about 7000.

Vimal Ranadive briefed about the all India situation and urged for planned work under the guidance of the CITU State Committees to bring in working

women in the trade union movement and consolidate the state coordination committees. She especially mentioned about the good work done by Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, etc in this regard. She emphasised the need for increasing the membership of working women in CITU. She further drew attention to the retrograde Pension Scheme introduced by the Government and called for preparation of strike against it as planned by the CITU and other unions.

Representatives from the states placed their state reports. Comrades from all the States participated in the discussions and reported about the struggles launched by them in various states.

The meeting also discussed the current situation

[Cont'd on page 20]

THE INFAMOUS PRESS NOTE

SAROJ CHOUDHURI

On January 19 in daily press carried prominently the Press Note issued by the Ministry of Finance (Deptt. of Economic Affairs) the previous night announcing that the Ministry "have today cleared the proposal for the wage revision of class III and class IV employees in the insurance sector.

Never before in wage disputes in the insurance industry or elsewhere the government felt impelled to make a public announcement of this kind even though such disputes had arisen in the past resulting in prolonged agitations involving lockouts and strikes. But the compelling reason arose this time because the government in a blatant display of authoritarian unilateralism decided to act in total disregard not only of the reasoned opposition of the employees but also the issues raised and concern expressed by over 70 members of Parliament in a joint letter to the Prime Minister in this connection. The necessity of window dressing and camouflaging the unilateral nature of the action, render the Press Note into a chain of untruths, distortions and quibblings. It bears testimony to some mandarin in the Ministry burning midnight oil to bring out all the sophistication of presenting a thinly veiled untruth as the reality. It is thus a part of the design of spreading misinformation so as to set the public against the employees. We are, therefore, refraining from discussing each of the points taken by the Ministry, though these can be refuted thoroughly and their hollowness proved, and prefer to confine to the larger issues.

The Press Note opens up with the claim of 20 per cent wage rise for insurance employees including the benefit of pension granted under an MOU in 1994. To include the expenditure that was agreed to be undertaken in 1994 in the cost of wage revision in early 1996 is anything that correct. Besides, the cost towards a similar scheme in RBI or IDBI or UTI has not been reckoned in costing wage revision. In SBI the cost of one increment was not included, nor the cost of improvement of pension scheme having regard to certain special circumstances.

About the extent of wage rise. The Press Note projects that hundred per cent wage rise has been granted. This is far from the truth. Indeed, what the class III and class IV employees have been given is reduction in take-home pay. The fact is that since the new pay-scales have been worked out at 1148 point

of index, DA payable upto that point of index has been merged into basic pay and because of PF deduction on basic pay so raised, the quantum of PF deduction goes up and take-home any declines. All the employees from the very first stage to the last thus suffer reduction in take-home pay. It is caused by a change of head of distribution of salary. Trade Unions, without doubt, are interested in augmenting the retiral benefits of employees, but can not be indifferent to the current needs. This problem, one of the sources of friction, could have been remedied by grant of one fitment increment as has been done in several public undertakings. Even in insurance a similar situation was overcome by grant of one increment during the revision in 1988. But this time the government opted to be unreasonable and adamant.

Another area of disagreement between the managements and the All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) WAS THE RATE AT WHICH DA should be neutralised into basic pay. While AIIEA insisted that it should be at 115 and 118 percent, the management refused to go beyond 103 and 106 per cent for class III and class IV respectively. But its illogicality became more blatantly glaring when, after a few days, LIC Class I officers were granted scales of pay with neutralization of 115 and 118 per cent as had been granted earlier to bank officers. Incidentally, it is this that led to the repudiation by the signatory unions of the bank agreement which is now before a 3-member committee.

Here our objection is not grant of higher rate of neutralisation to officers - they too deserve justice - but violation of an important and wholesome principle in wage fixation. It is well settled in Judicial verdicts, innumerable industrial awards and further sanctified by long-standing practice that those in the lower pay-brackets need to be provided higher rate of neutralization than those in the higher rungs of wage-ladder. There are other methods of increasing wages of officers.

The Press Note claims that "several rounds of discussions" with the unions were held. This again is a half-truth. There were only 3 rounds in 1995 after a probing round as far back as in 1993. In each of the 3 rounds, whatever proposals the managements made were described as having emanated from the Ministry and were claimed as "final". These were

'take it or leave it' situations and were not collective bargaining as known. Despite this limitation, the AIIEA attempted to do its best to achieve resolution of the dispute in the best interest of all concerned but that floundered on the rock of denial and deprivation and arrogance of power.

The Press Note almost waxes eloquent on the so-called justifiability of 10.5 per cent wage increase for insurance sector. The Ministry can not pretend unawareness that many agreements in public undertakings were concluded in 1995 providing wage increases between 18 and 27 per cent; in the financial sector, the RBI, IDBI and UTI wage increase of the order 16.5 per cent has been conceded.

The government seeks to construct some justification on the ground of "well-established historical linkage between banking and insurance industry". This is transparently a figment of imagination.

In wage determination, paying capacity of the industry has come to be accepted on all hands as an important determinant. The government claimed at the time of conclusion of banking agreement in February 1995 that the banks had incurred a loss of Rs.6500/- crores in 1993-94 and of Rs.3600/- crores in 1992-93. By no jugglery of figures and manipulative statistics can insurance be shown as incurring losses. In 1995 alone, the government received as its share of LIC valuation surplus Rs.160 crore as against Rs.140.15 crore the previous year. For wage revision LIC and GIC are in no need of any budgetary support. In the LIC, percentage of salary to total income was 5.92 per cent in 1994-95 and since the last wage agreement wage bill as a percentage to premium income has declined by nearly 4 per cent. Are those in the Ministry so jijune as not to know all these? The kernel of the government's assertions is that it seeks a pliable trade union like AIBEA to negotiate on behalf of the financial sector employees, especially insurance. The government needs an organisation that would not bother it on such matters as scuttling the objectives of nationalisation and opposing Narasimham report on banking reforms.

In a desperate bid to pit the LIC policyholders and the GIC clients against the employees, the Ministry has brought in the question of bonus to policyholders and the underwriting loss in GIC for some years. This is an attempt to cash in on the general unawareness about intricacies of insurance business.

The unbridled consumerism and the equity culture being assiduously promoted is affecting not just bonus to LIC's policyholders alone; it has brought in the disastrous fall in national savings rate. If only the LIC is allowed to earn a little more on its enormous

Life Fund (12.43 per cent in 1993-94) the policyholders can be given much higher bonus. Underwriting losses in general insurance occur for a variety of reasons. Even the advanced countries where this insurance is far more developed is not always free from this which does not interfere with the capacity to fulfill contracts. If two subsidiaries of GIC have marginally exceeded the limit of expenses, it is because of the unhealthy practices set off by the Malhotra report, the new provisioning norms laid down by the government, and in a limited way, weakness of management. These should not have been brought in to justify negation of legitimate demands of employees.

The most obnoxious part of the Press Note are the references to All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) and the support that other unions in the industry command. The authors of the Press Note could have profitably refer to the percentage of employees who participated in the strikes at the call of AIIEA, the figures which have been meticulously supplied by the LIC/GIX managements. If the Finance Ministry is so sure as to glibly state that these union represent the "majority of class III and class IV employees in the insurance industry as a whole" why the labour Ministry is sitting tight on several representations of AIIEA to carry out a verification of membership! AIIEA has offered to subject itself to any method that the government may choose. But for reasons best known to the government, no action has been taken and all wings of the government are maintaining stoic silence on this. It seems that the spirit of Goebbles has descended on Finance Ministry to repeat this untruth publicly.

The whole exercise is to hide the unpalatable fact that insurance employees have been made victims of a hostile discrimination by way of being deprived of the right to collective bargaining, a universally granted right to all workers. The need is also there to cover up the fact that in insurance there is no recognised trade union.

The Press Note will go down as a specimen of a clumsy attempt to ever up the chastising of insurance employees as a matter of vendetta for their temerity to oppose on a national scale the Malhotra report.

Despite, however, the untruths incorporated in the Press Note and the insinuations, the AIIEA remains open and indeed would welcome an amicable settlement on the basis of acceptance of the very just and legitimate demands of employees. The AIIEA's efforts in this direction shall not cease whatever the provocations and prevarications of the other side. castigations and browbeating shall not work. □

JUNGLE RULE IN NEPZ, NOIDA

□ K.M.TEWARY

General Secretary CITU Distt. Committee Ghaziabad, U.P.

Adjacent to the villages of Salarpur and Bhangel in NOIDA separated by a long drain lies the National Export Processing Zone. Surrounded by high fences of thick barbed wire and one gate manned and patrolled by weapon wielding customs officials, the zone presents a sealed picture of security. Modern buildings set in idyllic greenery mark the brutality of the most vicious and repressive exploitation of thousands of men, women and children who constitute the workers of NEPZ, NOIDA. An exploitation that is screened and hidden from the public eye not only by the facade of the buildings, the barbed wire and the customs gate, but also the plethora of Govt. platitudes that zones such as these are set up in "national interests."

We are not here raising our dispute with the prevailing understanding of the Govt. that the avarice of the wealthy constitutes the interests of the nation. But it is time that the overall policy towards labour in the Export Processing Zones was debated in depth both at the level of approach as well as experience. This is all the more important at a time when the Govt. is planning to multiply the number of such zones.

There have been a sufficient number of well documented academic studies that have highlighted the fact that the Export Processing Zones in India act as labour camps where all labour laws are flouted with impunity. But today, on behalf of the trade union movement we would like to address the concrete questions of the mechanisms and policies which require not just bland review but actual change, on the basis of our experience of the functioning of the NEPZ, NOIDA.

1. Set up in 1984, this zone is administered by a Development Commissioner from the Ministry of Commerce and an army of Customs Officials. This Zone Administration has a 'Holding of Hand Scheme' to assist entrepreneurs in getting various clearances and approvals. And yet, of the 142 units in the zone—only 67 are registered under the Factories Act with the Inspectorate of Factories. It should be noted that the majority of the factories employ above 100 workers.

2. The oppressive atmosphere for workers of being constantly under threat from uniformed customs officials is aggravated by open brutality from at

the gate itself to inside the zone—what the workers call the "Dadagiri" of customs people. There have been cases where workers have been beaten up by customs guards at the behest of employers and forced to give resignations.

3. Despite the fact that many of the factories employ children, there is no record or enforcement of regulations related to child labour.

4. Many factories employ well above 30 women. However, there is not a single creche in the whole zone. Discriminatory practices of employing only unmarried women are rampant.

5. Govt. claims that labour laws of the state in which the zone is situated are applicable while stressing that their enforcement is no responsibility of the Development Commissioner or Customs Officials who administer the zone. For labour there is no 'holding of hands'.

6. Labour Department Officials require special permission to enter the zone. The permission procedure includes the system of the customs officials checking with the management of companies before letting the labour department people enter the zone. A testimony to the confidence and brutality of managements is given in the following example. Hanung Toys, which employes a large number of women and children without even giving minimum wages, ESI, Provident Fund, and makes children work upto 12 hours, was to be inspected by the labour department in June '95. The Inspector was kept waiting at the zone gate while the management was informed by the customs officials at the gate of his arrival. As a result the young girls were herded off and locked there for hours in the blinding summer heat and the Inspector was sent back with a false report. While the labour department itself is utterly lax about enforcement of minimum labour laws, there can be little doubt that the awesome and repressive presence of Central Govt. restrictions and customs, is the major power base for such criminal managements.

7. Further, in cases of industrial dispute between employers and workers, the customs officials act as the enforcement agency for illegal acts of managements. The case of Taj Rhein Shoes is a clear example of this. When the management illegally

[Cont'd On page 24]

Unprecedented Resentment over Air India Wage Pact

□ R Ramanathan

The earlier settlement reached in Air India by the Air India Employees' Guild and the settlement reached in Indian Airlines by the Air Corporations Employees' Union expired on 31.8.90 and the employees of both the companies, which were both Corporations before the repeal of the Air Corporations Act 1953, are entitled for revision of wages with effect from 1.9.90. The employees of Air India and Indian Airlines were covered by identical pay scales and allowances in respect of similarly placed categories. However, the Govt of India referred the parity question to the National Industrial Tribunal and simultaneously referred the demands of the employees to it. Since 1.9.90, the dispute is pending before the NIT at Bombay.

As a result of several representations and agitations, the management of Indian Airlines finally agreed to negotiate the Charter of Demands bilaterally with Air Corporations Employees' Union. The Air India Employees Guild affiliated to HMS which is a recognised union in Air India arrived at a Memorandum of Settlement with the management of Air India on 31.12.95 in respect of the Charter of Demands pending w.e.f 1.9.90. The leading newspapers in the country on 1st January 1996 conveyed the information and declared it as a New Year Bonanza to the employees of Air India amounting to more than 100 crores of rupees. In the early morning of 1st January 1996, the employees of Air India greeted one another with joy and happiness. However, by the afternoon of 1st January 1996 before the employees clocked out, the news started leaking out about the real nature of the settlement arrived at by Air India management with their recognised union. Frustration and anger and a feeling of having let down started spreading to several departments and workshops. The rank and file tried to contact the union for seeking clarifications but except a general circular issued by the union, nothing came out and the Memorandum of Settlement was kept as a closely guarded document. The employees of Air India at Bombay in a massive way marched to the Guild Office on 4.1.96 and continuously protested against the settlement and in a peaceful manner offered a dharna till early morning of 5.1.96. They disbursed only when the union leadership wrote to the management that "keeping in mind the sentiments of our members we request you to

treat the MoU as cancelled till we revert back to you on our fresh proposals."

The Air Corporation Employees Union is an unrecognised union in Air India. The general secretary of the union was receiving several queries from the members of the ACEU in Air India. In order to explain the ACEU's stand vis-a-vis the MoU, a rally of Air India employees was convened by the ACEU Central Office on Friday the 5th January 1996 at Old Airport, Bombay. The rally was an unprecedented success as thousands of employees gathered to listen to the view points of the ACEU, though the rally was organised within a short time.

THE REAL NATURE OF THE SETTLEMENT

As stated earlier, the settlement continue to remain as a classified and confidential document. Neither the management of Air India nor the union in spite of huge protests has disclosed the settlement to the rank and file. However, reliable and definite informations are available about the real nature of the understanding. The frustrations of the employees have centered around three important aspects of the MoU. They are (1) Period of understanding, (2) The methods and principles adopted in fixation of the basic pay in the revised pay structure, and (3) Payment of huge sums of money to the union fund.

The fresh settlement is due for both Air India and Indian Airlines employees w.e.f. 1.9.90. The period of the settlement is five years as per the Govt of India's guidelines to the public sector undertakings. As such the settlement in Air India should have been for a period from 1.9.90 to 31st August 1995. Instead the settlement reached now is for a period unto 31.12.1996, i.e., an extension of 16 months and that too without accepting any additional compensation for the extended period. For the period from 1.9.90 to 31.12.91 (for 16 months) a separate payscale has been introduced without changing the rate of increment of the old basic pay structure and for these period of 16 months effective from 1.9.90 the management has offered a wage increase of Rs24/- only. The only consolation was that there will be no recovery of interim relief of Rs 280/- at the minimum paid to the employees with effect from 1.9.90. Hence the protests of employees centered around this aspect of non-granting the additional benefits from 1.9.90 to

31.12.91 and also extending the period of the settlement by another 16 months from 1.9.95 to 31.12.96.

The second most important area of anger of Air India employees could be gauged from the fact that though the minimum basic pay has been fixed at Rs 2800/-, the methodology adopted in the MOU for fitment of the employees in the revised basic pay is utterly faulty in as much as in almost all stage 2/3 stages of the old basic pay have been fitted in one and the same basic. The result of such a faulty fitment has been that even with a revised basic pay of less than Rs 2800/-, the employees of Air India could have gained substantially higher fitment in the revised basic pay structure. On the question of the exact quantum of the minimum basic pay, the rumour mongers and the agents of the management of Air India at the behest of the Industrial Relations Section carried a propaganda in Air India as well as in Indian Airlines so as to draw the attention of the employees to a certain basic pay on 1.1.92. Their whole emphasis was on 1.1.92, so that the settlement could be arrived at for 5 years from 1.1.92. It is unfortunate that the guild leadership fell into the machinations of vested interests of Air India and signed the settlement for 5 years from 1.1.92 to 31.12.96 fixing the basic pay at Rs 2800/- at the minimum. This basic pay has been arrived at to bring about a confusion and to project as if the wage structure of Air India especially the low paid staff is high, whereas the actual fact is that both the low paid staff in grade 1/2 as well as higher grades were deprived of a proper and principled basic pay fixation. For example, a pre-revised basic pay of Rs 1185/-, on 1.1.92 has been fixed in the revised basic pay of Rs 2880/- in the MoU, whereas it should have been fixed at Rs 3125/- as per proper fitment formula.

The employees of Air India have come to know that they are losing heavily as a result of the wrong fitment formula. At every stage right from the first year of joining, the employees have been losing a minimum of Rs 40/-, to maximum of around Rs 3000/-. Several statements and charts indicating stages of fitment in the revised pay scales have been circulated.

The third aspect has been the undemocratic manner in which the Union Fund has been raised through the settlement. If reports are true and correct, more than 61 lacs of rupees is agreed to be paid to the union. In the earlier settlement also such a provision was kept and Air India management deducted the money which led to industrial unrest and, filing a Writ petition in the Bombay High Court. However, again this time both the management as well as the Guild is reported to have landed the employees in the same

situation and illegal and corrupt means were adopted in signing of settlement to beef-up the union's fund.

The Air Corporation Employees' Union, fully and wholeheartedly supported the struggle of the employees of Air India and demanded that the settlement reached by the management with the Guild should be scrapped and a fresh MoU should be arrived at taking the genuine and legitimate feelings and aspirations of the employees into consideration. The management must understand clearly that in order to have durable and lasting industrial peace, the ACEU which has a substantial membership in Air India, should also be taken into confidence while arriving at important decisions. The top management of Air India should also understand that the industrial relations set up in Air India, which is responsible to advise and guide the management of Air India in matters of industrial relations, has been taking a partisan and sectarian view on the issues of Air India employees and has miserably failed to give a proper and correct advice resulting into a total chaos and consequent industrial unrest leading to hardships to the passengers of Air India.

Meeting of AICCWW—

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in the country with special focus on the forthcoming elections and decided the following action plans:

1. To devote wholeheartedly in the campaign against the retrograde policies of the Cong(I) government and also against the communal politics of the BJP and participate in the campaign programme by the National Platform of Mass Organisations.

2. While launching campaign, the issue of child labour should be focused.

3. Observe 8th March, the International Day of Women in a befitting manner.

4. The issues of Muslim and Dalit women to be taken up, demanding social justice to them. The decisions of the Delhi Seminar 9-10 should be carried forward, specially against the policy of BJP on common civil code.

5. Demand for six months maternity leave, creche, etc to be focused.

6. participation of working women in TU negotiations. Minimum wages and regularisation of Anganwadi women.

8. Campaign against price rise and for distribution of essential commodities in PDS.

The meeting also decided to hold TU classes for working women in different states, particularly in the Hindi belt.

V Raghavulu, the State CITU General Secretary also addressed the meeting. Vimal Ranadive summed up the discussions.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY - V

(We are publishing hereunder fifth part of the Report of Standing Committee on Energy (1995-96) on the subject, "New Policy Initiatives in Power Sector - Status of Implementation and their Impact on the Economy," dealing with the impact on Public Sector. This is the last of the series.- Editor)

KARBI LANGPI PROJECT

It transpired during discussion with the officials of North-Eastern Electric Power Corporation during the study tour to Arunachal Pradesh and Assam that the Karbi Langpi Hydro Electric Project which was being implemented by the National Project Construction Corporation (NPCC) at a cost of Rs.80 crores has now been transferred to a private investor viz., Bharat Hydro Power Corporation for completion of the project at a cost of Rs.300. 50% of the work of the project and reportedly been completed by NPCC.

Karbi Langpi (Lower Borpani) (2 x 50 MW) hydroelectric project in the district of Karbi Anglong of Assam was sanctioned in September, 1979 at a cost of Rs.34.15 crores and was scheduled for commissioning in 1985-96. This programme of commissioning was subsequently revised of June, 1989. The work on the dam was started through M/s Sibson Construction Company Ltd. in September, 1982 but the contract was terminated in March, 1987 because of slow progress of works and following fresh tenders, works were awarded to M/s NPCC in September, 1987. The project was posed to OECF and loan agreement was signed in October, 1981. The amount under the (Overseas Economic Corporation Fund) OECF loan was 1700 million Yen. The procurement of equipment had been stored in warehouses since then. An amount of 1490 million Yen has already been spent out of the loan amount and the balance was for supervision and erection charges. The loan agreement was scheduled for closing in October, 1986 and was revised to September, 1992 in view of the considerable delays in the civil works on the project. M/s NPCC could not mobilise in time and in 1988 devastating floods caused extensive damage to the dam site and the coffer dam and as a result there was a severe set back to the progress of the civil works. What compounded the slow progress by the contractors, was the political situation in the area and restriction on use of explosives added to the delays. Immediately after the work was awarded to M/s NPCC, disputes between Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB) and M/s NPCC started and contractual difficulties led to slow progress of the works. The cash flow problems of M/s NPCC worsened the situation and ASEB terminated the contract of M/s NPCC in 1993. Meanwhile because of the substantial period for which the construction equipments were kept in the Warehouses, the OECF refused to revalidate the warranty for the equipments.

In March, 1993, ASEB, Government of Assam and M/s Subhas Project Marketing Ltd. entered into an MOU for the execution of Karbi Langpi HE Project. A new Company called M/s Bharat Hydro Power Corporation was set up in which ASEB had a share of 11%. This decision was not taken with the approval of the Government of India. Since then OECF has been requesting for adequate safeguarding of the equipment supplied under its loan. As per the MOU, the new company took upon itself the liability of OECF and it was incorporated in the MOU that in case Government of India decides to insist upon the repayment of the loan, the said decision of repayment shall be binding on the company. The new company also considered as deferred liability the sum of Rs.116.21 crores as already spent by ASEB on the project. This liability would be liquidated by supply of 30% of the total generated power to ASEB. Once the liability was liquidated the company would supply the entire power to customers at rate determined by the company with prior approval of Government of Assam/ASEB.

The decision to transfer the project was taken by the Government of Assam who were competent to take this decision. However, Ministry of Power is interested in early completion of the project and if a new company can ensure that the project is commissioned early the Ministry of Power will support this. According to Government of Assam, the project required a further expenditure of Rs.100 crores (in addition to Rs.116.21 crores already spent). This level of expenditure was not possible within the limited resources of the Government of Assam. M/s Bharat Hydro Power Corporation have already sent a detailed project report of CEA for approval which is under examination. As per the DPR, the construction programme has been scheduled so as to commission both the projects by July, 1996. The latest cost estimated in the DPR is Rs.284.20 crores.

Enquired about the progress of the project after handing over to private sector, a representative of the Ministry of Power stated:

"The project is at a standstill....The equipment has been brought and it is lying on the godown for several years now....The warranties for the equipment are expiring. We are concerned about it."]

The witness also added that the OECF normally funds public sector projects and that the Government of Assam took a suo moto decision when it could not raise funds on its own and they had set up a joint venture.

Enquired what the centre proposes to do about the project, the Power Secretary stated:-

"If the Govt. of Assam is willing to give it to NEEPCO, it will be taken up, Sir."

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

In mid-October 1995 the CITU Received from Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Yugoslavia, faxed through the WFTU, appealing for urgent humanitarian aid for the thousands of hapless men, women and children uprooted from their homes and exposed to the cruelties of an internecine war. These people need food, shelter and medicine.

The Working Committee of the CITU at its meeting held at Bhilai (MP) in early November, decided to collect donations to send the rupee equivalent of 1500 US dollar. until Dec. 12, a sum of Rs.31,350.00 was collected through state committees and two industrial federations. in view of the urgency of the matter, the CITU Secretariat decided to advance the balance and to pass over the amount of Rs.53,850.00 to the Yugoslav embassy for onward transmission. This was done on January 18 by a functionary of CITU. We received a letter from the charge d' Affairs of the embassy at New Delhi profusely thanking the CITU for its

initiative. The CITU is the only central trade union in India to have sent humanitarian aid to Yugoslavia so far. We further received a message from the President of the CA-TUY dated Jan.22 which reads as under:
Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)
Brother M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary,
New Delhi, India.

Dear Brother Pandhe.

On behalf of the Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Yugoslavia and myself personally I would like to thank you for your solidarity and humanitarian aid send to the refugees in yugoslavia.

We are convinced that your humanitarian and solidarity action is a reflex of the traditional friendship between the peoples of India and Yugoslavia and the International workers solidarity.

On Coal Miners Strike in Russia and Ukraine

(We are publishing hereunder the letter received from Ukraine on the Coal Miners' strike and the Solidarity message sent by the CITU-Ed.)

Organisation International de Energie et des Mines
BOBIGNY, January 30th, 1996

Dear Comrade,

Our Ukrainian affiliate the Coal Industry Workers' Union has just informed us that from February 1st, 1996, the Ukrainian miners will begin an unlimited national strike. Accordingly to our information, the Russian miners will begin a similar action on the same day and for the same reasons accumulated delays for several months in the payment of their wages, the free fall of their purchasing power, poverty and starvation which hit a still growing number of families. The miners of Ukraine are forced to have recourse to the strike, after having tried all the other possible ways of actions such as negotiations with the government, hunger strike, demonstrations, etc... without being able to find a solution to this crisis. They are protesting against the destructive governmental measures aiming to the total breaking of the first national energetic resource that coal is and against the still growing appeal to import coal, in spite of the huge available reserves. They are appealing, to the international solidarity and action of miners and energy workers, particularly those from countries which export their coal to Ukraine, such as Poland and Russia.

A "Special UKRAINE: IEMO Newsletter, written in 5 languages, will be soon edited in which you will find more

information. We will keep you informed about the evolution of the situation.

Fraternally yours.

Sd/- Alain SIMON, Secretary General
Message of CITU

February 2, 1996

The General Secretary,
Coal Industry Workers' Union, UKRAINE
Fax: 0038-044-2286296

Dear Comrade,

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), on behalf of its 3 million members, expresses its solidarity and support to the valiant struggle of the Ukrainian and Russian miners, who have been forced to go on an indefinite strike on February 1, 1996 in the wake of accumulated delays of several months in the payment of wages leading to poverty and starvation of a growing number of worker's families. The CITU strongly condemns the unreasonable attitude of the Ukrainian and Russian governments towards the working class and strongly appeals that the legitimate demands of the striking Ukrainian miners be accepted at once and the crisis resolved before it brings disaster to the mining industry and economy of the country.

We wish the striking miners of Ukraine all success in their just struggle for the defence of working class rights. With warm greetings,

Yours fraternally,
Sd/- P.K. GANGULY,
Secretary

WFTU URGES IMF, WORLD BANK AND G-7 COUNTRIES TO DRAW APPROPRIATE LESSONS FROM MEMORANDUM OF MEXICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR AN END TO IMPOSITION OF NEOLIBERAL ECONOMIC POLICIES.

(We are publishing hereunder a communique received from the WFTU - Ed.)

In their recent memorandum to the government, the large majority of Mexican parliamentarians belonging to the ruling party urged the government to redefine its policy approach and called for an abandonment of the neo-liberal economic policies which have already resulted in job losses of over one million and other severe social consequences, aggravating mass poverty in the country in this International year for the Eradication of Poverty.

This memorandum shows that ever wider sections of public opinion now agree with the well-known positions of the trade union movement in Latin American and other regions about the economic and social crisis and its severe consequences for the people, especially in the developing countries, provoked by the neo-liberal economic policies imposed by the IMF and the World Bank which are controlled by the finance cartels in the G-7 countries. Serious criticism of these policies was expressed at the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in Copenhagen (March 1995) and Governments committed themselves at the Summit to ensure that when structural adjustment programmes are agreed to, they

include social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment, and enhancing social integration (Commitment No.8).

The WFTU therefore urges the United Nations to take appropriate steps in the framework of implementing the decisions of the WSSD to secure an immediate end to the imposition of neo-liberal economic policies by the IMF and World Bank and ask member governments to honour their commitments made at the WSSD to provide a social dimension to all economic policies.

This should, indeed, be the principal programme for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty this year, as decided by the U.N. General Assembly.

The WFTU also calls upon all international, regional and national trade union organisations to work together to secure an end to the economic and social attacks on the working people by the forces of neoliberalism and achieve the implementation of the WSSD Declaration and Commitments, in the spirit of the discussions and conclusions of the Trade Union Forum held in Copenhagen.

WORKERS PROTEST AT PAKISTAN AGAINST GOVERNMENT POLICIES PRICE HIKE, UNEMPLOYMENT AND PRIVATIZATION

All Pakistan Trade Union Federation observed 6th January 1996 as protest day throughout the country, holding demonstrations in different cities of Pakistan.

A big procession was organised in Lahore under the auspices of APTUF in which five thousands workers including women workers under the umbrella of Working Women's Organisations from different industrial areas and different professions and occupations from Railway, T&T, Brick Kilns, Leather, Food, paper, Printing Corporations, Pharmaceutical, Steel, private and Public Sectors workers participated. Workers held red flags and play cards, banners consisting their demands like stop Privatization, Provide Employment Opportunities, Stop Inflation,

Abolishing Contract System, Salary Increase, Provide Equal Opportunity to women etc.

The processionists marched on different roads of the city and reached before the building of Parliament House, where participants chanted slogans against government policies and beating their chest as protest. The Mall Road was blocked for nearly two hours. The General Secretary of All Pakistan Trade Unions Federations Gulzar Ahmed Chaudhry addressed the rally and said that the procession was taken out for the safeguard of social and economic rights of the workers and for the establishment of a system based on justice and equality. He condemned the government that the salaries and

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JUNGLE RULE IN NEPZ—

[From Page 18]

locked out all its 200 odd workers in Sept. '95, it was the customs gate that debarred the workers from entering the zone. Later, when the management started sending notices threatening the workers with dismissal if they did not report to duty, the customs gate continued to use brute force to prevent the workers from entering the zone thus effectively stopping them from reporting to duty. And now finally, this management has been allowed by the functioning procedure of the zone to retrench almost all its workers by illegally dismissing them. The fact is that this unilateral action was taken by the Taj Rhein management while their dispute was still pending with the conciliation officer of the labour deptt. And yet it has been made possible by the enforcement agency of the zone administration. The fact is that the customs officials act only at the behest of the managements. They make no effort to ascertain from the labour department whether the bar on entry was legal.

8. Trade Union leaders are denied access into the zone. Despite repeated requests made to the Development Commissioner, permission to enter has been denied. The right to assembly - a fundamental right of all citizens of India - is denied to the workers of NEPZ. In fact ever outside the customs boundary, workers are denied the right to hold demonstrations by the U.P. Police.

There is little doubt that this open jail system of the NEPZ has to change. Propelled by poverty, thousands of workers have been forced into these zones of depression. But there should be no doubt that an explosive force of anger is mounting. History is replete with examples of extreme repression leading to extreme reactions. Humanitarian consideration or respect for labour no longer remains a force behind govt policy. But we urge that the interests of healthy and productive industrial relations be taken into account and that rectificatory measures be taken.

As immediate steps, we suggest that

1) A special meeting of all the multiple govt. departments involved in the NEPZ including the state labour depts and trade union organisations be convened at the earliest to discuss the conditions of labour in the zones.

2) Customs officials be specifically instructed not to become a private army of goondas for employers. All administrative procedures that make the anti-labour axis of customs and employers structurally

inherent, be immediately reviewed and changed.

3) Restrictions on fundamental democratic rights of workers including the right to assembly be removed and trade union leaders given access to the NEPZ.

WORKERS PROTEST —

[From Page 23]

allowances of the Ministers, Advisers, and Members of the Parliaments have been increased, while the workers' wages who are the backbone of the country are neglected. He demanded that the workers' wages should be increased at least by one thousand per month. All the retrenched and dismissed workers from the private and public sectors industries should be reinstated. He also stressed that three thousand sixty closed mills must be reopened and the employers, who are victimising workers due to trade union activities must be punished under MPO 16.

The processionists also demanded to government, to hold negotiations with all the political parties including MQM for the restoration of peace in Karachi. It was also demanded that a commission should be constituted for the reinforcement of the labour laws in factories and other establishments and million workcharge and temporary employees should be made permanent. It was also resolved that a progressive labour policy should be introduced according to the ILO Conventions and all the anti women laws as Hudood Ordinance, Law of evidence, Qisas and Diyat Ordinance should be cancelled and the women workers should be given proper share in the parliament according to their population.

Ms. Rubina Jamil also addressed the rally and demanded that the contract system should be totally abolished and all discriminatory laws against women should be eliminated. She emphasised that women should be given equal opportunities in all the spheres of life. The rally was also addressed by Bashir Zafar, Fazal-e-Wahid Chief Organiser, Railway Workers Union, Sultan Khan and other leaders.

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