



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

**WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING,
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7-9, 1996.**

Address by the President

□ E. Balanandan

Dear Comrades,

At the outset, I express my profound sorrow at the passing away of Com.V G Bhaskaran Nair, one of our all India Secretaries and a Secretary of the Kerala State Committee of CITU and member of Kerala State CPI(M), on 28th April. He was suffering from cancer. Com.Bhaskaran Nair dedicated his life for working class movement and was a devoted communist. His death has caused a void in Kerala, which is very difficult to fill up. On behalf of you I pay my respectful homage to him and convey the condolences of the Working Committee to the bereaved members of his family.

Also I express our grief over the death of many of our cadres and leaders during the period after our Bhilai Working Committee and let us pay our respectful homage in their memory.

Comrades,

We are meeting here after the Bhilai Working Committee (2-4 November, 1995) meeting at a crucial juncture in the country, unprecedented since independence. At Bhilai we gave the call to defeat both the authors of the new economic policies—Cong(I) and the communal forces led by the BJP, and ensure victory for the emerging left, democratic and secular forces led by the NF- LF. The Cong(I) of course has been defeated hands down. But the communal forces led by BJP emerged as the largest single party and tried to sneak into power, and Sri Vajpai became the Prime Minister on this plea. The country stood at cross roads. Whether the unity and integrity of the country and its secular character can be safeguarded, or it would be dismembered under

the pernicious Hindutva ideology of the RSS based BJP. The efforts of left forces with the help of the NF constituents however have been successful to mobilise all the secular forces to dislodge the BJP and install the United Front Government headed by Sri Deve Gowda. The Congress was left with no alternative, but compelled to support the United Front. Although the left forces have come up with slightly reduced number of seats yet our objective has by and large been successful. The complexity of the situation is that though a non-BJP and non-Cong government has been installed, the United Front lacks absolute majority and has to take the support of the Cong(I), to keep the communal forces at bay.

In this new situation the question that naturally arises is how far this government can meet the demands of the working people and how far it can safeguard the economic sovereignty of the country from the offensives of the imperialist imposed globalised and liberalised economy, and how the working class can meet the situation.

Before proceeding to answer these questions, we must recollect our earlier analysis of the deepening crisis of global capitalism despite the new modus operandi of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation for its sustenance, and have a glimpse of the present state. During the period, the US economy has experienced the smallest growth in 1995 since 1991. According to the US Commerce Department, the GDP grew just 2 per cent last year—the most anaemic, since the economy actually shrunk 1 per cent in 1991, the last year of the previous economic down- turn. The GDP had shot up 3.5 per cent in 1994. Consumer spending, two-thirds of the

Percentage Change at Annual Rate

Country	GDP		Industrial Production	
	3 Months	1 Year	3 Months	1 Year
Australia	+ 2.0	+ 3.1 Q4	- 1.4	- 0.3 Q4
Austria	+12.8	+ 0.3 Q4	- 9.3	+ 0.6 Dec
Belgium	+ 1.6	+ 0.7 Q4	+ 20.8	+ 4.3 Nov
Britain	+ 1.5	+ 2.0 Q1	+ 0.9	+ 0.6 Mar
Canada	+ 0.8	+ 0.6 Q4	+ 0.6	- 0.5 Feb
Denmark	- 0.2	+ 1.4 Q4	na	- 1.8 Feb
France	- 1.7	+ 0.3 Q4	+ 3.4	+ 0.4 Feb
Germany	- 1.6	+ 1.0 Q4	- 4.4	- 1.7 Mar
Italy	- 3.6	+ 2.3 Q4	- 10.0	- 6.2 Mar
Japan	+ 3.6	+ 2.2 Q4	+ 2.4	- 2.8 Mar
Netherlands	+ 0.7	+ 1.6 Q4	- 1.3	- 1.5 Feb
Spain	+ 1.6	+ 2.6 Q4	- 9.0	+ 0.9 Feb
Sweden	- 1.4	+ 1.7 Q4	- 8.0	+ 0.6 Mar
Switzerland	- 0.4	- 0.2 Q4	nil	+ 2.7 Q3
United States	+ 2.8	+ 1.8 Q1	+ 4.3	+ 2.6 Apr

nation's economic activities, increased just 1.2 per cent in the fourth quarter compared with 2.8 per cent in the third quarter. Business investments, a pillar of economic growth, increased by only 3.1 per cent in the fourth quarter. Originally, it was reported upto 6.2 per cent. The trade deficit was also wider in the fourth quarter than initially thought. Although export grew at 11 per cent, imports rose by 1.3 per cent instead of the estimated 0.1 per cent. Construction of new homes, apartments, etc. fell by 2.3 per cent in 1995, the first drop since the 1991 recession. The manufacturing index conducted by the US National Association of Purchasing Management showed that manufacturing was still in decline. It stood at 46.9 per cent in March. According to the Association, the reading below 50 per cent shows weakness.

The latest issue of "The Economist" dated May 25-31 has given the following figures about the economy of the developed capitalist countries—the growth of GDP and the industrial production. This will give us the idea that the sluggishness of the economies of these countries are still continuing besides the frightening growth of unemployment.

The deepening crisis can be gauged from the following figures of unemployment in some selected countries released by a communique of ILO dated 5th March this year, which shows that following privatisation and structural adjustment policy, unemployment has been on continuous rise:

The ILO statisticians also pointed out that the figures do not take account of "labour hoarding" and various forms of hidden unemployment, like unpaid and long term maternity leave, underemployment, part time employment, job sharing, temporary placements, etc.

The continuous technological innovations have

Unemployment Rates, 1994-1995: Selected Countries

Country	Month/ 1994	Percentage	Month/ 1995	Percentage
Belgium	December	14.1	December	14.5
Brazil	October	4.5	October	5.1
Colombia	September	7.6	September	8.7
Germany	January 1995	11.1	January 1996	12.0
Hong Kong	2nd Quarter	1.6	2nd Quarter	2.9
Japan	December	2.7	December	3.2
Luxembourg	December	3.0	December	3.2
Portugal	3rd Quarter	6.8	3rd Quarter	6.9
Sweden	December	7.4	December	7.8
United States	December	5.1	December	5.3

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created a shortage of permanent jobs and increased the labour force seeking jobs. The unquenchable need for high-technology specialists in all areas has resulted in the growth of "temporary placement" companies in America, the New York Times has reported recently. They direct the technically proficient job seekers to places where they may be required for temporary work. In 1990 there were only 44 such companies in Seattle alone, but now there are at least 229 such companies. The US Labour Department has reported that in 1983 there were 6 lakh 19 thousand (6,19,000) temporary jobs in the country. In 1994 the number had grown to 2.25 million. It has further been projected that there will be a 60 per cent increase in temporary jobs by 2005. The paper further reports that the rise of the technology-temporary service is another nail in the coffin of American job security. Typically, these jobs offer no benefits, no social security or lasting bonds with employees, which were traditionally enjoyed by the workers. No wonder, it has adverse effect on trade union membership and activities. Over and above, with the reduction of full time permanent jobs, the number of working days in a week and hours in a day is being reduced with corresponding cuts in wages of the existing "permanent" workers.

Another growing phenomenon, which I elaborated in my last address at Bhilai and want to reiterate here is the growth of informal sector, or the unorganised sector. According to the World Labour Report, 1995 of the ILO, there has been a sea-change in the centre of production following the structural adjustment programme. With the closures of large modern enterprises, the informal sector now accounts for about 40 per cent of urban non-agricultural employment in Latin America, 55 per cent in Asia and about 70 per cent in the African countries. In America alone about 45 per cent of the workforce is in the informal sector. All the above trends are being growingly exported in the third world countries in this period of globalised economy.

It is claimed in a recent statement by an ILO expert that by the end of this century the unemployment is further

going to increase enormously and it will create serious difficulties for the people and he demanded that the governments should intervene and create big projects through which large scale employment creation is ensured. Otherwise this society will be seriously in trouble. This is stated by ILO expert, Mr. Sameed and this fact is noted in a report recently release from ILO.

In this situation the G-7 countries, the authors of the transnationalised global economy met at Lille, France on April 1- 2, 1996 to discuss an one point agenda — the problem of unemployment, the floodgates of which were opened by their globalised and liberalised economy itself. Their problem was how to get the 22 million unemployed in their countries back to work. It was an obsession no doubt. But the solution they thought of was to seek a "third path" between unbridled free market economies and an "interventionist" policy, and the ultimate solution was nothing but carrying forward the same reform policies, i.e. the transnationals must dominate the world.

In the above situation, the working class all over the world are in the thick of struggles to safeguard their interests, above all, to counter the erosion of existing jobs and economic conditions. You have seen during the period, the massive strike struggles by the French public workers, the German workers and of course the workers of Russia and other East European countries that have embarked upon the path of capitalism and market economy. In South Africa too, the COSATU, one of the co-fighters against the former apartheid regime has launched struggles against the so-called market economy reforms. The massive strike by the Sri Lankan power sector workers against privatisation of the Lanka Electric Company and the Ceylon Electricity Board plunged the island nation into total black out and without waters for several days recently.

Before again going back to the national situation I wish to make a mention about the developments in Russia and other erstwhile communist states.

Russia is in the news. The big capitalist propaganda machinery world over is geared up to bring to the fore about the great danger that in Russia communism is going to stage a come back in the June 16th Presidential elections. The NATO countries are rallied to boost up Yeltsin by contributing large sums. The IMF approved an emergency loan of 10.2 billion dollars, Germany an additional 2.7 billion dollars, and Japan and France also declared that they are going to help Yeltsin to fight the election successfully to defeat the Communist candidate. A detailed article about this has appeared in the Political Economic weekly dated May 18th from which I am quoting a para to show how the big capitalist countries are worried about Yeltsin's defeat in the coming Presidential election:

"The heavy artillery of the propaganda guns of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe have hit a new pitch of cold war rhetorical frenzy. The message is clear; the evil empire is on the rampage, the 'commies' are reaching for the jugular of 'democracy', reforms so painfully scaffolded over the last five years will be junked and Leninism will be restored in all its horrors; East Europe will

be destabilised. Stop the 'Red' offensive at any costs. As usual the message is fudged in the ballyhoo of 'human rights', 'pluralism', 'economic and political stability' and the Nirvana of 'economic reforms'".

Now we see here that how shamelessly imperialism is interfering in the Russian elections to subvert the will of the people. Imperialism is imperialism - The leopard cannot change the spots.

We know the claim made in 1991 by the imperialists that communism is dead and never it will come back. Now the very same people are raising a hue and cry that the leader of the Communist Party of Russia, Gennedy Zhuganov is going to capture power in Russia and about the coming back of communism. Everyone knows that the Communists got majority in the December parliamentary elections in Russia, and the Communist Party leader is likely to be elected as the President of Russia this time if proper elections are conducted. So the claim they have made about the death of communism is again becoming a question mark. Together with this we have to note that the Communists are on the come back trail in almost all the erstwhile Communist countries. In Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia, they are voted to power even within a short time of the death declaration made by the capitalists. A major part of the former eastern block has again come back to the Communist rule with different types of economic programmes. Besides that even in the recent elections in Italy, Communists have come to the fore and they have formed a government in a coalition with other parties. In Cyprus too, the Communists made big gains. This is only to debunk the claim which has been made that Communism can never come back in these days of economic liberalisation and reforms, globally integrated economy, GATT and various other mechanism through which capitalism have come to stay.

From the above we can come to the following broad conclusions:

a) The promised crisis free capitalism, using the scientific and technological development by the super powers after the downfall of Soviet Union and East European Socialist Countries in 1991 did not materialise and they are in serious crisis.

b) To cope up with the ever increasing unemployment, they themselves are forced to talk of government intervention to start industries or developmental activities which will create large scale employment which in other words instead of unbridled free capitalism a "third" path which will create employment. Under capitalism this can only be a futile talk.

c) The growing unemployment in the developed and under-developed societies creates a buyers' market for labour (power). The employers — the capitalists dictate terms of employment with reduced wages and amenities for the new recruits and also they are taking steps to reduce the facilities of the workers who are already employed including their wages.

d) Therefore, the working class is faced with a very serious situation in which they are forced to confront with

the capitalist class frontally and they are forced to take up the fight for a new society, ie, socialism, for which they have to equip themselves organisationally and ideologically.

After the fierce political battle in the elections, our victory is only partial. The Cong(I) has been dislodged from power no doubt, and the BJP has been kept at bay. Although the emerging United Front has been able to form the Government, the difficulties on way are very many. As stated above, the reforms have taken a globalised form. They have made deep dents in our country too, with the threat to stay on and make deeper in-roads into our economy under the increasing pressure of the imperialist countries and the Indian monopoly sections. So there cannot be any question of relaxation. It is only through our struggles that we have come to the present stage of the partial victory which again is fraught with many dangers. Bring in yet larger sections of the working class and other sections, consolidate the unity further and carry forward the struggles to new dimensions. It is only the pressure of struggle by the people that can accelerate the process of change, and to protect the economic sovereignty of the country and ensure national progress.

We should not forget for a moment the danger posed by the BJP coming to power, though they have been thrown out of power defeating the confidence motion in the Parliament. Our task of mobilisation of masses against the communal forces does not cease with the fall of BJP Government. In fact, the task has to be carried forward more intensively and extensively utilising the time and opportunities gained by us due to the fall of BJP Government and the installation of United Front Government at the Centre.

Comrades, I do not wish to go into the details of election results in the country. However, I must bring before you the glorious victory we have had in the state of West Bengal. Com. Jyoti Basu and his team of Ministers were voted to power for the fifth term which is a unique event in the Indian political history. The Congress (I) had tried their best to see that we are defeated in West Bengal in which they have miserably failed. On your behalf and the Left, I congratulate Com. Jyoti Basu for achieving this victory. In Kerala too, the Left Democratic Front claimed victories in the election and Comrade E.K. Nayanar has been elected as the Chief Minister for the third time. the Congress (I) led Front has been severely beaten by the Kerala electorate giving a sizeable majority in the legislature for the Left and Democratic Front. I also congratulate the Left and Democratic Front for this magnificent victory.

I don't wish to go into many other details which are covered extensively by our General Secretary in his report. I am confining myself to mention a few more things. The Bhilai Working Committee has specifically decided to strengthen our organisations by increasing our membership by taking immediate steps by all the states. I don't know how far we have succeeded in this. The big battles we have waged during the last five years have heightened the prestige of the CITU among every section of workers and employees. However, this did not reflect in our organisational strength. This is lag which we have to get over within a short span of time. In the globalised economic set up even though the political scenario is changed, every possibility is there to encroach upon the rights and privileges of the workers. This can only be successfully fought back by strengthening our own organisation. While we have to give sufficient emphasis in the work of our Unions in the strategic sectors, we cannot forget our responsibility to

concentrate and take into the fold of our organisation the vast majority of the workers of India who are in the unorganised sector who are under attack in so many ways. Even otherwise they have no protection for employment, and no guarantee of a minimum wage. Therefore, it is naturally on the part of the CITU for emphasising the need for concentrating our energy in this sector. The Coordination Committee which we organised in this sector have started doing some commendable work. The stronger areas of our Unions have to take particular initiative in this respect, besides mobilising the financial resources. In this direction the decisions taken by the Co-ordination Committee of unorganised sector should be taken seriously by all the State Committees and see that those decisions are implemented. One of the major industries, the Textiles, is in serious crisis. The Trade Union strength in this industry although increasing, yet it is not sufficient on an All-India basis. While taking stock of the situation we have organised a Co-ordination Committee in this industry too with the aim of organising a proper federation at the appropriate time. This Co-ordination Committee is also meeting periodically and carrying out their decisions. However, considering the vastness of the industry and its prevailing organisational weakness, more attention is necessary in this industry. Therefore, the State Committees should take steps for implementing the organisational decisions of the Coimbatore Convention to strengthen the Co-ordination Committee so that in every textile centre our organisation is strengthened and a regular federation of Textile Workers can be organised. The industrial federations which we are having, though working fairly well, they do not submit proper reports to CITU so that we cannot make any direct reference about the same. However, except 2-3 organisations the work is lagging behind. The Beedi workers, the Fishermen are to be given special importance by our State Committees to bring them to the organisational fold since they are facing serious difficulties due to Govt. policies also. I request Comrades to see that our organisational decisions are taken seriously and see that they are implemented.

Trade Union Unity:

We had a meeting with AITUC leaders to consider the question of Trade Union Unity. We had some preliminary talks and decided to meet again by the middle of June. Meanwhile they have had discussions with HMS about the merger of these two organisations and have decided to take organisational measures on a time-bound basis. However, we found that the declarations made by them as a condition for unity carries among other things that the trade unions should be apolitical. This question of trade union unity should be seriously discussed by us. The idea of confederation which we have put forth earlier is still valid and we feel the correct slogan for uniting the trade unions is to fight for common demands, and in due course organisational cohesion and unity can be achieved. But the AITUC proposes the merger of the unions which are ready to do so and slowly try to bring in others also for merger. They did not give us their detailed idea of trade union unity since the joint meeting is proposed to be held by the middle of June. We have to decide our approach on the same. Therefore, I request Comrades to give their opinion in this regard.

Another important thing I want to mention is about the BTR Memorial Building. We have got the land. We have to take possession and straightway start construction of the building. We have approached our architect to prepare

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CITU WORKING COMMITTEE SUPPORTS UF GOVERNMENT; WITH THE RIGHT TO OPPOSE THE NEGATIVE POINTS IN THE MINIMUM PROGRAMME

□ P.K.GANGULY

The Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Delhi from June 7-9-1996, made a critical analysis of the Common Minimum Programme announced by the new United Front Government headed by H.D. Deve Gowda and extended support to the Government, but with the right to oppose certain negative features in it. After threadbare discussions a resolution was unanimously adopted in this respect.

In absence of E. Balanandan, the President, who was ill, the meeting was presided over by Samar Mukherjee, Vice President. The stage for discussion was set by the Presidential address, which was read out by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, followed by the exhaustive report placed by M.K. Pandhe, the General Secretary.

Analysing the world capitalist crisis and the adverse effects of the globalised economy under the command of the transnationals on the working class world wide, the President said that the Indian situation has to be seen in that context. Though after the fierce political battle in the election, the UF Government has been installed, yet the reforms have taken a globalised form, he said, and have made deep dents in India too, with the threat to stay on and make deeper in-roads into our economy under the increasing pressure of the imperialist countries. So there could not be any question of relaxation. While supporting the UF Government to safeguard the unity and integrity of country and its secular character as against the BJP, struggles have to be carried forward mobilising yet larger sections of the working people to focus their discontent against the IMF-dictated economic policies pursued by the Congress and the devastating results. (The full text of the Presidential address has been published in this issue -Ed.)

The General Secretary's report dealt with the national situation in details, elaborating the experience of the workers of the Narasimha Rao Government's economic policies. It pointed to the worsening economic situation, growing indebtedness of the country, the privatisation of the public sector, growing industrial sickness, the functioning of the BIFR and joblessness in tens of thousands due to the so-called structural adjustment programme. It mentioned about the notable struggles waged by different sections of the workers during the period from the Bhilai Working Committee meeting. It included the jute strike in Bengal on 29th November, strike of unorganised sector workers at Delhi on 23rd November and in other states, struggle of Beedi workers, the countrywide strike of fishery workers on 18th January, the struggle of the central and state government employees, the strike struggle of the

financial sector workers, struggle of the textile workers, the countrywide strike against the retrograde Pension Scheme on 23rd February, struggle of public sector workers, of working women, etc. The report briefed the CITU-ILO programme on Child Labour in the unorganised sector. It also briefed about the growing international relations of the CITU. It dealt elaborately and critically about implementation of the Report on Organisation.

While dealing with the new situation and the tasks of the workers, the report extended support to the UF Government and hailed the unity of the left, democratic and secular forces against the communal forces led by the BJP. It however expressed serious concern over certain statements made by the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister supporting the liberalisation policies of the Narasimha Rao Government, against which the working class fought so doggedly for the last five years. The report categorically pointed out that the formation of the non-BJP, non-Congress Deve Gowda Government had naturally raised hopes among the working class that there would be a distinct departure from the policies of the congress. They expected that the reckless entry of the multinationals would be checked and the privatisation of the public sector would be stopped. They expected that the sick industries would be revived, unemployment would be brought down and the rising prices would be checked through a net work of public distribution system. They expected that a new Industrial Relations law would be introduced ensuring trade union rights, recognition of trade unions by secret ballot and genuine workers' participation in management. They further expected a genuine pension scheme and social security measures. Furthermore, they expected that the vast unorganised sector would be taken care of with guarantee of minimum wages and there would be a comprehensive legislation for the agricultural workers, and land reforms to better the conditions of the poor peasantry.

The report pointed out that support of the working class and other toiling masses would be the biggest asset of the Deve Gowda Government, which the Congress Government did not have, and that would be the guarantee of its stability and strength against both the Congress and the BJP. The report called upon the CITU unions to play an important role in this direction and strengthen the struggles against the machinations of the BJP and the Congress in defense of the economic sovereignty of the country and its secular character.

Twentyfour members participated in the discussion of the report, while sixteen members participated in the

discussion on Organisation. As the Common Minimum Programme of the UF Government was announced by that time, the discussions naturally centred around the Programme vis-a-vis the General Secretary's report. While supporting the positive aspects of the programme, members were critical of its negative features too, particularly with respect to the opening of the insurance sector and telecom sector to multinational, as well as regarding the disinvestment commission.

On Organisation, members deliberated self-critically regarding implementation of the tasks and briefed the plans of the respective state committees to overcome the weaknesses.

After reply by M.K. Pandhe, the report was adopted unanimously. A resolution thereafter was placed by A.K. Padmanabhan on the Present Situation and the Trade Union Movement, which was seconded by Niren Ghosh. A number of members spoke on the resolution and suggested several amendments. The resolution hailed the establishment of the United Front Government and expressed deep satisfaction at the success of the left and secular forces in defeating the game plan of the BJP of capturing power at the centre. The resolution while highlighting the positive aspects of the Minimum Programme adopted by the UF Government, did not endorse the negative features as stated above. It urged upon the Government to commence negotiations with the trade unions on all the contentious issues and for proper implementation of the positive aspects of the programme.

The Working Committee decided to initiate talks with other trade unions in support of the UF Government and organise a national convention to decide a movemental programme.

Samar Mukherjee summed up the deliberations. After the end of the meeting a condolence meeting was held to commemorate the first death anniversary of Com. Kim Il Sung, which was attended by the Ambassador of DPRK in India.

Main Resolution of the Working Committee The Present Situation and the Trade Union Movement.

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU held on 7-9 June 1996 at New Delhi hails the establishment of United Front (UF) Government at the Centre. The Working Committee expresses deep satisfaction at the success of the Left and Secular forces in defeating the game plan of BJP of capturing power at the Centre even by adopting foul means. The experience of 13 day Vajpayee Govt., the address of the President and the proceedings of the Lok Sabha on the confidence motion clearly demonstrated the double-faced character of the BJP which sought to don a

mask of reasonableness while adhering to the communal platform in their election manifesto.

The Working Committee notes that the general election took place in the background of long drawn, wide-spread vigorous united struggle of the working class along with other sections of people during the last five years of Congress (I) regime against their Fund/Bank dictated economic Policies as also against the communal forces. The so-called new economic policies brought gloom on the life and severely eroded the living-standard of the working class and common people and deeply damaged the domestic industrial economy thereby endangering the economic sovereignty of the country. The number of people below the poverty line had gone up. The external and internal debt had increased phenomenally. The five years of the Cong(I) Govt. brought in deindustrialisation of the country buttressed by reckless privatisation of PSUs, liquidation of sick units, unbridled promotion of foreign capital at the cost of the PSUs and domestic industries, generating greater sickness in domestic sector and accompanying idle capacity, joblessness and unemployment. It has killed more jobs than created, and further widened the inequality in incomes between handful of elites and the toiling millions

The New U.F. Government at the Centre has created high expectations among the working class and the people who expected that the new Govt would rectify the misdeeds of the previous regime, stall the reckless privatisation, take a positive view and active role in the revival of the Sick PSUs and also sick industrial units in private sector, take positive measures in correcting the distortions created in the domestic market by free entry of multinational companies and foreign capital even in consumer goods sector, and revise its economic industrial policy with a positive re-orientation towards employment generation, and upliftment of the standard of living in rural India by genuine radical land reforms, and proper wages for agricultural labourers. Rising prices must be checked through a network of public distribution system.

It is but obvious that the working class would expect the UF government to take positive steps on their long pending issues like removal of ceilings on entitlement and amount of bonus, raising of exemption limit on payment of Income Tax, removing anomalies on the payment of VDA to public sector employees, wage revision to the employees of so called sick PSUs, enactment of laws for the workers of construction industry and agricultural workers and other workers in the unorganised sector on the matter of their service security and wage and social security benefits. Effective steps should be taken to abolish contract labour system in permanent and perennial nature of work. The tripartite fora which have been rendered virtually defunct

should be made truly representative, active and effective. It is but natural that the trade unions would have definite expectation that the initiative taken during the earlier period of the Janata Dal government in incorporating the right to work as a fundamental right, finalising through consultation the scheme for workers' participation in management and recognition of trade unions through secret ballot shall be conferred concrete shape this time and shall be implemented without delay. And of course, the burning issue of pension has to receive the top priority attention by at least making the Govt pension scheme optional. Further, the PSUs and other who are ready to formulate their own pension scheme must be allowed to do so by the Govt. It is also expected of the UF Govt that suitable measures to amend Payment of Wages Act and Workmen's Compensation Act with a pro-workers orientation and Minimum Wages Act will be included in the 9th schedule of constitution; the draconian legislations like ESMA, NASA would be repealed.

The Working Committee appreciates that the UF Government faces a very serious challenge of working under a very complex situation. The government is dependent on the support of Congress (I) party while the BJP is the single largest party in the Lok Sabha. Moreover, it is the beginning of a new phase of coalition government at the Centre.

However, the Working Committee believes that genuine pro-working class pro-poor policy of the UF Government and a distinct departure from the economic and industrial policy of Con(I) Govt will ensure sustained support of the workers and common masses to the new government.

The Working Committee notes with satisfaction the various pro-people measures enunciated in the Common Minimum Programme of the UF Govt. like ruling out the Exit Policy, strengthening the Public distribution system, recognition of union by secret ballot, restricting foreign entry in consumer goods sector, protection of Home based and Village based industries and also to small and medium scale industries etc. It also welcomes the commitment made in respect of rehabilitation of sick industries, strengthening poverty alleviation programmes and their operation through Panchayats, providing 33% reservation for women in Parliament and Legislatures and Govt. jobs, strengthening of Public distribution system and comprehensive legislation for agricultural workers. It also welcomes the commitment made for strengthening the Federal structure by giving more powers to the States and for upholding Secularism and Social justice as the main plank of governance. It also feels relieved at the forthright stand taken by the UF Govt in the matter of Ayodhya issue by referring it to Supreme Court under article 138(2) of the

constitution It also heartily welcomes the commitment of UF Govt for promotion of science and indigenous technology for strengthening self-reliance and also its pronouncement for a corruption-free transparent Governance. The Working Committee congratulates the UF Govt. for those commitments on various fronts and expects that trade union movement would extend their full co-operation. All these factors debunk the press propoganda that the UF Governments policies are identical with those of the Congress Government.

At the same time, the working committee is concerned at certain negative aspects of the Common Programme. It cannot endorse the opening of the Insurance Sector to monopoly and foreign capital and privatisation of telecom sector and also Govt's stand on disinvestment of PSU shares through constitution of Disinvestment Commission. It expresses concern about the lack of clarity in the matter of revival of Sick PSUs as mentioned in the Common Minimum Programme and silence about the sale of Bailadila Mines and modernisation of IISCO by SAIL and cannot endorse its approach on further liberalisation of the tariff policy of the Govt. having serious bearing on the domestic industry.

The Working Committee expects, the popular support will enable UF Government to give immediate relief to common people on various fronts. At the same time, the Working Committee feels that united TU movement must continue to mobilise the workers for revival of Sick PSUs with active participation of Govt., against entry of multinational in the financial, telecom and other sensitive sectors of the economy and also consumer goods sector, and against privatisation and import liberalisation. It should also continue to close its rank against the communal forces. The CITU urges upon the Government of India to immediately commence the discussion with the trade unions and take measures with the consent of the trade unions which will lead to effective implementation of the positive aspects of the Common Minimum Programme. The Working Committee of the CITU appeals to all the affiliated unions and working class of all affiliations to understand the gravity of the situation and the machinations of the communal forces and be prepared to meet the challenges posed by the complex situation prevailing in the country. The CITU is confident that we can defend the interests of the working class and the country through popular mobilisation for early implementation of the positive measures in the United Front Common Minimum Programme while continuing efforts to prevail upon the Government of India not to pursue those policies that will adversely affect the interests of the working class, the toiling masses and the country.

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CITU WORKING COMMITTEE OBSERVES SECOND DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF COM. KIM IL SUNG

The Working Committee of CITU in a meeting held on June 8, 1996 observed the Second Death Anniversary of Comrade Kim Il Sung, the great leader of the Korean people and one of the outstanding leaders of world proletariat.

The meeting unanimously adopted a resolution, which highlighted the memorable contribution of the great Korean leader in the service of the people and against imperialist aggression and oppression the world over.

The resolution was moved by CITU Vice-President Samar Mukherjee and seconded by General Secretary M.K. Pandhe.

While moving the resolution Samar Mukherjee made an impressive speech and paid glowing tributes to the memory of Comrade Kim Il Sung. He recalled his visits to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea when he had the privilege of meeting the great Korean leader personally. The Juche idea and the policies of political and economic self-reliance enunciated by him brought about monumental changes in the economy, culture and national defence of his country and turned DPRK into a modern socialist state, he remarked.

Supporting the resolution, CITU General Secretary M.K. Pandhe praised the valuable services rendered by Comrade Kim Il Sung for the Korean people's revolutionary cause and urged to learn from his dedicated, people-oriented revolutionary life.

H.E. Cha Bong Ju, Ambassador of DPRK also spoke in the meeting, which was attended by some other members of the DPRK Embassy.

The meeting observed silence for a minute to pay respectful homage to the late Korean leader.

CITU Working Committee

(Cont'd page 4)

a design of the building without delay.

Comrades, therefore, it is an essential thing that we must immediately collect the required fund. We know that crores of ruppees are required for building a proper office in Delhi which according to our desire should not only be a Central Office for the CITU, but we want it to be a Central Office of all the Trade Unions of the country. In the memory of Com BTR we have to undertake the job of building this Central Office with all the modern facilities required for effective functioning of the Trade Unions. Comrades, I hope you take these things seriously and promptly execute the decisions which we take in this regard.

Long Live Working Class Unity

Date: 2-6-1996



The text of the resolution is as follows:

"The Working Committee of CITU pays its respectful homage to the hallowed memory of Comrade Kim Il Sung, the great leader of the Korean people and an outstanding champion of the world proletariat, on his 2nd death anniversary which falls on July 8, 1996.

"The Working Committee acknowledges the remarkable contributions made by Comrade Kim Il Sung in the struggle for the liberation of the Korean people and the establishment of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, and expresses its appreciation at the progress made by the Korean People under the illustrious leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung.

"The working committee fully endorses the proposals advanced by Comrade Kim Il Sung for the unification of fatherland and is confident that the people of North and South will rally behind these proposals and achieve the unification of Korea.

"The Working Committee of the CITU is confident that under the able leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Il the people of Korea will carry forward the task of building socialism and defeat all machinations of US imperialism against the valiant people of Korea."

CITU OPPOSES GOVT GUIDELINE TO REDUCE MANPOWER

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions opposes the guidelines issued by the Finance Ministry to all Ministries and Departments to reduce the man power to the maximum extent and in the shortest time possible, on the ground of reduction of fiscal deficit. The guidelines further say that the Finance Ministry will not provide any real increase in budgetary allocation for pay and allowances from 1997-98.

The employees cannot be made the target of attack for reduction of fiscal deficit. The Finance Ministry has stated that the salaries of the employees have doubled during the last five years. But due to continuous rise in prices their real wages have remained almost static. It is surprising that the Government has overlooked the fact that during the same period the top monopoly houses have increased their assets by around 100 per cent.

The guidelines also point out that all non-tax receipts should be revised, so that the cost of services is recovered. It means that prices of many items like LPG, Water, Power, transport, etc. will be increased. This goes against the CMP's announcement that prices will be stabilised.

Moreover the Finance Ministry has unilaterally and

arbitrarily announced the guidelines even without completing the pre-budget discussions which it has just started. Although the CITU has supported the Government and the positive aspects of its Common Minimum Programme, yet it had categorically opposed its negative features and warned the Government against following the footprints of the Narasimha Rao Government, against which the trade unions fought doggedly for the last five years. The CITU had categorically demanded that by breaking the congress legacy, the UF Government should evolve a practice of continuous discussions with the trade unions. But in its very first step concerning a major economic decision, the Government has totally bypassed the trade unions and made the forthcoming pre-budget discussion with the trade unions on 21st June a mere formality. The Government should note that support of the working people will be its greatest asset for strengthening it and keeping at bay the communal forces.

The CITU therefore demands that the guidelines issued should be withdrawn forthwith and the Government should immediately start dialogue with the trade unions. It calls upon all its unions and appeals to all other trade unions to raise their voice of protest.

Joint Statement issued by various organisations of Central Government employees on the Statement made by Shri P Chidambaram, Minister of Finance

The Central Government Employees are very much aggrieved and resented over the statement of Finance Minister of India on the rigorous guidelines on expenditure management that no budgetary allocations would be made in the Budget from 1997-98 onwards for any real increase in the emoluments of the Government employees and the number of employees would be sliced down to the maximum extent possible. The Central Government Employees feel that this is an attack on them and an attempt to pauperise the employees. This is also an ominous signal to the 5th Central Pay Commission not to give its report favourable to the workers. Due to the continued ban on creation of posts since January 1984 and virtually no recruitment to the Group C and Group D cadres the employees are already overworked to the tune of 33%. The reported measures would add insult to the injury. The employees had great expectations that the deprivation and overwork caused due to the ban and other measures would be mitigated by the United Front Government. But surprisingly the contrary has been perpetrated. The employees strongly oppose and condemn this move and urge the Finance Minister to retrace the steps. In case these measures are insisted upon the Employees will be left with no option than

to hit back by resorting to the extent of a strike which situation the employees intend to avoid.

K Adinarayana Secretary General National Federation of Postal Emp.,	K K N Kutty Secretary General Income Tax Employees Federation
A B Sen SG, All India Audit & Accts Assn	Vrighu Bhattacharjee All India Civil A/c Emp Association
Asok Babu General Secretary All India Telecom Emp Union IV	R A P Singh General Secretary All India Postal Emp. Union III
G Madhusoodhanan GS, All India Postal Emp. Union IV	P S Ramankutty GS, All India Telegraph Empl. Union III
C C Pillai General Secretary All India RMS Emp Union III	Pabitra Chakraborty General Secretary Telecom Adm. Offices Emp Union
D C Jethrana, GS Postal Accounts Emp Assn	N M Samal, SG, All India Census Emp Association

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

(BASE 1982 = 100)

Centre	Linking factor for Old Base			Centre	Linking factor for Old Base		
	Mar.'96	Apr.96			Mar'96	Apr.96	
All India	319	324	4.93	Solapur	348	347	5.03
Gudur	322	326	4.33	Barbil	311	316	5.00
Guntur	317	317	5.60	Rourkela	292	299	3.59
Hyderabad	298	300	5.23	Amritsar	281	289	5.19
Visakhapatnam	307	312	—	Ludhiana	286	295	—
Warrangal	314	315	—	Ajmer	318	324	5.01
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	297	301	4.05	Jaipur	307	312	5.17
Guwahati	328	336	—	Coimbatore	319	325	5.35
Labac-Silchar	276	290	3.96	Coonoor	328	331	4.80
Mariani-Jorhat	313	315	3.95	Madras	337	341	5.05
Rangapara-Tezpur	304	316	4.29	Madurai	331	327	5.27
Jamshedpur	305	311	4.68	Salem	323	329	—
Jharia	272	277	4.63	Tiruchirapally	333	346	—
Kodarma	271	276	5.43	Agra	294	299	—
Monghyr	299	298	5.29	Ghaziabad	308	308	—
Noamundi	295	298	4.58	Kanpur	313	314	4.69
Ranchi-Hatia	306	311	—	Saharanpur	297	299	5.06
Ahmedabad	314	321	4.78	Varanasi	327	334	5.12
Baroda	316	324	—	Asansol	295	298	4.77
Bhavanagar	331	338	4.99	Calcutta	321	329	4.74
Rajkot	313	321	—	Darjeeling	279	281	4.55
Surat	339	346	—	Durgapur	329	336	—
Faridabad	312	311	—	Haldia	343	348	—
Yamunanagar	301	310	5.53	Howrah	328	336	4.12
Srinagar	309	314	5.47	Jalpaiguri	284	289	4.16
Bangalore	315	318	5.66	Raniganj	282	291	4.40
Belgaum	345	347	—	Chandigarh	299	306	—
Hubli-Dharwar	325	325	—	Delhi	332	336	4.97
Mercara	319	324	—	Pondicherry	360	360	—
Alwaye	335	341	5.19				
Mundakayam	341	348	—	<u>Additional series of Labour Bureau</u>			
Quilon	350	349	—	Kothagudem	326	326	3.25
Trivandrum	365	365	—	Himachal Pradesh	299	306	3.75
Bhalaghat	306	312	5.24	Bhilwara	319	321	3.20
Bhilai	290	292	3.49	Chindwara	330	331	2.59
Bhopa	336	339	5.46	Tripura	300	315	4.37
Indore	331	337	5.18	Goa	357	358	3.40
Jabalpur	321	329	6.41				
Bombay	352	357	5.12	Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number. —Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series.			
Nagpur	326	331	4.99				
Nasik	339	344	—				
Pune	353	353	—				

CITU OPPOSES ANY MOVE TO CLOSE DOWN 40 NTC MILLS

A report has appeared in a section of the press that the Government has proposed a fresh package for the revival of the National Textile Corporation (NTC) mills. The package supposed to have been conceived by the Textile Ministry and the Planning Commission as part of the Ninth Plan, moots the closure of about 40 mills. The report has also stated that the present scheme has run into problems because some state governments have opposed the sale of surplus land as envisaged in the present scheme.

The CITU categorically opposes closure of any mill. The existing scheme was prepared after two years of discussion in NTC Committee with all the trade unions. In this scheme there were two specific points that there would be no closure or retrenchment. A part of the scheme relating to the subsidiaries of DPR, Maharashtra (North) and Maharashtra (South)

has already been approved by the BIFR.

The other part relating to the subsidiaries of WBABO, UP, MP and Gujarat is still pending, because the BIFR asked the erstwhile Congress Government to write off the loans or convert them into equity. This the Congress Government did not do. So these subsidiaries are under the threat of being served closer notice by the BIFR.

Therefore, the present UF Government, in pursuance of its Common Minimum Programme of revival of the sick PSUs, should take immediate steps for the waiver of the loans, so that the sick NTC mills under these four subsidiaries of Bengal, UP, MP and Gujarat can be revived under the existing scheme.

The CITU opposes any untoward move by the Government without consulting the trade unions.

State Level Convention of Textile Workers in Orissa

A state level convention of Textile workers representing mills, powerloom and handlooms sectors was organised by CITU Orissa State Committee on 17th March, 1996 at Yatriniwas, Bhubaneswar. CITU flag was hoisted and flowers were given in the martyrs, colour. A presidium consisting Com. Dinabandhu Gahan, vice president, OTM Sramk Kendra, Com. Rajendra Sahu, vice president Sonepur Spinning Mill sramki Union, Com. Sambunath Jena, Vice President, Baripada Spinning Mill Workers Union, Com. Harishankar Sharma, BTM and Com. G C Patnaik, President, Barunei Powerloom Employees Union conducted the proceeding of the convention. a condolence resolution was moved and silence for one minute was observed for the departed leaders and workers.

The convention was formally inaugurated and addressed by Com. Sivaji Patnaik, MP, president of CITU Orissa State Unit. The convention was greeted by Com. Lambodar Nayak, general secretary, CITU state unit. Com. Pradeep Das placed a report on behalf of the State Committee and it was discussed by Com. Narahari Prusty, Dhaneswar Sahu, Rajedner

Sahu, Harishankar Sharma, Srinivas Subdhirary, Vikram Jena, Bindo Bihari Prusty and Sambnath Jena. The report and call of the convention was adopted unanimously. A special resolution was moved by Com. Satyananda Behera and supported by Com. Pitambar Lenka demanding lifting lockout in Sarala Cooperative Spinning Mills, which has been illegally locked out from 17.6.96 rendering 1500 workers unemployed.

The convention elected a 15-member state level coordination committee with Com. Pradeep Das as convener in order to coordinate the organisation and movement of textile worker in Orissa.

The convention severely criticised the Central Govt's Textile Policy as well as Economic Policy and also denounced the anti-labour attitude of Orissa Cong(I) Govt. The convention also expressed serious concern on non-payment of wages, DA, Bonus non-deposit of ESI and EPF dues and failure to utilise the full production capacity of the Spinning Mills and composite Mill in the State and bad condition of powerloom and handloom workers in the State.

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Report on Working Women in West Bengal

The West Bengal State Sub-Committee of Working Women is continuing its effort to unite the women working in the state under its organisations. The sub-committee is trying to educate the members about socio-economic structure of our country and various other burning issues facing by them. Some district committees have organised mass agitation/movements against anti- people/anti-women policies of the previous Central Government of Congress lead by P V Narasimha Rao. More and more working women are participating in such agitation. Some sub-committees have also organised trade union classes. It has also been observed that almost all the members have involved themselves in Parliament and assembly elections held recently in the state.

But there is still some weakness in coordination and communication in between state sub committee and various district sub committees of the working women and for this reason the achievement in any agitation/movement sometime creates less impact.

As our members are coming almost from lower section, mostly illiterate and they do not read/understand English, State sub committee has to face great difficulty in running the organ of working women in English, i.e. "Voice of the Working Women."

However, State sub-committee is trying their level best to overcome the difficulties/weaknesses under the supervision and guidelines of CITU.

All India Plantation Workers' Conference in Assam in December

The meeting of the Working Committee of All India Plantation Workers Federation was held on 5th and 6th July in Delhi. Com. M K Pandhe, general secretary, CITU was present. Comrades from Kerala, Bengal, Assam and Karnataka attended the meeting. Com.Vimal Ranadive, president, AIPWF presided over the meeting. The condolence resolution on Com.Bhaskaran Nair, member of Kerala State Committee and CITU Secretariat was passed by observing 2 minutes silence. A condolence resolution on the martyrs was passed by giving tributes. Com.Vimal Ranadive informed about the absence of Com.E Balanandan due to his illness. Comrades stated about their wage negotiations and struggles launched during last one year. Assam comrades reported about the terrible repression in Kokrajhar and how they were launching struggles against the management and the disruptive forces.

The main discussion was on holding the next conference of AIPWF in Assam and its preparation. The meeting decided the number of delegates, the delegates fee, on the basis of membership invitations to foreign countries where mainly plantations exist and the preparation of the report by the general secretary. It was decided that Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal should be invited while messages from fraternal and brother parties will be requested for. The Conference of AIPWF will be held on 2.3.4 Dec 1996 at Dibrugarh. The working committee of AIPWF will be held earlier on 25-27th of Sept 1996 in Delhi to finalise the preparation of the Conference. While addressing the members told to take up the problems of plantation workers, study plantation labour act and its amendments and launch struggles so that the membership too will increase accordingly.

AIIEA Opposes Insurance Reforms

□ N M Sundaram

In the 'Minimum Programme' released by the United Front, there is mention of reforms in and restructuring of insurance industry on the basis of "considerable experience gained in the implementation of such reforms in Banking Sector." As a justification the 'programme' refers to there being "reform for public sector companies and private sector companies to co-exist and compete in the financial sector." As a background to this there is mention of the need for the flow of domestic and foreign funds for development of infrastructure, to be enhanced substantially, which it is estimated, would require Rs 7,00,000 crore in the next five years.

This short on verbiage, means insurance reforms would be pushed through by opening up the insurance sector to both indigenous and multinational companies. With most of the Indian companies seeking entry having arranged collaboration deal with foreign insurance companies, it implies unhindered entry to MNCs in the crucial insurance sector.

It should be kept in mind that public sector insurance industry while providing variety of insurance risk covers to the community and the economy mops up savings and makes available enormous resources for investment in priority areas of development. The source of such savings is from within the country. All our overseas ventures having not succeeded, there is very little scope for augmenting resources through foreign companies. Insurance is a highly protected market in the US, and such other advanced industrialized countries. In the US for example by the end of March, 1993 only 3 per cent of the premium collected is accounted for by foreign insurance companies, mostly of Europe and Japan. In the reinsurance area, too, there is the experience of enormous resources moving out than coming in, because of unequal, obscure, and non-transparent reinsurance treaties concluded way back. For example it is reported that the GIC and its subsidiaries have been slapped with reinsurance claims totalling over Rs 2000 crores, the details of which are unavailable. This is because foreign insurers operate in high risk areas—frequently operations are speculative—unlike GIC which sticks to prudential norms and safe areas of operation though often highly sophisticated. In such a scenario, the claim of generation of additional resources for development through opening up of insurance sector is a pipe dream. The Indian and

foreign companies will only compete with LIC and GIC for cornering creamy areas of operation without social commitment.

As for LIC and GIC, which the programme promises to strengthen ironically after weakening these through reform process, have been generating enormous resources for development on their meager capital base after meeting current expenses and current liabilities and at the same time building up 'Life Fund'/Reserves' to meet future liabilities. Taking LIC's example, it has made available Rs 13,500 crore for investment in the year 1995-96, besides paying the government Rs 160.15 crore by way of dividend and around Rs 600 crore as Income Tax. The increase as compared to the earlier year is around Rs 3200 crore. All this on a low capital base of Rs 5 crore invested in 1956 which the government has taken back through dividends many times over.

There has been a consistency in LIC's (and GIC's) growth and generation of surpluses. This indicates that in the coming years this increasing trend would most certainly be maintained. Still for argument sake, assuming that the additional resources by way of investments by LIC would remain at Rs 13500 crore per annum, the resource mobilisation would be Rs 67500 crore in the next five years. If the dividend and taxes paid are included, it would cross Rs 70000 crore. This would be as much as 1/10th of the resources the United Front document says it would require for development of infrastructure, in the minimum. Resource development of Rs 70000 crore by LIC alone is also by way of minimum. Add to this the type of annual accretion achieved (in 1995-96 Rs 3200 crore) and add to it further what the GIC and its subsidiaries can mobilise on the basis of their impeccable track record, the picture is clear. All this without need for any additional investment. What is more, the return on LIC investment is as low as 12.5% at a time when lending rates are hitting the roof.

Prudence requires that the so called insurance reforms are given up as this would be a costly exercise for the country. After the Malhotra Committee Report was published, it was not implemented in view of the tremendous public response to the call for opposition to it. Over 65 lakhs of signatures in a memorandum and around 10000 individual letters from a cross section of the public, was submitted to the predecessor Congress government, opposing

opening up of insurance sector.

The then government though initially talking of a national consensus, later admitted that such consensus was yet to be evolved. The 'Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions' unanimously disapproved the move of opening up the insurance sector.

The All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) representing the overwhelming majority of LIC and GIC employees, which has been spearheading opposition to the move to open-up the insurance industry, through innumerable campaigns, strikes, etc organised during the last five years, ever since the threat of the US under Super 301 surfaced, strongly opposes this illconceived agenda

(taken from the leaves of the Congress Government) to open up the insurance industry in the name of reforms, to Indian and Foreign companies. The United Front Government should not succumb to IMF/World Bank pressures in this regard.

The AIIEA appeals to the United Front and its government not to proceed on this disastrous path and give up this ill advised policy. The AIIEA while welcoming the UF Government as a democratic and secular alternative at the present juncture, would nevertheless organise campaigns throughout the country, to oppose entry of private companies in insurance industry.

Report of AP Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union

□ K Hemalatha

The anganwadi workers and helpers in the state enjoyed 15 days' summer holidays in the month of May, for the first time. This has created confidence on the union among the anganwadi employees.

Utilising the favourable atmosphere, the state committee of the Andhra Pradesh Anganwadi Workers and Helpers union has decided to conduct trade union classes for them, so that they can lead the union in their projects and districts. It was decided to conduct 3 days mass classes on a zonal basis at 5 centres, Visakhapatnam, Khammam, Warangal, Hyderabad and Anantapur, covering all the districts. Till now, the zonal classes at Visakhapatnam, Warangal, Hyderabad and Anantapur have been completed. Due to elections and the summer holidays, the dates of which were suddenly announced by the CDPOs, the attendance at the zonal class at Visakhapatnam was for below expectation. The Warangal and Hyderabad classes were better. The class at Anantapur was successful. A procession of about 800-900 Anganwadi employees preceded the class which was attended by about 250 women from the 4 districts of Rayalaseema. The Khammam class will be held from 8th to 10th of this month. Altogether, about 500 women will be trained in these classes. The women who attended the classes were very enthusiastic. Though the attendance was not good in some zones, all the districts have been represented.

It has been decided to conduct project level

classes by the end of July. After the February rally, more projects have come to us and at present we have established contact with more than 180 of the 192 projects in the state. Through the 1 day project classes, we expect to educate at least 2 thousand anganwadi women on some basic points regarding the functioning of the union and also about CITU.

Recently, the state government has issued a GO calling for applications from voluntary organisations to run the anganwadi projects. We have issued a statement condemning the decision. The CITU state committee has also issued a statement. We are planning to meet the Chief Minister. We are also chalking out a statewide struggle programme - telegrams requesting to take back the GO to the CM from all the projects, press statements from all the projects, project level and district level processions, etc. We also plan to collect signatures from the beneficiaries and submit a memorandum to the CM. We are also trying to raise the issue in the assembly if possible or representation by our legislators to the CM.

We request that Com. Vimal as president of our all India federation give a telegram to CM asking him to repeal GO 56 and stop handing over the projects to voluntary organisations.

(A telegramme protesting against privatisation was sent to the chief minister by Vimal Ranadive, President of the federation.)

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TUs Demand Immediate Steps for Revival of Sick Units Within PSU Framework in the Meeting with Prime Minister

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following Statement:

In the meeting between the Prime Minister and Labour Minister the Central Trade Unions held on 24.6.96 CITU urged for expeditious steps and concrete budgetary provision for revival of Sick PSUs within PSU framework and not otherwise. Trade Unions demanded that Sick PSUs must be taken out of the purview of SICA and BIFR, the BIFR's power of liquidation must be withdrawn, and Govt must participate as promoter for revival of Sick PSUs and re-orient its policy measures to ensure expeditious revival of Sick PSUs. It is a great loss to the country if the major industrial units in the most vital sector like Fertilizer industry continue to languish in sickness, the trade unions reiterated, and the UF Govt. must take concrete steps to revitalise those units and also sick units in other sector. It was further reiterated that pending revival Govt must continue to provide for non-plan budgetary support and working capital to the sick units to prevent further aggravation of sickness. The immediate implementation of the consensus revival scheme of the NTC mills and writing off the loans for its subsidiaries in W.Bengal, Gujarat, MP and U.P. was urged upon. While welcoming the Govt's decision to strengthen the public sector, the CITU expressed its opposition to disinvestment.

In the meeting, trade unions also insisted for immediate steps for concrete legislation on Recognition of Unions through secret ballot by all workers, workers' participation in management, legislation on Agricultural Labourers and Construction Workers, which were all committed by the UF Govt in their Common Minimum Programme.

The CITU demanded that National Renewal Fund should be used for modernisation, retraining and redeployment, and not for VRS.

CITU also demanded that Central Govt.

employees unions should also be covered by proposed Secret Ballot legislation and the order given by the previous Congress Govt to withdraw recognition of existing unions of Central Government employees and impose check off system should be scrapped.

It was also demanded that in view of the delay in finalisation of the recommendation of 5th Pay Commission, Govt must take steps to declare third interim relief for the Central Govt employees.

Trade Unions also urged upon for amendment of Minimum Wages Act to ensure statutory periodical revision and its automatic linkage with price index. The CITU demanded need based wage for the unorganised sector workers.

Besides, above the problem of Beedi Workers arising out of excise duty concession on Mini Cigarettes, Child Labour, weak enforcement and non-implementation of various labour laws and demand for ratification of ILO conventions by Govt of India were also raised.

Issue of Pension Scheme also surfaced in the meeting and CITU reiterated its demand that Govt. Pension Scheme must not be imposed on workers, it should be optional. Pension should be paid as third retirement benefit.

The Prime Minister while welcoming the TU leaders assured to look into the issues raised, with a positive approach.

CITU was represented by Shri Tapan Sen and Shri P K Ganguly, both are Secretaries of CITU.

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Editorial Board

M.K. Pandhe (Chairman)
P.K. Ganguly (Working Editor)
Niren Ghosh, M.M. Lawrence,
Vimal Randive, Ranjit Basu

MEETING WITH FINANCE MINISTER

CITU demanded:

- * Distinct Departure from Congress Policies.
- * Budgetary Provisions for expeditious revival of Sick PSUs.
- * No opening of the Insurance Sector to MNCs & Private Sector.
- * No disinvestment in Public Sector.
- * Raising of Income Tax ceilings and Removal of bonus ceilings in PRE-BUDGET DISCUSSION with Finance Minister.

In the Pre-Budget discussion with Finance Minister held on 21st June 1996, CITU representatives demanded a distinct and visible departure from the congress policies on economic issues with a clear pro-people orientation, and urged for provisions of greater relief to common people both in rural and urban India and control on price rise.

CITU alongwith all other trade unions recorded strong disapproval to the approach of the workers/employees being the made the solitary target for the so called austerity measures as per recommendation of Biju Patnaik panel which must be scrapped. Trade Unions were unanimous in expressing in clear terms that Finance Ministry should not have issued such guidelines just before pre-budget discussions with the trade unions. Filling up of all vacancies in Govt depts. was demanded by the TUs. CITU also opposed hiking the administered prices of the various services rendered by Govt agencies on the plea of austerity which would hit the common people. CITU also urged for not allowing private and foreign capital in the Insurance Sector to present the possibility of scarce resources being frittered away through repatriation or by speculative activities.

In respect of resource mobilisation, CITU urged a thorough change of direction and target and overhauling of the tax/duty structure to draw more from the richer class, the monopoly houses and tapping the areas like rural rich and the big landlords who are still outside the tax net. Concrete measures should also be taken to unearth the overgrowing black money in the economy.

CITU strongly proposed for a budget to reflect a programme of economic growth based on greater employment generation and not of

'Jobless growth. It also insisted for restructuring the existing tax/duty structure to ensure that public sector and domestic industries are protected against unequal and unfair competition and are assured a level playing field. After all, strengthening of the domestic industries and not the multinational companies should be our major concern.

CITU insisted that budgetary exercise must priorities on making provision for expeditious revival of Sick PSUs with active financial participation of the Govt. as promoter. Neither privatisation nor disinvestment can offer any solution to these areas and CITU is strongly opposed to such measures. Cases of NTC, IISCO, Fertilizers etc. were pointed out as example where owing to bungling of Govt even consensus revival scheme could not be implemented. Writing off the loans from the NTC subsidiaries of Bengal, U.P, M.P, and Gujarat is the immediate necessity.

It also demanded for special measures for promotion and protection of small scale/tiny/cottage industries having huge employment and growth potential. It also demanded special measures of social security and need based minimum wages for the workers of unorganised sectors and contract workers, and anganwadi workers.

At the sametime, CITU reiterated the long standing demands of the entire trade union movement for raising of limits of exemption from Income Tax, removal of ceilings for entitlement and payment of Bonus, increase of interest rate on provident fund and amendment of Minimum Wages Act for Statutory periodical revision of Minimum wage and its automatic linkage with price index and for all those specific provisions should be made in the budget. CITU has also demanded concrete provision for interim relief and wage revision for Central Govt. employees as per recommendation of 5th Pay Commission to be made in the forthcoming budget.

There was a general consensus on the issues raised, among the Central Trade Unions present in the meeting viz INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS, UTUC(LS), TUCC, NFITU etc.

CITU was represented by Tapan Sen, Secretary and Saroj Chaudhuri, Treasurer.

Wage Negotiation in Cement Industry

Workers to get an increase of minimum Rs 900.00; Proposed strike from 24th June deferred.

After two days of hectic negotiation between the Cement Manufacturers Association and the Joint Negotiating Committee of trade unions some consensus emerged on the major question of pay and allowances. According to this understanding the workers in cement industry will get a minimum increase in their total emolument to the tune of around Rs 900/- . Settlement will be finalised in presence of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) in the first week of July 1996. In view of this understanding the trade unions have jointly decided to defer the strike scheduled to commence from 24th June, pending finalisation. The negotiations took place at the CMA office in Bombay on 18-19 June 1996. CITU was represented by Comrades Kanai Banerjee, Dilip Majumdar (Durgapur, W.Bengal) and K Karunakaran (Tamilnadu).

Background

Last wage settlement which took place in 1992 for a term of 4 years, expired on 31st March 1996. The CITU along with AITUC and HMS, which moved unitedly prior to and during the 1992 wage negotiations, was trying this time to present a complete united front of all the five central trade unions. Effort was made for a single common charter of demand being submitted. This however did not materialise. While CITU, AITUC and HMS submitted a joint charter of demands both INTUC and BMS submitted their own charters separately.

Though all the demand charters were submitted before the expiry of the previous settlement, i.e. before 31st March, there was no response of any kind from the industry. At this stage fresh effort was made by CITU and its allies for united action. On 1st June, all five trade unions met at Bombay and jointly served notice for indefinite strike to commence from 24 June in supersession of the Notice served earlier by INTUC for strike from a different date. A joint negotiating committee was formed with three members from each trade union centre/federations. And it was only after serving of the strike notice jointly by the five central trade unions that the Cement Manufacturers Association invited the negotiating committee for discussion.

Disruption by ACC

Meanwhile the Associated Cement Company,

which is probably the largest cement manufacturer in the country, obviously with the intention to sabotage the prospect of national level settlement in the industry entered into agreement with pliant unions (CITU does not have any important union in any ACC plant) at plant level. All central trade unions voiced their protest against ACC's disruptive move. It appears that the CMA was also not happy. But it could not be prevented.

Negotiations

It is in this background that the negotiation took place. The ACC agreement cast its shadow over the entire proceedings. While some items could be settled relatively easily, hard bargaining was required to settle some major items like basic pay, quantum of increment and DA. The industry tended rather strongly not to exceed the ACC agreements in respect of major items in any substantial measure. However, the result of bargaining by unions is now before all to judge.

Finally

While the ACC agreement weighed heavily against us, there is no doubt that the all-in unity that we could develop during the last phase stood us in good stead. But the unity that we have achieved does not yet on firm ground. If the workers in this industry, which is earning fabulous profit, is to get its due share in the prosperity of the industry, not only the unity will have to be consolidated but unions themselves will have to be strengthened.

Main features of consensus reached

Members of the Joint Negotiating Committee of Cement Workers and Representatives of Industry met on 18th and 19th June 1996 at Mumbai to arrive at negotiated settlement on Charters of Demands raised by INCWF (INTUC), AICWF (AITUC), CITU, BMS and HMS.

02. After considerable discussions the following understanding was reached for incorporation into a Memorandum of Settlement to be signed jointly by the above representatives of the Cement Industry and Cement Workers before the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), New Delhi on 21st June 1996.

A. Increase in Basic Wage	Rs 285.00 per month
B Increase in House Rpt Allowance	Rs 75.00 per month
C Increase in Conveyance allowance	Rs 300.00 per month
D Increase in Education Allowance	Rs 30.00 per month
E Increase in Leave Travel Allowance	Rs 150.00 per month
F Increase in Washing Allowance	Rs 25.00 per month
G Increase in Dust Allowance	Rs 25.00 per month

Total Rs 890.00

03. The above increase will be with effect from 1.4.96

04. Dearness allowance

Fixed Dearness allowance at AICPI(1960=100) Number 1500 Rs 2204.30

Variable Dearness Allowance @ Rs 2.05 per for fall or rise would be paid above AICPI Number 1500(1960=100). Rate of Rs 2.05 will be raised to Rs 2.10 per point rise or fall from 1.4.1998.

05. Existing method of calculation of DA on quarterly basis would continue.

06. Annual increment

Grades	Present Quantum of increment	Revised quantum of increment			
E	Rs 8.00	Rs 24.00	I	Rs 16.00	Rs 48.00
D	Rs 11.00	Rs 33.00	II	Rs 20.00	Rs 60.00
C	Rs 15.00	Rs 45.00	III	Rs 22.00	Rs 66.00
B	Rs 20.00	Rs 60.00	IV	Rs 28.00	Rs 84.00
A	Rs 26.00	Rs 78.00	V	Rs 32.00	Rs 96.00
TC	Rs 13.00	Rs 39.00	VI	Rs 36.00	Rs 108.00
			VIII	Rs 40.00	Rs 120.00

07. The revised annual increment would be given on the next due date of increment of each workman.

Service Weightage increments to permanent employees

08. Continuous service of 5 years 1 Annual Graded increment
and above as on 1.4.1996 Above 15 years as on 1.4.1996 2 Annual Graded Increments

Settlement Benefit

09. The settlement benefit of the previous settlement of Rs 115/- would be added to the Basic Wages as special pay as follows:

On 1.4.1996	Rs 15.00
On 1.4.1997	Rs 40.00
On 1.4.1998	Rs 30.00
On 1.4.1999	Rs 30.00

Validity of the Settlement

10. The settlement is valid for a period of 4 years from 1.4.1996.

Coverage

11. All categories of workers who have been covered by the Second Arbitration Award shall

continue to be covered by this settlement.

Existing Benefits

12. All existing service conditions, benefits and privileges shall continue to be operative till revised.

13. The parties further agree that if any workman reaches the ceiling of his grade during the pendency of this settlement, he will continue to draw his annual increments at the rate last drawn.

14. It is the contention of CMA that the present settlement arrived at between the parties to the agreement shall have no application to certain cement companies who have requested CMA to exclude them from its applicability. The Federations representatives do not agree to this.

15. The settlement arrived at between the parties settles all the demands jointly raised by the INCWF and BMS vide letter dated 2nd February 1996 and AICWF, CITU and HMS vide their letter dated 25th March 1996.

16. All the Federation/Central Trade Unions agree that they would extend full cooperation to increase production, productivity, efficiency and discipline.

17. The arrears due under the settlement shall be paid on or before 31st August 1996.

JOINT FORUM OF SOUTH ASIAN TRADE UNIONS

□ Swadesh Dev Roye

A conference of the trade unions from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka alongwith the representatives from several NGOs and other support organisations from these countries was held at Kathmandu on 20-24 May '96. More than 50 delegates attended the conference. While CITU was represented by Com. S. Dev Roye, other trade unions from India represented in the conference were AITUC, HMS and HMKP.

THE BACKGROUND

On the face of 'Social Clause' onslaught the trade unions of the South Asian Countries took united stand to oppose the imperialist machinations to impose restrictions on the entry of developing countries in the global market on that plea. The trade unions of the region made no mistake in realising the imperialist motive behind their demand for Social Clause. But while rejecting Social Clause the trade unions took serious note of the gross negligence of the Governments of the region on the burning problems of increasing economic hardship of the working class and toiling masses, abuse and exploitation of child labour, discrimination against working women, denial of basic human rights and suppression of trade union rights.

The Kathmandu Conference was preceded by national level conferences in the respective South Asian Countries on the issue. In India the trade unions alongwith NGOs met in two sessions at New Delhi and Bangalore. The statement adopted at Bangalore "called for the implementation and improvement of labour standards, environmental standards and human rights standards, but at the same time, rejected the linkage of the social clause with trade in the framework of the WTO and in bilateral trade agreements in the form of a Social Clause, in view of trade linkage being unjust and unequitable mechanism for enforcement of such standards. More so, given the nature of the unequal multilateral treaty and ongoing structural adjustment programmes in the Third World Countries under the IMF/WB conditionalities". Thus the Kathmandu conference is the culmination of the national level conferences of the South Asian countries on the subject issue.

ONSLAUGHT OF TRANSNATIONAL CAPITAL

The Conference reviewed the plight of working class in South Asia in the context of globalisation and structural adjustment programmes. The resolution on South Asian Charter on Labour Rights adopted at the conference noted "The World is witnessing the relentless onslaught of Transnational capital on the economies of the developing countries, which are increasingly being subjected to harsh conditionalities dictated by IMF and World Bank under the Fiscal

Stabilisation and Structural Adjustment Programmes. The situation of domination has been institutionalised by the conclusion of the GATT agreements and the subsequent establishment of the World Trade Organisation. This has also given the international capital the freedom to dictate their own terms on to the developing countries. "

The process of globalisation and structural adjustment programmes has resulted in a steady increase in unemployment and a drastic deterioration in the living and working conditions of the common people, especially the labour. Privatisation, closures and retrenchments have lead to job losses and deterioration in working conditions. Further, the number of people below poverty line has increased."

REGIONAL ECONOMIC BLOCS

A rather new and recent phenomenon in the world economy is the formation of Regional Economic Blocs. This is completely the machinations of the advanced capitalist countries to safeguard their own interest. As we have seen in the name of Social Clause they want to impose restrictions on the developing countries, so too, the Regional Economic Blocs are aimed to serve the same motive in different fashion. These blocs are really the product of intense competition chiefly amongst the capitalist countries for capturing others' markets and protecting their own markets. It has been pointed out that NAFTA was born to counter the world's largest united economic region - EEC. More such blocs have already emerged or are in the process. East Asian Economic Caucus, European Economic Integration, Asian Free Trade Area, New Pacific Community etc. can be cited as examples. The multi- polarisation of the world economy will produce friction. It is bound to add further momentum to the intensity of market competition among the major industrialised countries.

NEED TO REORIENT TU MOVEMENT

The new situation emanating out of the emergence of these Regional Economic Blocs is bound to throw new challenges before the trade union movement within and outside the blocs. The conference recognised note of this new development and noted in the adopted resolution "The international economic system is undergoing a process of reorganisation on the basis of economic regions, so much so that global capital is initiating investment and managerial policies and programmes in terms of regions rather than individual countries. In such a situation, it is difficult for any one country to individually face the challenges. The working class shall have to develop an appropriate response to these challenges in the shape of a democratically organised international labour movement. The trade unions in different regions have to articulate their interests in a coordinated and

united way, irrespective of their international affiliation, and move towards a genuine regional and international solidarity. The time has come for the international trade union movement to seek cooperation, forge alliance for common actions to resist the onslaught and to evolve alternative paths of development."

THE SOUTH ASIAN CONTEXT

It is obvious that in view of the multi-polarisation of the world economy as a result of formation of the regional economic blocs engineered by the advanced capitalist countries, the developing countries will have to face serious challenges mainly on economic front. The Conference, thus, identified the need for the South Asian countries to establish closer regional coordination and cooperation. This is all the more necessary because of the fact that the countries of this region have been the target of the Western economic powers as hunting ground for market. In this context the necessity for further strengthening the organisation of SAARC, SAPTA and realising SAFTA was pointed out in the resolution which noted, "Governments in the region too have taken initiatives towards this end, in the formation of SAARC, which was an outcome of the imperatives of regional cooperation. This cooperation is a pre-requisite to peace, progress and development."

"Notwithstanding the slow pace of the process of South Asian cooperation initiated by SAARC, the recent signing of the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement, (SAPTA) and the proposal to conclude a South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) by the year 2000, are to be regarded as important positive developments. Labour movements stand for the establishment of a fair and equitable trade system in the region. In the context of globalisation, this regional cooperation can enable us to resist the onslaught of globalisation and to bargain an effective and fair terms of trade."

However, the conference took the position that cooperation among the countries of South Asia cannot be attained and the real objectives cannot be achieved without establishment of actual cooperation among the working class and people of the region. Because the ruling classes of these countries do not have the political will and stature to oppose the imperialist pressures. Moreover, out of their class interest they pursue anti-working class policies. In this connection the resolution pointed out "the labour movements in South Asia have to establish closer cooperation amongst themselves on an organised basis in order to be able to effectively face the present challenge. This unity is necessary considering the fact that the

governments of these countries have capitulated before the international agencies and endangered the national sovereignties. Though all the governments of South Asia have ratified the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other Covenants relating to Economic and Social Rights, Civil and Political as well as some of the ILO conventions relating to basic labour rights, they have done little, to ensure these rights."

THE OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE

The Kathmandu session has to be viewed from the point of distinctly different position taken by it unlike the Governments of South Asian countries on the questions of fighting the onslaughts of imperialist forces, rejecting the Social Clause and establishing genuine regional cooperation aimed at real economic development for the benefit of the people of the region as a whole. The real fight against the transnational capital needs to be carried out on one hand by resolutely upholding the economic sovereignty and on the other hand pursuing the policy of self-reliant economic development. The regional cooperation must be developed based on these principles. At the same time rejection of the Social Clause must not be at the cost of standard of living and livelihood of the people and trade union rights of the working class. The conference also appreciated that democratic mobilisation of the working class is a pre-condition for successful implementation of these tasks. It is on the basis of such understanding the Conference decided to formulate a South Asian Charter on Labour Rights and conceived a South Asian trade union forum.

Considering the fact that the relevant Declarations, Conventions and Covenants of UN and ILO have set instruments of international standards and rights, the delegates unanimously decided to prepare the Labour Charter based on the said instruments dealing with Human Rights, Civil and Political and Trade Union Rights, Child Labour, Migrant Labour, Forced Labour, Equal Remuneration, Social Security, Collective Bargaining, Right of agricultural Workers, Occupational Health and Safety, Working Environment etc. Apart from these, some more issues like demand for convention on Transnational Corporations, Right to Work and some issues of common concern in the region were also identified to be incorporated in the Charter.

Finally, it was decided that another round of national consultation would be organised for wider discussion among the labour movement in South Asian countries with a view to evolve and adopt the

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Question of Politicalisation of the Working Class

□ Sukomal Sen

The question of politicalisation of the working class is not new. It is being raised again and again. Of late, the issue has come in sharp focus, particularly after the last elections to the Lok Sabha, and in some state assemblies.

But the main question is what is actually meant by 'politicalisation of the working class?' During the elections the workers do not remain silent. They vote for this political party or that political party.

In every capitalist country there will be generally a number of bourgeois political parties, few social democratic parties, left parties and one genuine working class party. By genuine working class party, we mean which is guided by a working class world view. But what is the 'working class world view?' In simple terms it is a view which looks at the world from as a class basis - 'we' and 'they'. 'We' means the exploited working class and 'they' means the exploiter capitalist and propertied class. When the working class is able to see that the society is class divided and they belong to the propertyless and exploited class and also that there is an incessant struggle of economic interests between the working class and the propertied class, then it can be said that the working class has attained the necessary class consciousness. And when working class is imbued with this class consciousness, then politically it inevitably allies with the genuine working class political party.

The working class political party has a revolutionary goal of social transformation—transforming the exploitation based capitalist society into an exploitation free socialist society—into a state of the working class.

But bourgeois political parties want to protect the exploitative capitalist society because such a society satisfies its economic interest as against the interest of the working class.

When we speak of political consciousness of the working class, we mean by that whether the working class has learnt to distinguish between the ideological difference between a bourgeois political party and a genuine working class political party and whether the working class is ready to fight against the bourgeois political parties (of all kinds) and stand by its own political party—the genuine working class party.

Unfortunately, though historically working class is a distinct class as opposed to the bourgeoisie in practical terms, it is an extremely tortuous process through which the working class can achieve this realisation. The irony is that though the workers are organised in trade unions and fight against capitalist exploitation, when the question of politics comes, the same working class tend to align with their class enemies—the bourgeoisie. In the absence of class consciousness, the working class tend to tail the bourgeoisie on political matters, particularly when the question of governance of the country comes in.

It requires a tremendous and tortuous effort to make the working class understand its class position and to take

class point of view in politics. Trade unions organise the workers on economic issues and wage economic battles against the capitalists and their government. But that economic battle is not sufficient to inculcate class political consciousness among the working class.

As is well known Com.Lenin himself clarified this question. Lenin's clear assertion was that the class political consciousness can be infused into the working class from outside the trade unions—that is by the working class political party itself. That does not mean that trade unions will make no conscious efforts to develop the class political consciousness among the working class. They must do so, but that is not sufficient. Working class political party will have to step in for that purpose. That is what Lenin meant.

Now, coming to the Indian question, the task is even more difficult. The freedom movement of the country was led by the bourgeoisie, although the working class political party also played a glorious role in it. The political impact of the bourgeois leadership of the freedom movement is tremendous among all sections of the Indian people including the working class. That impact though weakened in course of time, still persists. That is why it is seen that the same workers who remain united under red flag trade union during economic trade union battles, often exhibit its political loyalty towards the bourgeois political parties. It is a serious contradiction and at the same time a political dilemma.

India's condition is further complicated by the division of the society on the basis of caste, creed, religion, ethnic, racial, linguistic and other local diversities. In practical experience it is seen that emotion and appeal on the basis of caste, religion, ethnic and racial divide, etc are much more stronger among the working class than the class appeal. Of course, that is not uniform. In the areas where democratic and left movement is very strong as in W.Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, the working class in general reject these sectarian appeals in favour of class appeal. And this favourable development in these three states, has a historical background also, which cannot be discussed in this article.

Of late, there has been a resurgence of casteism and religious fundamentalism in the country and the working class also is getting seriously affected by it. Once affected by casteism and religious fundamentalism the workers will automatically follow the bourgeois political parties which champion these dark and divisive forces and to this extent the working class political party loses. Recent elections in the country is a proof of this phenomenon.

Naturally, the task of politicalisation of the working class, i.e. infusing into them class political consciousness has become a crucial task for the red and progressive trade unions and for the left and communist labour activists. How to do this—that is the most important question.

But one thing is clear. Without incessant left and

radical political propaganda among the workers, without a serious attempt to infuse socialist consciousness among them—it is not possible to fulfil this task. Along with trade union battles on economic issues, the working class has to be drawn into political battle in a massive way by the working class political party. Not simply during the elections,

throughout the year an incessant political campaign and political education of the working class by the trade unions and the radical labour political activists is a must to achieve this objective. This task is now more important and crucial than ever before. □

JAPAN NEWSLETTER

78000 Strong Rallies on May Day '96 in Japan

Tokyo, the capital of Japan witnessed the rally of 78000 workers from various industries in Kameido Central Park on May Day 1996. Main slogan in the May Day rally was: "workers' unity can defend living conditions and rights, peace and democracy" Rally also raised slogan against the anti-working class and pro-imperialist policies of the Japanese Government. Rally carried the banner saying "We don't need military bases and security treaty" and "Don't use our tax money for JUSEN (housing loan companies)". It may be noted that the Housing loan companies in Japan has undergone huge losses for misusing the fund in speculative (share market) activities against which workers have raised their voice of protest. As ZENROREN reports: 357 rallies took place in different parts of Japan on the May Day 1996.

The rally condemned the surrender of the Japanese rulers to US imperialist manoeuvre in the name of "Japan-US security system." The rally also called for wider unity of the Japanese working class against the bid of the Japanese ruler for further deregulation of Labour legislation in Japan.

Workers' Struggle against 'Kharsohi' (Death due to overwork)

Japanese trade unions have long been struggling against the inhuman working condition of compelling overwork and work of long hours leading to increasing toll of 'kharoshi' (death due to overwork.)

A worker named Ichiro Oshima (24 years) working in M/s Dentsu, Japan's largest advertising agency had been pushed to such extent through compelling 'overwork' that he committed suicide. During 17 months prior to his death, Oshima working as Radio Commercial Planner worked during week ends, most nights and had taken just one half-day break. In the eight months before his death, Oshima worked from early in the morning until well past 2.00 pm at night for 105 days and beyond 4 pm for 49 days. The matter was taken to court of law by the workers. The Tokyo District Court has ordered in March 1996 for payment of 126 million yen (1.2 million US\$) to the family of Oshima by the employer company as compensation for the 'compelling suicide' by the worker after "working exceptionally long hours."

Women Workers' Rally

April 19, 1996, on the National United Action Day, Japanese women workers from Transportation printing,

medical and other industries held conference and rally with several thousands working women participants to protest against discrimination against women in the matter of employment opportunity. They have also demanded revision of labour standards, law concerning working hours. In the rally representatives from various industries reported on increasing introduction of longer working hours, including night shifts.

Joint Struggle Committee to fight against dismissal in Telecommunications

On April 11, 1996, a joint struggle committee for protection of public nature of Telecommunication and against NTT's plan for reduction of 50000 workers was formed under the initiative of ZENROREN. Its aim is to oppose NTT's plan to dismiss 50,000 workers as a typical restructuring offensive and also to develop the telecommunication service in the interest of the people. The joint struggle committee has been able to draw support from unions cutting across affiliation including many unions affiliated to 'Rengo' the rival trade union centre of ZENROREN.

Broader Platform of Joint Struggle against Deregulation of labour laws

On April 25, 1996, a meeting of the Preparatory Committee consisting of people from Trade Unions, Women's organisations, lawyer groups and others was held to set up a "National Liaison Committee against drastic revision of labour laws and for establishment of rights and standards for workers."

The Japanese government and the business circle have been planning to drastically revise labour laws and introduce deregulation measures which would drive workers into more difficulty by way of increasing casualisation of service condition, collapsing wage standards and creating greater discrimination between men and women. Measures being planned by Japanese rulers are introduction of dispatched labour in wider section of business leading to greater casualisation of workforce and reducing employers' responsibility towards workers, strengthening of the discretion of the employers, in the matter of working hours and wages, abolition of minimum wage system and abolition of restriction on deployment of women workers, in nightshift, holiday work and overtime work. □

South African Labour Movement Proposes to Govt:

The June issue of the Working Class carried the introductory part of the proposals on economic policy measures forwarded to the Govt of South Africa by the trade union movement of the country comprising COSATU, NACTU and FEDSAL. The introductory part outlined the approach and vision of the trade union movement on the issue and also the background and reality on South African soil of extreme economic inequality between a handful of rich and exploited and impoverished millions, which need to be addressed by the policy measures of the post-apartheid South African Governance. The trade unions while putting forward their proposals to Govt have expressed in unambiguous terms that reliance on "Free market, if reduced to freedom to exploit, have led to development of major inequalities and poverty in societies and defeated the purpose of economic policy. The alternative is a coherent development plan, based on market realities and seeking to marshal resources towards building of an efficient dynamic economy." Trade union stressed the need for active Govt intervention to moderate and control the use of market power to give a pro-people reorientation to economic policy measures which were so long oriented towards the benefit of big business and the rich.

We are reproducing below the excerpt of the proposals of the South African Trade Union movement to Govt of South Africa which according to them projects this 'Alternative Economic Visions' to meet the challenges. Editor)

The RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme of ANC) Base Document has a very clear analysis of the fundamental problems in South Africa. It says: "Our history has been a bitter one dominated by colonialism, racism, apartheid, sexism and repressive labour policies. The result is that poverty and degradation exist side by side with modern cities and a developed mining, industrial and commercial infrastructure. Our income distribution is racially distorted and ranks as one of the most unequal in the world—lavish wealth and abject poverty characterise our society."

In the vision and objectives set by the RDP for Rebuilding the Economy, it says we need an economy which will "Eliminate the poverty, low wages and extreme inequalities in wages and wealth generated by the apartheid system, meet basic needs, and thus ensure that every South African has a decent living standard and economic security....(and)....create

productive employment opportunities at a living wage for all South Africans" (clause 4.2.2. RDP Base Document)

We must now break with these policies, and start on a fresh road as a country. Our call is for policies which are built on South African realities, and put our country, its workers and its citizens first.

We now propose six pillars to promote social equity, based on South African realities. These are: a programme of job creation, a redistributive fiscal policy, proposals to break up economic concentration, measures to promote worker rights, a plan to build industrial democracy, steps to promote equity and economic development globally.

We call on our people, on organised workers, on the unemployed, and on the democratic government, to take steps to have this programme implemented now. We call on the business community to break with the past and to embrace the new South Africa. South Africa requires fresh social and economic policies for the new democracy, policies which mark a clear and decisive break with the policies of apartheid. Our country requires such fresh policies now.

The first pillar is job creation

We propose eleven measures to create jobs in South Africa.

First, through public works and mass housing programmes, second, through modernising our industrial base, third through "job sharing" arrangements, fourth through pragmatic trade and tariff policies, fifth, by expanding domestic demand and local purchasing policies, sixth, through training and retraining the workforce, seventh, through productivity increase in the economy, eighth, through creating jobs in labour intensive processes, ninth, through stopping retrenchments in the economy, tenth, through a programme of land reforms and through the stimulation of economic activity.

The second pillar is redistributive fiscal policies

We propose two measures to ensure a more equitable fiscal policy. First, redirect spending towards social services for the poor and increase the redistribution features of tax policy.

These measures require: 1) Financing of housing and health care for all, (2) increase in corporate taxation, (3) reduction of consumer tax on basic requirement (4) introduction of a tax category for the super-rich (5) introduction of capital gains tax and luxury goods tax (6) encouragement of savings through provident fund (7) the management of debt and

deficit in the annual budget should be re-oriented to ensure that expenditure in social sector, job creation and economic growth are not affected.

The third pillars is breaking the stranglehold of big business in the economy

The high levels of economic concentration in South Africa have major negative consequences on social equity. The big conglomerates own banking, mining, industrial and retail businesses. The concentration of power in a few hands limits the prospect of inclusive economic decision-making. An example, consider the organogram on the inside front cover setting out the companies under effective control of Anglo American Corporation.

The spread of the conglomerates are truly breathtaking. Take for example the boast by Anglovaal in a Financial Mail Top Companies survey a few years back. "We finance, manage, own and invest in some 200 companies with products that vary from bearings to burgers, cement to coffee, fruit juices to ferro-alloys, biscuits to bottles and shirts to switchgear. Apart from this we mine gold, uranium, copper, zinc, pyrite, antimony, chrome, manganese and iron ore."

Major decisions on investment, on employment, and on prices, are taken by a tiny minority, the real elite in the society.....We propose that a new anti-trust policy be negotiated, which will address these problems. Current efforts by conglomerates to unbundle are no more than corporate camouflage, which retains power and control in the small group of shareholders and their directors.

Organised labour will now set up an Anti-Trust

Joint Form of South Asian

(Cont'd Page 20)

common charter and finalise the steps for formation of South Asian Labour Forum.

A delegation visited the Secretary General at the SAARC Secretariat headquarters, Kathmandu and handed over the resolutions and declaration of the Conference. The delegation consisted of S Dev Roye, R A Mittal and J John (India), Dr Fareeda Rehman, Dr Tanvir Gondal and Karamat Ali (Pakistan), M A Abbas (Bangladesh), Antron Marcus and Saranapala Silva (Sri Lanka) and Gauri Pradhan, Vishnu Viman (Nepal).

At the invitation the delegates visited the office of CPN(UML). The senior leaders of the party including the head of international department spoke on the political situation of Nepal and activities of the party. The leaders also replied to questions raised by some delegates.

Commission, to report with concrete proposals within the next 2 months. We will seek far reaching changes to the corporate structure in the country.

The fourth pillar is through improving worker rights

We propose four broad measures to improve the incomes and quality of life for workers. First, strengthen worker rights through labour market measures, including the development of centralised bargaining; second, invest in training and human resource development; third, use public procurement policies to advance worker rights; fourth, reduce wage differentials between managerial and 'blue collar' workers.

The fifth pillar is greater industrial democracy

We propose four broad measures to ensure this:

First, use workplace forums to strengthen shop steward structures, second, reduce managerial prerogative through legislation, third grant workers 50% of the seats on company boards, fourth, address representation on mutual insurance companies immediately.

The sixth pillar is championing economic development and worker rights internationally

We propose six broad measures to achieve this. First, help the development of the Southern African region through technical and other assistance and aid to neighboring countries; second, assist the growth of trade unionism as an important instrument of social development in all Southern African countries; third, campaign for a social clause to be part of all multilateral and bilateral trade agreements; fourth pursue the proposal that the WTO become a tripartite body, with representation by government, labour and business; fifth, campaign for special market access to developed country markets for those developing countries with specified labour rights; sixth champion the call of Third World countries for a debt write off by international creditors.

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BOOK POST