



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Comrade Deng Xiao Ping

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses profound grief at the passing away of Com. Deng Xiaoping on February 19. Com Deng Xiao was 93.

Born in 1904, Com. Deng Xiao, as a brilliant student was sent to France in a study group at the age of 16 only. Later he had his education in Soviet Union also. At a very young age he joined the Socialist Youth League in China in 1922 and then became a member of the Communist Party of China in 1924. From 1927-29 he served as the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. He was a front line leader of the uprising against the Kuomintang in 1929-30. He gave unstinted support to Com. Mao Tse Tung's revolutionary plans as against the ultra leftist forces, who were successful in removing him from all positions, albeit temporarily. Having revived the positions, he became the Chief Editor of the Parties Red Star News Journal.

During the historic Long March in 1934, he was again the

General Secretary of the Party. He was also the head of the political front of the Party during the resistance war against the Japanese imperialists. He held several top positions in the party during the liberation war as well. He was also the Political Commissar of the Peoples Liberation Army. Having led the onward march of the Liberation Army in Central China and Eastern China and having captured the main office of the Kuomintang Govt., Com Deng led the army in South-West China as well.

After the successful revolution in 1949, Com. Deng became the General Secretary of the Party again after 1954 and the Deputy Prime Minister of China. He was however again removed from all positions in 1966 during the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. But in 1973 again he became the

Deputy Prime Minister of China and in 1975 became a member of Standing Committee of the Party Polit Bureau and the Chief of General Staff of the Peoples Liberation Army. During the illness of Com. Chou En Lai, Com Deng carried out the functions of the Government with responsibility. During this period he carried forward a determined struggle against the counter revolutionary forces. In 1976 again he was removed from all positions, but revived them in 1977 again.

From then onwards he guided party in all ideological, political and organizational matters. In 1978 he gave the considered line of socialist constructions according to the concrete conditions and the needs of the country. In 1979 he gave the four point basis for the development of China according to the needs of the contemporary times, namely, keeping intact the socialist path, dictatorship of the proletariat, keeping up the ideals of the Communist Party based on Marxism-Leninism and keeping high the thoughts of Mao Tse Tung.

In 1987 Com. Deng voluntarily retired from all positions, but naturally remained the main lime light in guiding the development of the country. The counter-revolutionary forces tried to take advantage of the situation and created the notorious Tiananmen Square incident in 1989. But the revolutionary traditions of the people and the working class of China and its Liberation Army successfully defeated the games of the counter-revolutionaries and put the country back to the rails of the revolutionary path.

With the demise of Com. Deng Xiao Ping the world communist and working class movement have lost a great revolutionary, who became a legend in his time.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions dips its red banner paying homaging to the great leader.

Key Events in Com. Dengs life

August 22, 1904 : Deng Xiaoping born, son of a peasantin Sichuan province.

1920: Leaves China to join work-study programme in France.

1924: Joins Chinese Communist Party (European branch).

1926: Returns to China.

1927: Becomes Secretary to Central Committee of Chinese Communist party.

1929: Leads uprising in southwestern Guangxi region.

1930: Leads Longzhou uprising in Guangxi and leads Seventh Red

Army to eastern Jiangxi province.

1933: Comes under attack from anti Mao faction and is purged, imprisoned and forced to write self-criticisms.

1934: Reassigned to First Front Army and appointed editor-in-chief of army journal. Takes part in Long March. Becomes chief secretary to party Central Committee.

1937: Becomes political commissar in 8th Route Army.

1947: Together with Liu Bocheng, leads troops across Yellow River marking beginning of commu-

nists rule in southwest China.

1951: With Liu, leads liberation of Tibet.

1952: Promoted to Vice Premier.

1954: Appointed party secretary-general.

1955: Elected to Politburo.

1956: Becomes member of Politburos standing committee and elected party general secretary.

1966: Falls victim to ultra leftists during Cultural Revolution, is purged from the party leadership and sent to do manual labour in eastern Jiangxi Province.

1973: Rehabilitated and re-appointed vice-premier.

1974: Takes over routine work of party and government when Premier Zhou Enlai fill ill.

1976: Ousted by Gang of Four led by Maos wife Jiang Quing.

1977: Reinstated to office after death of Mao and arrest of Gang of Four.

1978: Begins policy of socialist reforms under four cordial principles of socialist construction. 1987: Retires from Politburo, Central Committee and Central Advisory Commission.

1989: Successfully guides to overcome the counter revolutionary forces.

Com. Sitaram Gupta

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the sad demise of Com. Sitaram Gupta on February 18 at the age of 77. Com. Gupta ws a member of the General Council of CITU and Vice-President of the W.Bengal State Committee of CITU.

Com. Gupta devoted his life in working class struggles. He made particular contribution to develop the struggles of the jute workers of Bengal. He took active part in the Quit India Movement in 1942 and was jailed by the

British Government. During his jail term he lost his wife and only daughter. Having contributed his mite in the freedom struggle, he joined the Communist Party in 1951. Later he joined the CPI(M) in 1964 and served as a number of the Partys North 24 Parganas Dist. Committee of the party.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions dips its red banner paying homage to Com. Sitaram Gupta and conveys its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family.

Public Sector Workers Strike on 2nd April

(We are publishing hereunder the resolution adopted in the National Convention of PSU workers held at Delhi on February 12 and 13.-Ed.)

The National Convention of public sector employees on sickness of PSUs, held in New Delhi on 12-13 February 1997, notes with concern the complete inaction of Govt of India in the matter of revival of sick PSUs in the background of aggravating sickness and escalating revival cost. And in almost all the cases of sick PSUs the refusal and/or bungling of the Govt to act as promoter stands as the major bottleneck for the revival of those sick PSUs. The convention also notes that at the instance of Govt, the financial institutions are denying advance for working capital to the sick PSUs, thereby completely crippling down the productive activities in most of the sick PSUs further adding to the accumulated loss, and making revival more difficult.

The ongoing in BIFR and the role of Govt there clearly manifests the resolve of the Govt of India not to revive and/or throw for privatisation the host of sick PSUs covering vital sectors of the whole industrial economy. Convention notes with dismay that even the agreed revival packages have not been implemented in many cases; the revival package agreed between the Govt and all the trade unions and approved by the Cabinet in case of NTC mills has not been put to effect. The industrial units in vital sector like fertilizer and drug production are being allowed to cripple in sickness although imports galore are draining out the precious foreign exchange.

The convention observes with concern that the negative role of the Govt in respect of revival of sick PSUs is the reflection of its overall policies on public sector. Public sector units are being discriminated in respect of orders from Govt Departments and from other PSUs and foreign companies are being favoured instead. Whatever the Common Minimum Programme prescribes, the policy packages declared from time to time by the various ministries and the Industry Ministry in particular regarding opening of the core sector of economy to private and foreign capital and allowing 74% and 51% disinvestment in

so called non-core PSUs, if allowed to be implemented, would dismantle the whole PSU network. The drastic reduction in customs duty on import alongwith no concession or increased pressure of excise duty on indigenous product has already created severe constraint even for the healthy public sector units and eroded their profitability. The whole structure of customs duty has been scrupulously drawn to provide greater incentive for import than domestic manufacture, thereby hitting at the root of domestic industries. On the other hand Govt is taking a lukewarm attitude in invoking anti-dumping measures in the face of reckless dumping of imported products by the MNCs in Indian market in a clandestine manner, although India is facing similar anti-dumping blockade in the European and American market.

The convention expresses deep anguish that the workers in the sick PSUs are deprived of wage revision mostly due from 1.1.1992 as also the revised DA. Even the payment of wages and retirement benefits are abnormally delayed.

Convention notes with anguish that despite repeated persuasion and protest by the entire TU movement, Govt of India has been declaring anti-PSU policies one after another. The declaration regarding Disinvestment Commission, opening of oil sector to foreign companies, the Cabinet decision regarding 74% disinvestment in vital sector of industries and the opening to the private sector, both Indian foreign of the basic coal mining, crucial power and telecom sector and even the defence and nuclear power much to the detriment of the security of the nation are all the reflection of arrogance of the Govt in pursuing the anti-public sector policy ignoring the total opposition by the working class and therefore the working class cannot accept such a position lying down. The policy of virtually liquidating public sector would severely erode the self reliant development of Indian economy and put the country in peril to the benefit of foreign capital and public sector workers cannot allow such things to happen. The convention appeals to the PSU unions to constitute committees to exercise vigilance to foil the conspiracy by vested

interests in managing the PSUs.

The plea of having no money for revival of the sick PSUs as repeated by the Govt on many occasion also does not stand on its leg. Irony is that Govt is making such plea while not taking any action against the defaulting corporate houses owing nearly thirty thousand crores of rupees to the nationalised banking and financial institutions which are all matters of record. Also notable is that the burden of interest and past loans on the sick PSUs are one of the basic reasons for making networth negative in many of the sick PSUs and waival of such burden (which is otherwise not realisable) by financial restructuring of sick PSUs would make revival less difficult and in some cases can bring the PSUs out of BIFR. In order to meet the financial requirement for the the revival of sick industires the proposed allocation of revival fund to the extent of 10% the disinvestment proceeds is absolutely meaningless. Rather, withdrawal of the part of amount invested by the Government financial institutions in private sector can also be considered as source for funding the revival of sick industries, the convention notes.

Convention points out in clear terms that it is the intention to revive sick PSUs which is lacking in the Govt of India and hence instead of taking positive steps for revival, Govt is planning further to amend SICA in the direction of making process of liquidation/winding up faster. The Govt of India in this respect is acting as role model for many state governments in the matter of sick State PSUs.

The convention declares that the strong united movement of PSU workers alongwith other sections of population can create a condition for compelling the Govt of India to reverse its policy towards PSUs. Working class cannot allow the self reliance of the country to be frittered away and the sick PSUs to get liquidated in particular.

The convention reasserts the decision for nationwide strike call in all public sector units on 2nd April to cry a halt to the disastrous policy of the Govt of India towards public sector and undertakes the following programme of agitation and campaign to carry forward the resolve of the public sector workers for revival of sick PSUs and defence of the public sector units to safeguard the self reliance of the country besides the right and job security of the

employees.

1. State/Regional level conventions involving other sections of the population in the region/state/society including the economists, intellegentia, etc.

2. To take up cause of State level PSUs also in the convention

3. To observe 20th March 1997 REVIVE PUBLIC SECTOR DAY all over the country through demonstration, dharna, rallies, etc

4. To make the countrywide strike in Public Sector on 2nd April 1997 a massive success.

Bengal Bandh on April 2

The trade unions in Bengal have given a call for Bengal Bandh on April 2 in support of the Public Sector Workers strike demanding revival of all Sick PSUs.

Strike in Insurance Industry

The trade unions in the Insurance Industry will go on strike on April 2 protesting against opening up the Insurance industry to private sector.

FORM IV

(See Rule B)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Place of Publication | : 6, Talkatora Road
New Delhi - 110 001 |
| 2. Periodicity of Publication | : Monthly |
| 3. Printers Name | : M K Pandhe |
| Whether citizen of India | : Yes |
| Address | : 6, Talkatora Road
New Delhi - 110 001 |
| 4. Publishers Name | : M K Pandhe |
| Whether citizen of India | : Yes |
| | : 6, Talkatora Road
New Delhi - 110 001 |
| 5. Editors Name | : M K Pandhe |
| Whether citizen of India | : Yes |
| 6. Name and address of newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital | : Centre of Indian
Trade Unions
6, Talkatora Road
New Delhi-110001 |

Dated: 28.2.1997

Sd/-
M K Pandhe
Publisher

JAC Decides for Dharna before Prime Ministers Place on February 25 and 26 for Revival of NTC Mills

The Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers comprising of the INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS, BMS, UTUC and TUCC has decided to launch Dharna in front of the residence of the Prime Minister at Delhi, demanding revival of the NTC mills as per agreement and release of salaries to the workers.

The JAC has decided the dharna to be staged on February 25 and 26, 1997. However, the dharna may continue for indefinite period, unless the Government releases working capital for modernisation of the 79 mills of the NTC as per the unanimous agreement arrived at with the trade unions on 9.4.1994, which was approved by the Cabinet on 9.5.1995, and also releases salaries of the workers on a regular basis.

The JAC expresses serious concern over the fact that on December 5 and again on December 11, the Prime Minister himself assured to the delegations of the JAC and a large number of MPs that the agreed revival plan will be implemented and the final decision in this regard will be taken again by the Cabinet.

But it is regrettable that this assurance has not been fulfilled. The Govt. remained insensitive to the Rail Roko/Rasta Roko launched by the Textile Workers on December 30 also. The Cabinet has decided to release two months salaries (November and December) only. The fund for revival of the mills has not

yet been granted. On the contrary, it is being reported that altogether a new scheme is being prepared, whereby about 40 mills will be closed down. This tantamounts to total flouting of the agreement and the report of the four Textile Research Associations that all the mills can be revived.

The JAC wants to make it clear to the Government that any flouting of the agreement will not be accepted by the trade unions. It demands immediate implementation of the agreement on revival of the mills and fulfilment of the assurance made by the Prime Minister.

The JAC calls upon all NTC workers in the country irrespective of affiliations to reach Delhi in large number on 25th February morning to stage the dharna. It congratulates the Kanpur NTC workers for their dharna before the Labour Ministers residence on 28th January on these demands and calls upon them to reach delhi on 25th February again in larger number.

Sd/- Haribhau Naik (INTUC) Sd/- D.L Sachdev (AITUC) Sd/- P.K. Ganguly (CITU)
Sd/- R.A. Mittal (HMS) Sd/- V.A. Satam (BMS) Sd/- Sunil Sengupta (UTUC)
Sd/- D.D. Shastri (TUCC)

CITU DEMANDS JUDICIAL ENQUIRY OVER POLICE FIRING ON TEXTILE WORKERS KILLING THREE WORKMEN IN BANGALORE

The Secretariat of CITU has released the following statement for favour of publication:-

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the police firing on textile workers in Bangalore killing three workmen including a woman worker. The firing was unprovoked and aimed at terrorising the textile workers who are engaged in a nationwide struggle for the revival of the industry and the suppression workers struggle in Shree Vallaippa Textiles Ltd. The workers of the company have been struggling since last eight months against the illegal lockout and dismissal of their leaders. The unprovoked firing on innocent workmen expresses the growing insensitivity of state machinery against the labour in forceful

imposition of the policy of the liberalisation. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions demands judicial enquiry against the inhuman firing on innocent workmen and demands the state government to put the official responsible for the firing under suspension till the completion of the enquiry. It also demands adequate compensation to the next of kin of the deceased and also to injured workmen. CITU further demands the state government to declare the lockout illegal and compell the management to reopen the mill settling all demands through mutual discussion. CITU calls upon the working class and the textile workers in particular to organise protests against the police highhandedness.

Letter written by E. Balanandan M.P

February 5, 1997

Dear Shri Deve Gowdaji,

This is to draw your kind attention to the brutal firing resorted to by the police against the workers who were peacefully demonstrating against the victimisation resorted to by the management of a textile factory at Hejjala nearby Bangalore in Karnataka on 3rd of February, 1997. The workers were connected with CITU union and large number of the workers were women. Four died due to this firing including one young woman.

From the reports I gather that the demonstration and road roko was permitted by the police and it was for two hours, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. But before the end of the programme at 10.30 a.m. the police, ignoring the request of the leaders to wait for 30 minutes more, resorted to lathicharge and firing which resulted in the death of four workers and several seriously injured.

It seems that this could have been avoided if police shown some patience. But, however, they thought that the workers can easily be short down just like birds. I need not say that this will not auger well with the prestige of the Karnataka government.

Therefore, while protesting strongly against it I want you to intervene to see that the industrial dispute to be settled immediately and adequate compensation to be given to the bereaved family of the workers and take immediate steps for punishing the guilty police officers who were responsible for the firing.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(E. BALANANDAN M.P)

Shri Deve Gowda,
Prime Minister,
Government of India,
New Delhi

Letter by Jibon Roy, MP

February 5, 1997

Dear Prime Minister,

I write this letter to draw your attention to the incident of police firing at the textile workers in Bangalore on 3rd February, which killed four including one woman worker on the spot and injured a large number seriously. This has constrained the entire trade union movement.

The textile workers of Valliappa Textiles Ltd, Bidadi, a private mill at Hejjla near Bangalore, were peacefully demonstrating demanding reinstatement of several victimised workers and for settlement of their demand for wage rise and withdrawal of lock out illegally imposed by the management.

It has been reported that at the behest of the management this brutal action was taken by the police under the direct order of the SP of Bangalore, Mr Narayan Gowda. Even after the firing and killing, the police continued repression and arrested almost all the leaders of the Karnataka State Committee of CITU, including its General Secretary, Sri VJK Nair.

The situation is highly volatile. You know that the textile workers are currently on struggle against clo-

sures of textile mills and for revival of the NTC mills. Killing of workers in Bangalore is bound to create tension in textile mills throughout the country.

I believe appreciating the gravity of the situation you will stand by the side of the workers, take all measures to bring down commotion and see that workers are relieved from the sense of deprivity. In the interest of restoring peace it is urgently required that the state government should order judicial enquiry over the matter, proper compensations are announced, guilty officials are put to suspension till enquiry is over and the government should see that dispute is settled amicably.

Soliciting your reply in the matter,

Yours sincerely,

(JIBON ROY)

Shri H D Deve Gowda
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

MARCH TO PARLIAMENT BY AIAWU

Meeting at New Delhi, January 18-19, the Central Working Committee of the All India Agricultural Workers Union (AIAWU) has decided to participate actively in the mass picketing being organised by left-led agricultural workers organizations in front of Parliament on March 12.

The Statement issued on the occasion regretted as unfortunate the fact that the Deve Gowda government, which promised a comprehensive central legislation for agricultural workers, has now backtracked on its earlier assurance of passing this legislation during the winter session of the parliament last year. By deferring this enactment, the Gowda government too appears to be procrastinating over this long cherished demand of the most downtrodden section in our society. Therefore, the AIAWU has decided to organise mass picketing in the state capitals too on the same day to highlight the need for a comprehensive legislation for over eight crore Indians.

The statement also said the unilateral announcement of Rs.35 as national minimum wage for unorganised sector by the central government for the downtrodden sections was insufficient. The govern-

ment must change this decision and announce Rs.60 as minimum wage and pass a legislation to make its implementation easier.

The steep hike in the prices of wheat and atta, with stocks disappearing as a result of hoarding by big traders, is creating immense hardships for agricultural workers. The AIAWU therefore has urged the government to take immediate steps to arrest this tendency and ensure that food grains are not exported until adequate supply for the domestic market is ensured so that the promised provision of PDS foodgrains at 50 per cent can be implemented. The AIAWU has also decided to hold village level protest meetings against the price-rise in the month of February.

Before this harvest season the Union will also hold village level wage conventions in 10,000 villages for enhanced wages.

The CWC also expressed its anguish over the increasing number of atrocities against scheduled castes and tribes being reported from Rajasthan, MP, UP, and Maharashtra.

CITU Demands Disbursal of Wages and Working Capital in IDPL

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions demands immediate disbursal of salaries to all IDPL workers and release of working capital for the revival of the company.

The promise made by the Prime Minister to the delegation of trade unions and Members of Parliament on 5th December to the above effect that the decision in this regard would be taken on 24th December in the Cabinet meeting, has not been fulfilled. On the contrary, it has been reported that till the receipt of the report of IDBI on revival of the company, the Govt. will not take any decision. Productions in the major plants at Rishikesh, Hyderabad and Gurgaon have been stopped and salaries of the workers have not been paid since November, 1996.

It is to be noted that both the trade unions and the Chemical Ministry asked for release of Rs.38 crores as working capital and salaries of the workers to run the company upto March, 1997, pending the report of the IDBI, on which the Prime Minister gave positive assurances.

It is a matter of serious concern that the biggest drug company in Asia in the central public sector manufacturing all the essential and life saving drugs from the basic stage to finished products has been thrown into crisis due to the retrograde policy of the Government to dismantle the public sector, even to the extent of stoppage of salaries, which is an illegal act.

The CITU demands of the Govt. to release the amount so asked for by the Chemical Ministry also, and calls upon the workers to intensify their action programme with the demand.

Dharna by IDPL Workers

The Solidarity Committee of IDPL comprising of the two CITU unions of Rishikesh and Hyderabad and FMRAI has decided to launch a dharna before the Prime Ministers place from February 24 to 28. In the mean time all the trade unions have rejected a revival scheme prepared by A Fergusson, which calls for retrenchment of over 5000 workers to revive the company.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

(BASE 1982 = 100)

Centre			Linking facto forr Old Base	Centre			Linking facto forr Old Base
	Nov. 96	Dec.96			Nov. 96	Dec.96	
All India	349	350	4.93	Barbil	330	326	5.00
Gudur	349	361	4.33	Rourkela	312	309	3.59
Guntur	349	350	5.60	Amritsar	321	317	5.19
Hyderabad	319	319	5.23	Ludhiana	319	314	—
Visakhapatnam	331	330	-	Ajmer	347	350	5.01
Warrangal	341	336	-	Jaipur	336	344	5.17
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	324	321	4.05	Chennai	370	371	-
Guwahati	352	351	-	Coimbatore	344	344	5.35
Labac-Silchar	314	307	3.96	Coonor	361	374	4.80
Mariani-Jorhat	335	336	3.95	Madurai	367	371	5.05
Rangapara-Tezpur	341	339	4.29	Salem	366	375	—
Jamshedpur	340	337	4.68	Tiruchirapally	395	402	—
Jharia	300	294	4.63	Agra	335	327	—
Kodarma	306	310	5.43	Ghaziabad	343	338	—
Monghyr	344	341	5.29	Kanpur	349	344	4.69
Noamundi	340	349	4.58	Saharanpur	318	319	5.06
Ranchi-Hatia	335	334	—	Varanasi	368	363	5.12
Ahmedabad	347	348	4.78	Asansol	318	318	4.77
Baroda	342	335	—	Calcutta	358	356	4.74
Bhavanagar	368	369	4.99	Darjeeling	303	398	4.55
Rajkot	351	353	—	Durgapur	362	359	—
Surat	369	367	—	Haldia	377	375	—
Faridabad	343	347	—	Howrah	365	361	4.12
Yamunanagar	337	334	5.53	Jalpaiguri	311	308	4.16
Srinagar	330	331	5.47	Raniganj	316	312	4.40
Bangalore	349	351	5.66	Chandigarh	329	329	—
Belgaum	368	369	—	Delhi	372	366	4.97
Hubli-Dharwar	350	349	—	Pondicherry	414	428	—
Mercara	357	367	—				
Alwaye	358	361	5.19	<u>Additional series of Labour Bureau</u>			
Mundakayam	362	369	—	Kothagudem	355	355	3.25
Quilon	372	381	—	Himachal Pradesh	351	331	3.75
Thiruvanandapuram	367	379	—	Bhilwara	344	347	3.20
Bhalaghat	338	340	5.24	Chindwara	352	363	2.59
Bhilai	314	316	3.49	Tripura	345	337	4.37
Bhopal	368	371	5.46	Goa	391	394	3.40
Indore	353	354	5.18				
Jabalpur	354	358	6.41				
Mumbai	374	380	5.12	Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by			
Nagpur	359	361	4.99	multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the			
Nasik	369	368	—	linking factor given and rounding off the result to			
Pune	369	372	—	nearest whole number.			
Solapur	370	372	5.03	—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series,			

Total Strike of Powerloom Workers in Ahmedabad

Organised under the banner of the CITU-affiliated Powerloom Workers Union, powerloom workers of Ahmedabad went on an indefinite strike on January 26. The strike which turned out to be total, continued for 18 days, after which the Govt was compelled to intervene and a settlement was arrived at.

Most of these powerloom workers are ex-textilemen of this very city and are fully aware of the workers rights, besides being fed up with their ruthless exploitation and the total non-implementation of even the most ordinary labour laws. It was this combination of the subjective and objective factors that the CITU made effective use of, leading to this spontaneous and total strike.

These workers demanded permanency of jobs, identity cards, payslips, attendance cards, paid leave and earned leave facilities, ESI and provident fund benefits from the day of entry, wage hikes for various categories of workers, 20 per cent bonus, and DA at an adequate rate in view of the ever escalating prices, among other things.

On January 27, the union also organised a huge mass meeting where demands were formulated and a decision taken to further intensify the struggle. This was immediately followed by a spate of CITU-organised meetings, etc all attended by a large number of workers. A vigorous mass campaign was also launched in various localities like CTM area, Revabhai Estate, Kevdawdi, Jogni Mata temple area, Saijpur Bogha Road, Kalyan Mills area, Hiravadi, etc, where a large number of powerlooms are located.

On February 1, a huge procession of over 45,000 workers was taken out from Bapunagar which passed through Rakhial Road, Sarangpur, Astodia Darwaza, Khamasa Chowki and Lal Darwaza and reached the labour commissioners office at Khanpur Darwaza where the enraged workers shouted slogans against the corruption and callousness rampant in the labour department. They warned of even radical actions in case their grievances were not addressed to on an urgent basis.

The procession finally culminated in a big public rally at JP Chowk, addressed among others by Gujarat State

CITU president and CPI(M) state committee secretary Subodh Mehta, state CITU secretary Raghuvir Mali, powerloom union leaders Devtadin Yadav and Zaverbhai, Hasmukh Patel, Narasingh Rajput, Satish Parmar and Nizamuddin Sheikh.

The rally issued a call for boycott of all functions attended by the chief minister and other ministers, and for a March to Assembly at capital Gandhinagar, apart from seeking the MLAs resignations in case the workers demands were not conceded.

Next, a Chakka Jam was organised at Odhav Chowk near Sonivali on February 6.

Leaders of unions in central government offices, postal offices, LIC, income tax office, transport corporation, and other offices and establishments, extended support on behalf of their respective organisations, to the struggling powerloom workers. The agitation caught the imagination of the working class of the city, in general. It also motivated other powerloom workers, led by one Ashok Punjabi, to join hands with the CITU-led movement.

On the 18th day of the strike, the State Labour Minister called a tripartite meeting, which he himself attended along with his officials from the Government. Subodh Mehta and leaders of the CITU affiliated Powerloom Kamdar Union represented the workers and the owners were represented by the Powerloom Owners Association. The following decisions were arrived at:

The Govt will immediately issue notification for upward new wages; till then an ad hoc increase of Rs 9/- per day will be given. 50 per cent wages would be given for the strike period; there will be no victimisation, all other demands for identity cards, wage slips, earned leave, etc would be conceded with immediate effect, the PF Commissioner will sit with the CITU to discuss and clinch the details of PF; ESI cards will be issued; the Labour Commissioner will ensure implementation of all labour laws and prosecute the defaulting employers, etc. The agreement will benefit lakhs of powerloom workers of the state.

CITU OPPOSES RETROGRADE RECOMMENDATIONS OF FIFTH PAY COMMISSION

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions opposes the recommendations made by the Fifth Pay Commission as retrograde and reactionary.

While the long standing demand of the Central Government employees for parity of pay with the Central Public Sector employees has again been

rejected, the minimum salary of Rs.2440/- recommended by the commission falls far short of Rs.3340/- as demanded by the Central employees, that too with increased workload. Besides, there is a wide disparity between the employees and the executives not only in salaries, but also in other benefits, in as much as the increase in the pay of the employees is about 13 percent in the lowest category, whereas it is

54 per cent for the Senior Executives. Similarly in house rent allowance also for the senior executives it is Rs.7800/- PM tax free against the existing Rs.800/-. This shows complete bias in favour of the executives. The facilities extended to the executives for staying in high standard private hotels, air travels, staff cars, etc. will be bound to lead to further corruption, which is already rampant at top level.

What are most retrograde and reactionary in nature are the recommendations like 30 per cent downsizing in manpower, closing down of departments and their merger, freezing of recruitment of junior staff, forced VRS and abolition of 3.5 lakh vacant posts for which there was a constant demand for filling up the posts. The recommendations have virtually blocked the path of the young generation to be employed in central govt. services. Over and above this, for the first time contract service is being introduced in Central Govt, services and handing

over of some services to NGOs. These are steps towards privatisation, which is totally opposed by the CITU.

On the issue of Bonus, only recently the employees succeeded a through a strike action in getting removed atleast the eligibility ceiling. Instead of conceding the demand for removal of all ceilings, the Commissions recommendations have restored the eligibility ceiling and reverted to the previous system.

It is further reprehensible that the recommendations will be effective from 1.1.96 and not from 1.1.94 as demanded by the central employees. The recommendations moreover are coming after long ten years during which there is more than 170 per cent rise in prices.

The CITU demands of the govt to reject the retrograde recommendations and modify the recommendations as per the demands of the employees. The CITU calls upon the Central govt. employees to draw up action plans to meet their demand.

Confederation of Central Govt Employees & Workers

Press Statement

The report of the Fifth Pay Commission has caused disappointment to generality of employees who have been given a meagre wage increase of ..% whereas offices have been able to manipulate about 53% increase in their salaries. The employees are particularly unhappy because of the rejection of their long standing demand of parity with public sector workers in wages in violation of principle of Equal Pay for Equal work upheld by the apex court from time to time. So much so that wages of Central Government employees has not been granted parity even with the wages of employees of Supreme Court. While in fixing minimum wage the Commission has adopted the percentage increase in percapita net National Product between 1.1.86 to 1.1.96, the salaries of the Senior officers have been fixed not on the basis of well settled vertical relativities but on their consumption behaviour. This is totally and unprincipled exercise which is condemnable.

The policy of discrimination is also followed by the Commission in fixed annual increment @ 1.6% for Group D and 2.1% for Group C while granting more than 3% of basic pay as annual increment to officers. Again offices have been granted three mandatory automatic promotion on completion of 4, 9 & 13 years service, the other employees have been given only 2 automatic promotions after rendering longer spells of service. The fitment formula is the worst as it would deny employees with longer years of service the accrued benefit of their past service.

Some of the bilateral agreements in the JCM like

5 day week and merger of two Pay Scales of Group D Employees have been reversed without any reason or rhyme. When 5 day week is the trend in the world over, reverting to 6 days week is most anachronistic and shall be resisted by employees. The recommendations to impound 50% of arrears and to giving prospective effect to various allowances with a view to deny full accrued benefits to the employees are also condemned.

39% cut in staff strength, in 10 years by straight way abolition of 3.5 lakh post lying vacant because of complicated recruitment procedure and various other questionable means which would even curtail promotional prospects of existing employees shall be resisted by employees.

The issue of Bonus which was referred to the Commission for a comprehensive examination was given a perfunctory treatment as no memoranda was invited from staff unions nor were the representatives called to tender evidence. On top of it, what the Commission has recommended is to freeze the quantum to 30 days for Adhoc Bonus and 55 days for PLB.

The Confederation of Central Govt Employees and Workers including National Federation of Postal and Telecom Employees want the Govt to effect major modifications in these recommendation in consultation with staff representatives, failing which there will be industrial unrest amongst the employees. It calls upon the Central Govt employees to forge unity to meet the challenge.

Statement of the Leaders of the Confederation of Central Govt Employees & Workers

The Confederation of Central Government Employees & Workers including National Federations of Postal & Telecom Employees and All India Defence Employees Federation deplore the recommendation of the 5th Central Pay Commission rejecting for the second time their demand for parity in wages with public Sector workers. As against their demand for Rs 3340/- as minimum wage, the recommendation of Rs 2440/- would mean that the disparity gap would widen to Rs 900/- from Rs 210 in 1986. While minimum wages has been fixed on the basis of increase in percapita Net National Product between 1.1.86 to 1.1.96, salaries of Senior Officers have been fixed on the basis of their consumption. Adoption of double standards in determination of wages is highly unprincipled exercise. The result of it is that while low paid employees have been given a meager increase of 13% in their existing wages, officers have manipulated for themselves an increase of 53% in the existing emoluments.

The policy of gross discrimination is also manifested in fixing annual increments @ 1.6% for lowest paid employees and more than 3% for officers. Again when for offices 3 mandatory automatic promotions in shorter spells of time have been recommended, for others only two such promotions with much longer spells have been recommended. The worst of all recommendations is the fitment formula of this commission which denies senior employees the accrued benefit of their past service and will also causes serious anomalies.

Bilateral agreement in JCM like 5 day week,

merger of two pay scales of Gr. D employees have been reversed without any reason or rhyme. When 5 day week is the trend worldwide, reverting to six day week is anachronistic. The recommendation to give prospective effect to various allowances is to deny whatever little benefit would accrue to employees in arrears.

The afore mentioned organisations vehemently condemn arbitrary recommendations like 30% cut in staff strength and abolition of 3.5 lakhs vacant posts not because of lack of workload but due to complicated recruitment procedure. The Commission has gone beyond its terms of reference in recommending entry of MNCs in various strategic areas, endangering the security of India, major privatisation, off loading and contracterisation.

The Commission abdicated its duty in relation to Bonus issue by giving a perfunctory treatment to it. No memoranda was invited from Associations, nor were they called to tender evidence though the Govt of India Resolution on the subject enjoined on the commission to do so.

The Confederation of Central Govt Employees including NFPE, NFTE & AIDEF demand that Govt should immediately initiate discussions with the Staff Side of JCM for major modifications in the recommendations failing which employees will be compelled to resort to industrial action.

Sd/-
(OP Gupta)
NFTE

Sd/-
(K Adinarayana)
NFPE

Sd/-
(AB Bardhan)
AIDEF

All India State Govt Employees Federation

Press Communique

The 5th Central Pay Commission Report that was submitted to the government yesterday is a retrograde and disappointing one so far as the employees at the lower level are concerned. Not only the Commission has rejected a minimum basic of Rs 3,350/- at per with average minimum pay of the public sector employees, the commission has merely merged the DA with pay and with marginal additions in order to make it look a fat one. The date of implementation has also been fixed on 1.1.96 instead of 1.1.94, the year in which the Pay Commission was set up. The most negative aspects of the Commissions Report are broadly:

1. Downsizing of the government service by as big as 30% at the lower level.

2. Abolition of 3.5 lakhs vacant posts

3. Freezing of the further employment of lower grade staff

4. Government service at the lower level to be on contract basis.

These recommendations will have serious negative impact on the unemployment situation as a prospect of whole and the jobless youths future government service will be totally doomed. Moreover, pressure of work on the government employees at lower level will increase and the efficiency of service will be seriously jeopardised much to the detriment of the interest of the common people. This is just in line with the World Bank-IMF dictated new economic policy of the government.

Moreover, the eligibility ceiling of bonus has been

[On page 14]

Blessed he is who expects nothing for he shall never be disappointed ...(Pope)

□ P S Raman Kutty

The above is one of the interesting quotations you will find in the three volumes of Report submitted by the Fifth Central Pay Commission headed by Justice (Retired) Retnavel Pandian to the Government on 30th January 1997. The Quotation is quite meaningful because anyone who expected justice from the Commission is disappointed now. One need not go through the entire report running about 2100 pages to understand the philosophy which led the Commission to prepare the most elitist report. It is sufficient if one goes through the Summary of Recommendations prepared and presented by the Commission. While discussing the general principles for wage determination the Commission admits that the Government of India can no longer pretend to be a model or even a good employer and also that the concept of fair comparison with the public and private sector was made by it not with a view to granting parity. On the advice of National Productivity Council, the Pay Commission fixed Rs.2440 as the minimum salary in the Central Government Service sector by adding dearness allowance to pay and then giving weightage based on the percentage increase in the per capita net national product between 1-1-1986 and 1-1-1996. But, for fixing the maximum salary the Commission adopted a entirely different criteria, suggested by Indian Institute of Public Administration. Taking into account the 'consumption level of senior

officers and the 'additionality they expected in order to meet their legitimate expenses the highest salary was fixed at Rs.26,000 per month. The long pending demand of Central Government Employees for parity in wages with Public Sector or even with the Supreme Court staff is once again rejected. Even the vertical relativities were not maintained by the Commission while fixing the minimum and maximum pay. The disparity will widen if the total emoluments of Group D staff and Top executives are considered as shown in the following table:

(The comparison is made between a Group D Staff and Government Secretary stationed in New Delhi. Total emoluments of the Group D employees in an unclassified city is much less than the above.) The above glaring discrimination and many other recommendations of the commission are nothing but true reflection of the policy adopted by the members of the Pay Body, which is ably summarised by the Commission itself as:

The Commission started off by looking at the task of governance in the 21st century. Certainly there are many challenges ahead of us-economic, political and social. While diplomatic initiatives have to be launched so as to defuse tensions with our neighbours, population growth has to be held in check. The rate of economic growth has to be accelerated in an atmosphere of liberalisation and globalization, where the state reduces its role as a manufacturer of good and services.....

In its over-enthusiasm on liberalisation and dismantling government service sector the pay Commission has suggested that contract labour system should be encouraged by abolishing the Group D post and also immediate abolition of 3.5 lakhs posts now lying vacant. Deliberate attempts were being made by bureaucrats to keep the posts vacant as a major portion of it belongs to SC and ST communities. It is yet to be seen if the present Central Government will accept the above two recommendations which go against the most downtrodden sections of the society. The Commission has further suggested that the staff strength in certain core services like Posts, Telecom, Railways, Defence etc. should be reduced by 30 percent during the next ten years. It is being resorted to when management in some of the above departments have already pleaded before the Commission that the services could not be maintained or expanded with the available staff. The Fifth

Group D Staff		Government Secretary	
Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
750.00		Basic Pay 8000.00	
1110.00		DA 7680.00	
100.00		Interim Relief 100.00	
100.00		(2nd) 800.00	
100.00		(3rd) 800.00	
<hr/>		<hr/>	
2160.00		17380.00	
	2440.00	New Basic Pay	26000.00
150.00	960.00	HRA 1000.00	7800.00
30.00	90.00	CCA 100.00	300.00
		allowance	1500.00
		allowance	800.00
		allowance	1000.00
<hr/>		<hr/>	
2340.00	3590.00	Total 18480.00	37400.00
1250.00		Increase 18920.00	

Pay Commission has overstepped while making recommendations on computerisation of many works and disbandment of Rashtriya Rifles as well as amalgamation of Assam Rifles with CRPF. Such recommendations have compelled some of the most reactionary newspapers to comment:

The Fifth Pay Commission would have refrained from transcending its mandate by advising on matters best left to the nations policy makers.....

The Central Government Employees through their recent historic strike action got the Bonus without any eligibility ceiling. The Pay Commission, without hearing the views of Staff Side, has proposed reintroduction of eligibility ceiling of Rs.4500 per month in the revised scale, virtually denying bonus to Group C employees. The Pay Body has further suggested significant changes in parameters for working out the Productivity Linked Bonus. A new ceiling on the quantum of bonus also is proposed at 55 days pay as PLB and 30 days pay as non-PLB. It is certain that the Central Government Employees shall not allow implementation of such ludicrous proposals.

The Fifth Pay Commission has suggested new classification of Services as Top Executives, Senior Executives, Executives, Supervisory Personnel, Supporting Personnel and Auxiliary Personnel. It is also suggested that the distinction between gazetted and non-gazetted officers in government should be abolished. By substituting the designations and abolition of such distinctions, without making any substantial improvement in the income of the lower rungs, the Commission claims that Indian bureaucracy can be taken out of its feudal past into a modern present. But, the same Commission did not fail to recommend Rs 1000 per month for the top executives and senior executives as entertainment allowance. As if it is not enough the commission has recommended a sum of Rs 1500 per month as Telephone Attendant Allowance to Deputy Secretary and other officers above him. The officer can recruit and appoint anyone - his son or daughter or wife - as the telephone attendant and receive the allowance.

The policy of discrimination is also followed by the commission in fixing annual increment @ 1.6% for Group D and 2.1% for Group C while granting more than 3 per cent for the officers. While an officer reaches the maximum of his pay scale within ten years a postman has to work for long 30 years to reach the maximum in his scale. Again, the officers are granted three mandatory automatic promotions on completion of 4,9 and 13 years of service while Group C employees are granted only two promotions on completion of 10 and 20 years and Group D employees on completion of 12 years and 24 years. A uniform incremental value of three per cent is quite

justified which requires immediate consideration of the government. While no significant change is suggested to the DA formula the officers are benefited by the new one by way of 100 per cent neutralisation of rise in cost of living index. In fixing the minimum of the pay scale too the top offices received an unexpected benefit from this full neutralisation. The pay of Group D staff at the lowest level was raised from Rs 750 to Rs 2440 taking into account the DA, which was 148% of Basic pay on 1.1.1996. The same ratio of 1:3.25 is maintained in raising the basic pay of a Government Secretary from Rs 8000 to Rs 26000 though he was getting only 96% of basic pay as DA on 1.1.1996. Same favouritism is shown in granting transportation allowance, providing air travel facilities for Leave Travel Concession and House Rent Allowance also.

While a top officer is entitled to a tax-free HRA of Rs 7800 in A1 cities (four metros) a Group D is entitled to only Rs 960.00 per month. A group D working in A Class city like Bangalore or Hyderabad which are costlier than Delhi or Calcutta is entitled to just Rs 480.00 only. His counterpart in a C class city will get Rs 240 and an unfortunate official in the unclassified city gets only Rs 160.00 per month as the House Rent Allowance. rate of HRA merits rationalisation. It is strange enough that a Pay Commission consisting of a retired judge of the Supreme Court, an eminent economist and an IAS officer was convinced that an employee and his family can manage to get a decent accommodation for Rs 160 per month.

Some of the bilateral agreements in the JCM like five days week and merger of two pay scales of Group D employees have been reversed without any reason or rhyme. When five days week is the trend in the world over, reverting to 6 days week work is most anachronistic, though it is suggested by a Commission which talks of globalisation. There will not be any takers for the Voluntary Retirement Schemes and Golden Shake Hands Schemes proposed by the fifth pay commission. Any attempt to introduce compulsory retirement schemes in central government sector shall be resisted by the trade union movement unitedly.

At the same time, some of the recommendations of Fifth Central Pay Commission like increase in the maternity leave period to 135 days, introduction of paternity leave of 15 days, raising the recruitment age of women to 35 years etc are welcome though they are not to benefit many in view of recruitment ban being imposed. Some of the benefits recommended to pensioners and family pensioners too are appreciated by the employees. A section of Group C employees and the middle level officers are benefited by the suggestion that all allowances and pension shall be paid net of taxes. The fact remains that the top officers did not want much hike in their basic pay as

a major portion of the benefit would go back to the exchequer by way of taxes. Hence the allowances are made tax free by the Commission.

The fitment formula suggested is most unsatisfactory and it works against the ordinary employees. The Commission has suggested a meagre increase of 20 per cent of the pre-revised basic pay as fixation benefit while revising the pay. The following table illustrates the disparity:

Cadre	Existing Pay	Revised pay	Increase
Junior Gp D	Basic Pay 810.00		
	DA 148%	1199.00	(Add 20%
	I.Rif	100.00	of 810.00
		100.00	and then
		100.00	deduct 3rd IR)
	Total	2309.00	2480.00 171.00
Senior Gp D with basic pay of Rs 1010.00	2807.00	2950.00	143.00
Junior Gp C with basic pay of Rs 1150.00	3182.00	3330.00	148.00
Senior Gp C BP 1800.00	4924.00	5125.00	201.00
Sr Officer BP 7500.00	16300.00	22400.00	5350.00

Many of the employees having 15 years or more of service shall be benefited by an increase of 12 per cent in their pay while the officer is benefited by more than 70%.

(More than 90% of employees are put up with 15 years service)

The IAS Officers Association has commented on the hike that the pay and perks recommended by the Commission for them are much less than expected. They wanted more with which we could save some money for the rainy days according to the statement issued by their association!

The most objectionable recommendation given by the Pay Commission is that the next Pay Commission should be appointed before 1.1.2003 and the date of implementation of its recommendations should be 1.1.2006, irrespective of when its report is submitted. Such ridiculous proposals merit total condemnation. The future shall be decided by the united will of people; not by some Commissions.

The Fifth Central Pay Commission has prepared its report on the basis of studies conducted by various agencies and institutes. Some of them are run and funded by capitalists like Tata and others are managed by the IAS, serving or retired. Quite obviously, the report is elitist in every aspect. Even one of the members of the Commission, Prof Suresh Tendul-

kar, could not agree with certain recommendations. The report has invited unprecedented, widespread protest from employees and caused resentment among various sections of officers. Going beyond its areas of consideration the Commission has displayed erudite nescience by calling for immediate implementation of National Telecom Policy, opening up of core sectors to the private sector, both Indian and International, and privatisation of many of the activities of different departments. The government at the Centre should exhibit the political will and reject such unwarranted recommendations straightaway. It should initiate discussions with the Staff Unions to effect major modifications in the recommendations of the Pay Commission, failing which there will be industrial unrest among the employees. A timely action by the United Front Government on the issue is the urgent need.

[From page 11]

pegged at Rs 4500/- while there is a common demand for total abolition of that ceiling and for which the Central employees went on strike also. Moreover, voluntary retirement scheme has also been proposed to effect further reduction of staff strength. However, the employees will get some higher benefits in terms of HRA and also to a certain extent in city-compensatory-allowance. While allowing some amount of benefits to the employees in such manner, the Pay Commission wants to compensate that benefit by recommending introduction of 6 days week instead of present 5 days one. So far as medical benefit is concerned no mentionable benefit has been recommended by the Commission. On the contrary, the recommendations are heavily loaded in favour of the highest grade officers.

For the existing pensioners, no new benefit has been recommended by the Pay Commission.

The employees will have to fight for several of the severely negative aspects of the recommendations and the Government should never accept them.

So far as the 80 lakhs of State government employees are concerned, the situation will be precarious now. On the one side, most of the state governments will be inclined to implement the negative aspects while, pleading helplessness in case of the positive features, on the plea of paucity of funds.

The State governments should immediately oppose the negative aspects and be prepared to implement those positive aspects which will benefit the employees. For that, the State governments should demand from the Central Government providing additional funds if necessary. In any case, the State government employees should not get less than what the Central employees will get.

The State government employees will have to build up movement in all states to compel the State governments to implement the positive sides of the recommendations and oppose the negative recommendations.

Bank Employees and Officers to Strike on April 4

On 14th February 1997 in Mumbai the representatives of the Bank unions covering 100% of the workmen and officers in the banking industry met to take a stock of the various issues facing the Bank employees and the industry and chalked out a common programme of action.

The meeting, first of its kind in the bank employees movement, identified the issues of WAGE FREEZE in UCO BANK as the most important and immediate one. This is a precursor of things to come in all banks - loss making or not.

The meeting noted that already all unions have staged massive demonstrations in front of UCO Bank HO in Calcutta on 3.2.97, further by a deputation to Banks ED same afternoon and a letter to the Finance Minister. There have been countrywide protest against this sinister move. The committee chalked out the following programme:

a) A Joint demonstration on 18th February 1997 in front of Head office of UCO Bank and principal offices in other states;

b) Joint deputation by the representatives of our affiliates in UCO Bank to the Banks Board members on 19th February 1997 morning urging for revocation of wage freeze. In the event banks board does not revoke the decision of wage freeze there shall be:

i) Instant sit-down strike same day inside UCO Bank premises in Calcutta and

ii) All India Bank strike on 28.2.97 (As the UCO Bank decided to withdraw their decision of wage freeze, the strike decision has been withdrawn).

The meeting further discussed on various issues confronting the industry and its workforce and came to the conclusion that there was urgent need for agitation in respect of issues listed herebelow:

- 1) Establishment of Local Area private banks
- 2 Pension

(a) Non-implementation of pension settlement in Private Banks.

b) Anti-employee clause in pension Regulation to deny pension to bank employees and officers by adding the words Participation in illegal strike.

3) Non-implementation of 6th Bipartite Settlement and officers salary revision in Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

4. Virtual ban on recruitment and also on compassionate appointments

5. Removal of ceiling on gratuity and Bonus

The meeting has decided to observe a One-Day strike action on 4th April 1997 in pursuit of the above issues

Needless to point out here that as the fountain-

head of attacks on bank employees and banking industry, is the New Economic Policy characterised by so-called liberalisation and globalisation, free market economy privatisation of banks, insurance, huge portfolio of bad and default debts, concessions to corporate sector, shrinkage of credit flow to rural and weaker sections, emphasis of class banking instead of mass banking, private capitals entry into public sector banks, etc, are some of the characteristics of the new economic policy which has heaped on massive miseries on the masses.

We appeal to all our members to stand together in defence of public sector banking on the one hand and our existing rights on the other. We also call upon all members to defeat the establishment of local area private sector banks. IBA/Government must be forced to honour pension settlement, delete the anti-strike clause in the Pension Regulations; make need-based recruitments; continue compassionate appointments; implement 6th Bipartite Settlement and officers wage revision to give pay-parity in RRBs and also remove the ceiling on Bonus/Gratuity.

The following preparatory programme should be jointly observed:

13.3.1997: Tiffing time demonstrations

25.3.1997: Observance of all India Day through badge-wearing; submission of joint memorandum by all union leaders to Regional/zonal Central Office managements, and demonstrations in front of all banks;

3.4.1997: Joint Rally by all unions.

4.4.97: All India strike from 6 AM on 4.4.97 to 6 AM on 5.4.1997.

Leaders of all the unions shall meet the Finance Minister, leaders of all political parties, all Central Trade Union. Attempts will be made to meet the Prime Minister as well.

Campaign by posters, leaflets, seminars, symposium - in all possible forms shall have to be undertaken to popularise our demands and enlist public support to our struggle.

The struggle will be a sustained one necessitating higher/repetitive actions to ward off the attacks and achieve our demands.

Attacks are on public sector banks, on our jobs and job security. These must be repulsed regardless of cost and sacrifices.

Sd/- T Chakraborty, GS, AIBEA, Ashis Sen, GS, BEFI, NA Prabhu, GS, NOBW, R J Sridharan, GS AIBOA, S M Joshi, GS, NOBO, P Lakshmi Narasaiah, GS, NCBE, RPK Murugesan, GS, INBEF, S R Sengupta, GS, AIBOC, K K Nair, GS, INBOC.

CITUS 8TH SUCCESSFUL STATE CONFERENCE AT NASIK

□ P.R. KRISHNAN

The three day 8th conference of the Maharashtra State CITU ended at Nasik with a massive 10,000 strong rally at the famous Bhalerao High School Maidan in the heart of the city in the evening on 1st February 1997. The venue of the delegate session of this conference was a Mathale Mangal Hall at CIDCO. The Conference adopted an 16 points demands charter, for agitation and popularization amongst the working class in Maharashtra which is of vital importance to them. The three day 8th Conference of this premier state of Maharashtra came to be organised as a part of and prelude to the 9th All India CITU Conference scheduled to be held at Ernakulam in Kerala in April 1996. The Conference was attended by 281 delegates from 22 of the 28 districts of the state. These delegates represented different industries like engineering, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, power loom, hand loom, plastic, beedi, irrigation projects, Municipalities (Nagar Parishad), Auto-rickshaw, anganwadi, forest, anti-malaria projects, port and docks etc.

31 of the participants were women delegates. It has to be stated here that this conference took place in Nasik in the background of the coming statewide elections to Grama panchayat Samities, Zilla Parishads and Nagar Palikas scheduled to be held from 23rd February to 3rd March 97 under the Shiv Sena-BJP rule with the mysterious death of Ramesh Kini, the daylight murder of trade union leader Dr. Datta Samant, Shiv Sena attack against newspaper like Mahanagar, assault of former Municipal Dy. Commissioner Khairnar, insulting utterness against wellknown Marathi author P.L. Deshpande, abuses against noted social worker Anna Hazare for his crusade against judiciary, the Police firing against and killing of 2 CPI(M) Adivasi functionaries Babu Navasha Kharpada and Laksha Kania Beej, at Talasary on 26.1.97, the atrocities in Aurangabad and police indifference, growing corruption etc. during the last 26 months old Shiv Sena-BJP rule.

The reception committee formed under the Nasik District Committee of CITU with Narendra Malusare as Chairman and Dr.D.L. Karad as Secretary had made elaborate arrangements for the success of the Conference. Accommodation for the stay of dele-

gates and food, snacks etc. were made in the 3 story Conference Hall itself. Welcome arches, banners, red flags and wall writing etc. had begun to appear throughout Nasik citu and its suburbs and in various industrial centres of this fast developing district. It was notable that quite a good number of the participants in the concluding rally at Bhalerao School Maidan were Kissans, agricultural workers, adivasis and women workers from far off villages, tehsils and talukas who had treked their journey in groups and processions. A sizable number of those came to hear the leaders in the public meeting were middle class people. The sessions of the conference and also the concluding rally were preceded and followed by songs and cultural programmes by young and enthusiastic cultural groups swar-well-Pooja of Nasik, Aurangabad, Chandrapur, Bombay and by Sanjay Jadhav of Ichalkaranji. Most of them were from factories and offices. There was also held a Kavi Sammelan under the guidance of famous poet Kailas Pawar and all participants were workers from different factories organised under the CITU banner. Mathale Mangal Karyalai Hall, the venue of the conference was named Com. Godavari Parulekar Nagar in memory of the legendary leader of tribals, Adivasis and peasants who died in Oct. 96. The gates to the hall was in the name of Com.S.Y. Kolhatkar The veteran communist leader and founder President of Maharashtra CITU who died in March 94 and the Conference Dias had the name in memory of Advocate D.T. Jaybhawe a leading lawyer and prominent figure of the leftist and progressive movement in Nasik who died in February 94. The hall and the surroundings presented a colorful look with red banners, arches and posters with depiction unity and class struggle (Ek joot aani vargaladdha) struggle is our path (Sangharsh Hamara rasta) Socialism is our objective (Samajwad Hamara Manzil) and Workers of the world unite (Jagatil Kamgar Ek Hua). Photos of Marx, Engle, Lenin, Chatrpati Shivaji, Mahatma Phule, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, B.T. Ranadive, P. Ramamoorthy, S.Y. Kolhatkar, Godavari Parulekar, P.K. Kurane, and Advocate D.T. Jaybhawe were prominently displayed.

The conference began in the morning on 30th January 97 with unfurling of red flag by CITUs State

President P.P. Sansgiri followed by floral tributes to the martyrs by the delegates. The proceedings of the delegate session started with introductory remarks by Dr. D.L. Karad, the CITU leader of Nasik and the reception committee secretary. Chairman of the reception committee, Narendra Malusare, a veteran of the States Kissan movement, welcomed the delegates. Malusare, who is lovingly called as NANA in Maharashtra, in his welcome address gave a brief depiction of the various struggles conducted by the people in this pilgrim city of Nasik during freedom struggle against British, after freedom during congress rule against feudal, landlord and capitalist exploitation and against the onslaught of communal forces and against the ongoing attack during the Shiv Sena-BJP rule.

The Conference was inaugurated by CITU State Committee President P.P. Sansgiri who is also the Secretary of the Maharashtra State Committee of CPI(M). Sansgiri in his hourlong speech dealt with various issues arising from and the deteriorating conditions prevailing in the state as a result of the new economic and industrial policies adopted by the erstwhile regime of Narasimha Rao government which is also being followed by the present United Front Government of Prime Minister Deve Gowda, the danger posed by the fascist policies of Shiv Sena-BJP government, the growing attacks against civil liberties, onslaught against freedom of Press, the mysterious death of Ramesh Kini, the daylight murder of trade union leader Dr. Datta Samant, the police firing and killing of the 2 CPI(M) functionaries at Talassary on 26.1.97 and curtailment of trade union rights etc. Sansgiri therefore called upon the working class to fight back these fascist and dictatorial policies of Shiv Sena-BJP combine and to build-up class unity to combat them.

The conference immediately after Sansgiri's speech adopted condolence resolutions moved by B.P. Kashyap and paid homage to martyrs and those leaders and functionaries who died in the cause of people, during the 3 years after the last Poona State Conference in January 94.

The main document for discussion before the conference was the report submitted by the State General Secretary K.L. Bajaj. The report referred to and covered the activities of the state CITU during the 3 years period after the last state conference at Poona in 1994. In his speech Bajaj said that though in the state there is a change of government since 2 1/2 years after our last conference from Congress-I

Party to Shiv Sena-BJP combination, this change has not brought any relief to the people as promised or as expected by those who voted them to power. On the contrary said Bajaj, the situation has since been deteriorating due to the Shiv-Sena-BJP governments pro-employer, pro-landlord, pro-business house, pro-monopoly, pro-multinational attitude and due to its communal bias towards peoples problems. The Shiv Sena-BJP government has not fulfilled any of the election promises made to the people in their manifestoes charged Bajaj. As a result, unemployment has increased, more factories and mills have been closed down, no houses have been provided to the poor hutment dwellers as drumbeated, on the contrary, hutment dwellers are being forcibly removed to help the builders to amass money, prices of essential commodities have increased manifold, statutory minimum wage in several cases have not been revised, large-scale contract system is being introduced in all industries, the Labour department and enforcement machinery of the government has become non-functional, the law and order situation has worsened, goonda attack against trade union functionaries is on the rise, entry of anti-social and underworld elements into trade union field has been encouraged, and corruption has become very rampant, in the state he said. The CITU has therefore to be in the forefront to fight against these and other anti-working class policies of the Shiv Sena-BJP government said Bajaj. In his speech Bajaj also mentioned about the difficulties faced by the CITU on account of non-cooperative attitude from other trade union centres and organizations in the movement against the anti-working class policies of the government. Nevertheless said Bajaj, We cannot remain passive and have to try our best to reactivate the working class movement in Maharashtra with actual involvement of other fraternal unions and organizations. Therefore he called for every attempts by all CITU centres in the State to move in that direction and organise struggles from time to time. We should at the same time never forget and should make all attempts to mobilize the workers independently on CITU line and build up class unity. Organising the unorganised and unprotected segment of the working-class should also receive our top priority in this process, reminded Bajaj.

In the discussion which followed the General Secretary's report, 54 delegates participated and spoke. After reply by K.L. Bajaj, the report was unanimously adopted. Similarly the income and expenditure re-

ports and the balance sheets of the last 3 years of the state CITU was also placed by treasurer Dinkar Kadav and was adopted after discussions and clarifications in that behalf. Earlier the delegates were greeted by AITUC Maharashtra Rajya Committee President G.V. Chitnis, the All India Secretary of Agricultural Workers Union, Kumar Shiralkar and Maharashtra State Janwadi Mahila Sanghatana Secretary Smt. Anjali Mahabaleshwarkar.

The conference took up and discussed many other important issues affecting the people in general and the working-class in particular by way of resolutions. These were regarding dangerous of new economic and industrial policy, Child Labour, New Pension Scheme, Curtailment of trade union rights, amendments in Bonus and Gratuity Acts, Corruption, Statutory Minimum Wages fixation, Contract Labour, Privatization Policy, Police Intervention in labour disputes and terrorism in the trade union movement, Enron Project and atrocities against women. These resolutions were moved by P.R. Krishnan, Armaity Irnai, Sayyed Ahmed, Yeshwant Koli, K.L. Malabade, Dr.D.L.Karad, Sreedhar Deshpandhe, Suryaji Salunke, Udhav Bhavalkar, Dr. Vivek Monteiro and Sadshiv Bhat. They were seconded by Chandrakant Jadhav, Pro. Ramesh Dahiwade, Nivruti Chavan, P.M. Vartak, Allabaksh Patel, Pandit Munde, Mohan Singh, B.L. Patil, Bhimrao Khobragade, Suresh Mohite and Prema Nair. While the resolutions on Talassary firing and killing, amendment in Bonus and Gratuity Acts and the anti-working-class features of the 5th Pay Commission report, it was Sansgiri who moved them from the chair. All these resolutions were passed unanimously.

Earlier the conference had unanimously elected a 3 member resolution committee comprising of P.R. Krishnan, K.L. Malabade and B.P. Kashyap, another 3 member credential committee consisting of Pandit Munde, Hemkant Samant, and Amrut Mehshram and a 2 member minute committee of Dr.S.K. Rege and Anna Sawant. The office bearers of the State Council compared of the steering committee and conducted the proceedings of the conference.

A resolute and furious but heartening matter which requires mention here is that while condemning the police firing and killing of CPI(M) functionaries Laksha Kania Beej and BabuNavasha Kharpade at Talassary on the Republic Day of 26th January 97 and demanding immediate enquiry in that connection, the conference could collect Rs.65,000/- towards expenditure to be incurred for legal proceed-

ings to be initiated in that case.

Unlike the pattern of proceedings of previous conferences a unique feature adopted by the steering committee in the present conference was that it arranged for and organised a detailed groupwise discussion on some of the main question such as on New Economic Policy, on limitation of labour laws, Contract System, Minimum Wages, Working women and Pension Scheme. The delegates were given free choice to select any of these topics and full opportunity to have separate group discussions to be monitored for a coordinated report. These groups were assisted by B.P. Kashyap, P.R. Krishnan, Dr. Vivek Monteiro, Dr.D.L. Karad, Suman Pujari and K.L. Bajaj. The group discussions so organized was of considerable significance in as much as the delegates showed keen interest to know more in details about the implicates and intricacies of these problem. The group discussions also revealed the fact that it is urgently essential for the state CITU leadership to organize workshops, seminars and study groups for imparting knowledge to the rank and file of the CITU.

The discussions in the delegate session having concluded in the afternoon of 1st February 97 the delegates unanimously elected a new state council comprising of 40 members from different regions and districts with the Prabhakar Sansgiri as President and Ahilya Ranganekar, K.L. Malabade, Bindhya Prasad Kashyap, Yeshwant Koli, Dinkar Kadav, Narsaya Adam Master MLA, V.G. Padmanabhan and Sadshiv Bhat as Vice Presidents, K.L. Bajaj as General Secretary and P.R. Krishnan, P.M. Vartak, Sayyed Ahmed, Dr. Vivek Monteiro, Suryaji Salunke, Dr.D.L. Karad, Udhav Bhawalkar, and Amrut Meshram as Secretaries and Hemkant Samant as Treasurer of the State Committee.

The new elected office bearers were introduced to and felicitated in open rally at Bhalerao High School Maidan held in the evening of Saturday the 1st February 97. The 16 point demands charter adopted by the delegate session for campaign and popularization amongst the people and mobilization of the working class was read out in the rally by Dr.D.L. Karad. This meeting was addressed amongst others by Prabhakar Sansgiri, Narendra Malusare, K.L. Bajaj, Kallappa Malabade, Jiva Pandu Gavit Ex-MLA, Udhav Bhawalkar and Sayyed Ahmed. Sitaram Thombre proposed a vote of thanks. The 10,000 strong public rally pledged full support to these demands with prolonged applause and full-throated slogans.

State Wide Campaign in Tamilnadu

Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU has planned extensive campaign all over the state. CITU has decided to link the campaign in connection with the seventh state conference and that of the programmes of the National Platform of Mass Organizations.

State Conference

Seventh State Conference of CITU is to be held at Chennai from 6th to 8th March 1997. Prior to this, all the 28 district conferences have been completed. In addition to this working women state conference and 16 district conferences were also conducted.

Preparations for the State Conference has already begun. A reception committee under the chairmanship of N.M. Sundaram, General Secretary AIIEA has been formed. 600 delegates representing 2.28 lakhs of members are to attend the conference.

Conference is to be inaugurated by CITU president Com. E. Balanandan, Com. M.K. Pandhe and Com.S. Dev Roye will attend the conference from the All India Centre. A massive rally on 8th March is to be addressed by Com. Jyoti Basu and other Central and State leaders arrangements for statewide mobilization for the rally is being made in all districts.

State wide campaign

Statewide campaign for the conference is to begin on 11th February the remembrance day of Comrade Singaravelu Chettiar, a of the T.U. movement in Southern India. During this campaign, hundreds of meetings are to be held all over the state and lakhs of handbills are to be distributed. Wall writings, and posterings are being done.

Flag Mast, Flag and Jyothis are to be brought to Chennai from Nagarkoil, Coimbatore, Madurai and Nagpatanam covering all points of the state reception meetings are to be organised enroute. All the Four Sauads will reach Chennai on 5th March.

CITU state committee has called upon all the affiliates to involve themselves in this campaign in a big way.

National Platform campaign

A meeting of state leaders of Trade Unions and other mass organizations was held at Chennai on 30th January. S.S. Thyagarajan, General Secretary of State AITUC provided over the meeting. Among those who attended the meeting, were A.K. Padmanabhan (AITUC) V.A.Karupusami (AIKS), Sarasvathy (AKDWA) and leaders of various Trade Unions from Insurance, Bank, State Government and Teachers and organisations of women, youth and students also attended the meetings.

The meetings decided to conduct statewide campaign explaining the declaration adopted in the National convention on 16th December at Delhi. District level conventions are also to be organised. District level meetings of these organisations will divide the Centres of picketing of Central govt offices on 25th February and the next phase of Rasta Rail Roko on 27th March.

The meeting called upon all Trade Unions, mass organizations and other sections of people to support the struggles being conducted by the platform.

Appeal for Communal harmony

The meeting in a Separate resolution, expressed shock and concern over the killings and violence in various parts of the state by communal forces. The meeting called upon the state government to take stern action against the disrupters of peace in the state. The resolution also called upon all democratic organisations to take steps to isolate the communal forces and maintain communal harmony in the state.

7th Conference of Singareni Collieries Employees Union

Sri Parsa Satyanarayana, President of Singareni Collieries Employees Union hoisted the red flag on 26th January 1997 morning on the inauguration of the conference. The opening session was presided over by him. The Chairman was represented by his Dy Chief Personnel Manager. Com.T Veerabhadram, MP, Comrades Y Gattaiyah, general secretary, SCWU(AITUC), A Raghunanda Rao, President, Singhareni, All Association Jt Action Committee etc participated in the conference.

Messages were received from the president of the Singareni Officers Association, General Secretary of the APSRTC Staff & Workers Federation on the Executive Director (Personnel) wishing the conference every success. The conference observed 2 minutes silence to condole the demise of martyrs, social workers, trade unionists and the workers who died in various mine accidents.

On the evening of the 26th January a rally of workers was taken out at Godavarikham. A public meeting took place where nearly 3000 people attended comrades, T Veerabhadram, MP, Malam Mallesh, MLA *P Raja Rao, General Secretary addressed the gathering. Com.P Satyanarayana, President of the Union presided over the meets.

The delegates session took place from 27th noon to 28th afternoon. 270 delegates participated.

Com P Raja Rao, General Secretary submitted his report, the same was discussed and the report was unanimously adopted. The conference demanded immediate constitution of JBCCI-VI, Improvement in safety and coal mines, improvement in welfare measures for coal workers, removal of ceiling on payment of gratuity, abolition of contract system, etc. Com.B V Raghuraman, General Secretary, AP State Committee observed the deliberations and addressed the conference. At the end of the conference a new committee was elected with Com.Parasa Satyanarayana as president.

□

Working Womens Convention at Vishakhapatnam

Women should wage organised struggles to fight for their rights as even trade unions are not concentrating on their issues, said Vimala Ranadive, Secretary, All India Working Womens Coordination Committee in a convention organised by the Vishakhapatnam District unit of Working Womens Coordination Committee. However the fight of women should be a joint one with men and not in a characterising feminist manner, she said.

She said that the women were products of feudal mentality which got ingrained owing to generation of conditioning particularly in the northern parts of the country. Even in negotiations on issues like bonus women were not given representation. Women should demand for representations in various committees of trade unions. The struggles of the trade unions had not been extended to womens specific problems. While women of organised sector were better off in unorganised sector most of the women workers were out of the purview of trade unions. Com. Vimala Ranadive said that CITU however is taking initiatives in organising the women workers in the unorganised

sectors like Beedi, plantation, construction etc and train them to led their unions by themselves.

Dr Hemalatha, Secretary, State Working Womens Coordination Committee said that the govt itself is exploiting the Anganwadi women by paying a paltry Rs 400 to them and only Rs 200 to helpers.

The convention was presided over by D Sarada. She said that the convention was being held for organising a broad based working womens front for united struggle. The district committee had published 2000 leaflets on activities of working womens coordination committee and distributed them. The convention was attended by women employees from LIC, GIC, Shipyard, BHPV, Municipal P&T, ITI college lectures, Anganwadi workers, etc. Two resolutions, one against privatisation and another demanding 33% reservations for women in legislatures were adopted. The convention paid homage to Com. Sagarika Soren Assam TU leader and women workers who lost their lives for democratic movement.

First State Conference of Punjab-Chandigarh Medical Representatives Union

The first State Conference of Punjab and Chandigarh Medical and Sales Representatives Union (CITU) was held at Bathinda on November 2 and 3, 1996.

It was the foundation conference of the union merging together the two unions of Punjab and Chandigarh and named it as Punjab and Chandigarh Medical and Sales Representatives Union (PCMSRU).

The State level union was formed through a long drawn struggle against certain disruptive elements. First, the Chandigarh union was formed and it got affiliated with the Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Associations of India (FMRAI). Then the pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical field workers were mobilised throughout the state to form a union with the active help and guidance by the Punjab State Committee of CITU, getting affiliated to it. The Bathinda Conference was a historic occasion merging together the two unions to form the PCMSRU as an affiliate of both CITU and FMRAI.

The Conference started with a rally, which was participated by several thousands of the field workers and other CITU workers from different industries. The rally was addressed among others by P K Ganguly, CITU Secretary, Chandrasekhar, the State CITU

General Secretary; Vijay Mishra, the State CITU Vice President; Sat Pal Bharati, the Bathinda District CITU Secretary; Inderjeet Singh, the PCMSRU General Secretary; D P Dubey, the FMRAI General Secretary, etc.

The conference was inaugurated by P K Ganguly, who briefed about the repercussions of the NEP and the danger of amendment of the Patent Act and called for intensified struggles against it. Among others who greeted the conference were Chandrasekhar, leaders of some fraternal trade unions, and leaders of FMRAI, namely D P Dubey, Sudhir Kumar, C S Sharma, Vinode Mani, Wadhawan, etc.

The report placed by Inderjeet Singh was discussed by the delegates and adopted unanimously. The Conference adopted several resolutions on the problems faced by the pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical workers in the country and against the NEP. It gave a clarion call to march to Delhi on 27th November to participate in the North Zonal Convention organised by the FMRAI on common demands and in the rally against amendment of the Patent Act.

Inderjeet Singh was elected as the General Secretary of PCMSRU. The Conference ended with a grand cultural function.

The Writing on the Wall: It's Still Poverty, Stupid!

(We are publishing hereunder in slightly abridged form, an article written by Mohan Guruswamy, Political Commentator, published in Pioneer on 8.11.96Ed),

Given all the brouhaha about corruption in high places being unravelled almost on a daily basis it would seem that our focus is entirely now on corruption. It is because of this that the canny Mr Sitaram Kesri has pushed Dr Manmohan Singh with his clean image to a leading position in his party. He might even be projected as its Prime Minister-in-waiting. This calls for a close scrutiny of his performance as Finance Minister.

The 1991 Census confirmed that even after four and a half decades of Independence over 80 per cent of all rural workers are employed by the agricultural sector. As many as 52 per cent of all rural men and 18 per cent of all rural women are workers. Over 85 per cent of the daily income of these workers is spent on food articles. Clearly the brunt of the impact of the high rate of inflation that has been a typical characteristic of the previous decade, and which reached new heights during the Narasimha Rao period, has been borne by this section. During this period the wholesale price index for foodgrains had gone up by 51.4 per cent, cereals, by 53 per cent, pulses by 66.7 per cent, vegetables by 62.4 per cent, sugar and gur by 71.4 per cent. Thus the rate of effective inflation for this sector has been over 20 per cent as opposed to the general annual rate of inflation of 12 per cent.

The per capita income of people in this category is much below the national average of around Rs 7,000 per year. It is estimated that the farm worker on an average is employed for less than 150 days a year. Even assuming a daily wag of Rs 30, this amounts to about Rs 4,500 each year. If the wife is also working this could at best mean a family income of about Rs 9,000 per year or a per capita income of Rs 1,800 a year for a typical family of five. In reality this situation is even worse as the lower the income the larger the family size, which means not only more children but also more other dependents like aged parents. So the poor are really much worse off than the average figures would suggest. The average in a country such as ours with high income inequality is actually much higher than what actually prevails.

Surveys by the NCAER reveal that almost 59 per cent of all households accounting for 526 million people have an annual income of less than Rs 12,500. This means a monthly household income of about Rs 1,000 or about Rs 200 per head. This by any yardstick, is an abysmally low income and makes a better poverty line than the governments and generally accepted poverty line. Households with incomes between Rs 12,500 and Rs 40,000 per year account for 331 million people. Only 4.1 per cent accounting for 37 million have an income of over Rs 40,000 a year. Even in this group it would seem that a few have got it all. The NCAER has also estimated that 1.4 million Indians have an annual income in excess of Rs 5 lakh. It would seem that this is the group at whom all our economic reforms and the faculties of most of our sarkari economists

are focused upon. By the government of India's own admission about 240 million people live below its poverty line. This poverty line is really the line of destitution.

Inept handling of economy

It is not the devaluation of the rupee, or unprecedented inflation, or the widening of the trade deficit, or the phenomenal increase of the foreign debt, but the increase in the incidence of poverty since 1991 that exposes the total failure of the Narasimha Rao governments economic policies. The increase in the incidence of poverty is the end product of his governments and therefore Dr Singhs inept handling of the economic situation.

In its last year the Narasimha Rao Government resorted to false and improper methods in an attempt to claim that the incidence of poverty has declined to 19 per cent in 1993-94. Realising that the methodology used to estimate poverty was, both unreliable and unscientific, a previous government had appointed the Lakdawala Committee in September 1989 to improve the methodology. The recommendations have still not been implemented as they would show a far higher incidence of poverty. Even the Expert Group appointed by the Planning Commission during Dr Manmohan Singhs tenure as Finance Minister in its report submitted in 1993 expressed reservations on the methodology and claimed that it underestimated poverty. Recently the World Bank too has expressed similar reservations and is now not inclined to accept the governments claims.

According to an analysis by Oxfam based on a published study by Tendulkar and Jain in the first year of the Narasimha Rao era the level of rural poverty rose from 35.55 per cent to 42.06 per cent and then to 48.6 per cent in the following year. Similarly urban poverty rose from 32.43 per cent, to 33.87 per cent. The trend still continues.

The increase in poverty levels is a direct result of the dramatic increase in food prices which at the end of 1995 were about 60 per cent, above what they were in 1991. The poverty line is based on the caloric norm of 2400 per capital for rural areas and 2100 for urban areas. At the 1992-93 level this translates into a monthly per capita income of Rs 264. At present income levels it only means that non-food expenditures such as clothing, housing and fuel can only be expected to be sub-marginal, which means life for the vast majority has only become more harsh.

Since 1991 the national agenda seems to have been dominated only by words like liberalisation and globalisation. Liberalisation, instead of de-bureaucratisation and less regulations, has mostly meant easy entry and protection for MNCs. Many MNCs have been allowed to take control of their Indian affiliates by paying considerably less than the market prices for the additional shares, giving them control of already existing production facilities. Others have been guaranteed exceptionally high rates of return, sovereign guarantees, fixed rates of exchange and what not.

Today India ranks 135 in terms of the Human Development Index, even below Pakistan which continues to be a feudal and military dominated state. May be it is time we passed out signs that read, Its Still Poverty Stupid.

NATIONAL WORKSHOP OF CENTRAL PUBLIC SECTOR TRADE UNIONS ON CHARTER OF DEMANDS

CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

1. The National Workshop of the trade unions in Central Public Sector was held at Bangalore on 27th and 28th January 1997 to discuss and finalise the broad parameters for the Charter of Demands to be submitted by the trade unions for the wage negotiations now due in the Central Public Sector Undertakings.

2. The workshop was attended by 115 representatives from all the major PSUs of the country. A presidium consisting of comrades V B Cherian, H Mahadevan, R K Samant Roy, Michael B Fernandes and S Narasimha Reddy conducted the proceedings of the workshop. 22 speakers participated in the deliberations.

3. The workshop was of unanimous opinion that the forthcoming wage negotiations are bound to be very difficult because of the unfair and cut-throat competition the mounting attack on public sector as a whole stemming from the policy of liberalisation and structural adjustment continuously pursued by the Central Government.

4. Hostile attitude of the government towards public sector is evident from various concessions granted to the foreign and Indian private capital. Budgetary support to PSUs are withdrawn, banking and institutional credits are denied while favouring the monopoly capital with liberal credit and tax concessions. MNCs are favoured with reduction in custom duty. Vital sectors like Oil & Petroleum, Insurance, Defence, Telecom, Power etc which have been developed and nursed to strength in the public sector are being opened to foreign capital thereby endangering the economic sovereignty of the country.

5. In spite of total opposition by the trade union movement the government is proceeding consciously, under dictation of Fund-Bank, with their scheme of disinvestment of shares of PSUs. Some who advocate disinvestment as a means for reforming the PSU management to make it autonomous and efficient are blind to the reality that after disinvestment of 51% to 74% shares there shall be no effective existence of public sector and such enterprises shall be controlled by private sector. Perhaps Maruti Udyog is a glaring instance in point.

6. The World Bank in its report on Regional Perspective, 1995 has said, 'wage determination needs to be decentralised.... For this strategy to succeed, governments will need to impose a hard budget constraint on public enterprise...'

In addition to the above, the Fund Bank dictated policy being pursued by the government, serious attempts may be made to scuttle wage negotiations through various devices including constitution of Pay Commission as has been done for the executives of PSUs.

7. The employees of the PSUs under reference with BIFR continue to be the worst sufferers. They have been deprived of wage revision (mostly from 1.1.92) and even the enhanced rate of VDA is denied to them by the government. Anti public sector policy of the Government is the hurdle in reviving the sick PSUs. While the government is not coming forward with revival schemes, even the BIFR

sanctioned revival schemes are not implemented by the government. Above all, the PSUs are not being given a level playing field vis-a-vis the private and foreign capital, causing sickness to now viable units. This must stop forthwith. Government must ensure budgetary support for implementation of 1992 agreement.

8. The workshop called upon the trade unions in Central Public Sector irrespective of affiliations to further strengthen their unity and prepare for nationwide united struggle with firm determination to defeat any conspiracy to deny wage negotiations to the public sector workers. The workshop expressed full confidence that as in the past, the trade unions in public sector shall succeed in defeating all machinations to realise due wage revision through industry level collective bargaining.

9. At the end of protracted deliberations the workshop evolved the following agreed conclusions on various issues involved in the preparation of the Charter of Demands:

10. The settlements should be valid for a period not more than four years and should be effective from the day following the day of expiry of the previous settlement.

11. All pending conclusions of the previous settlements should be implemented.

12. pending wage revision to the PSUs under reference with BIFR should be finalised and implemented with effect from 1.1.1992.

13. Minimum wage, rate of increment and rate of VDA

A. The workshop was of the opinion that workers in public sector should strive to achieve the need-based minimum wage based on the norms laid down by the 15th Indian Labour conference held in 1957. Based on this understanding the workshop decided to demand the following minimum wage:

i) Minimum Basic Pay as on 1.1.1997 $666 >$ Rs 4,200 - 00 at AICPI 1668 (1960 = 100)

ii) Full neutralisation of cost of living upto a basic wage of Rs 10,000/- subject to minimum of Rs 2.50 per point; 90% neutralisation beyond basic pay Rs 10,000/-

The norms and basis applied for fixing the minimum basic pay should be applied in drawing the subsequent pay scales

B) Rate of annual increment should be fixed to ensure a minimum of Rs 85/-

C Full neutralisation/Dearness allowance:

The present system of VDA has some distortion particularly due incorrect interpretation and instructions issued by the DPE. This distortion should be rectified with retrospective effect.

14 Service Weightage:

To protect the wage differential for the workers who have put more years of service, we should demand service-weightage while finalising the fitment formula.

15. Retirement Age

Retirement age should be 60 years

16. Relativity in terms and service conditions:

Due to variation in benefits and concessions granted to officers and a section of workers, the relativity between

different categories of employees have been greatly disturbed, which is causing deep resentment among the deprived sections of workers. Attempt should be made to restore the relativity in wage and other terms and conditions during the forthcoming negotiations. Facilities and benefits should be similar as far as possible irrespective of status for persons drawing same level of wages/salaries.

17. Minimum Guaranteed Benefit

As a result of revision pay scales every worker should get a minimum guaranteed benefit of 25% wage increase.

18. House Rent Allowance

To match with the steep rise in house rent, which is reportedly receiving the priority attention of the Fifth Central Pay Commission also, we should demand higher percentage of HRA at the maximum of the revised pay scales. However, this should not be linked with House Rent recovery for the company's quarters provided to the employees.

19. House Building Advance

In view of the phenomenal rise in the cost of land and construction the quantum of HBA should be raised substantially. Further to encourage building of own house by the workers rate of interest of HBA should be reduced from the current rate.

20. City Compensatory Allowance

Due to abnormal rise in cost of living in the cities the CCA should be increased in terms of percentage and there should be no ceiling on the maximum amount of CCA, CCA should also be paid to employees residing in Class 'C'.

21. Conveyance Allowance/LTE

Conveyance allowance and reimbursement of local traveling expenses should be increased to neutralise the rise in cost of fuel and transport fare and it should be linked with the rise in the price/fare of fuel/transport.

22. Medical Benefits

Public sector workers covered under ESI due to recent amendment to coverage limit should be granted exemption forthwith on making application for exemption as per demand of trade unions. Further, full medical benefits should be granted to the retired employees and their dependents.

23. Provident Fund and Gratuity

We should demand PF contribution at 12% and the rate of interest should be increased to attain higher return on PF deposit.

The rate of Gratuity should be raised to one month's pay for every completed year of service. The ceiling on maximum gratuity to Rs 3.00 lakh.

24. Pension Scheme

We should demand scrapping of the DPE circular imposing restriction on the public sector management in formulating company's own Contributory Pension Scheme.

Public sectors should formulate their own Pension Scheme in consultation with the union without diverting any fund from the Contributory Provident Fund. The industry/company wise pension scheme should cover all casual, temporary, and contract workers enjoying PF facilities.

(NOTE: Details will be worked in the proposed CPSTU workshop)

25. Ceiling on Bonus

Ceilings on eligibility and payment of Bonus should be eliminated in the absence of which overwhelming majority of public sector workers are deprived of bonus. Bonus should be paid to all PSU employees including contract

workers and the minimum should be raised from existing 8.33% to 12.5%

26. Exemption Limit of Income Tax

Present exemption limit of Income Tax should be raised substantially so that the benefit of wage rise is not eaten away on account of Income Tax.

27. Health, Safety and Environment

The question of Health, Safety and Environment is attaining crucial importance and need priority attention. Trade unions in PSUs should suitably deal with these issues in their Charter of Demands according to the obtaining situation in their respective industries.

28. Other Allowances

Allowances vary from industry to industry and even region to region depending on the nature of industry, production process, technology and also location. Therefore, instead of identifying the specific allowances to be demanded by the trade unions it is recommended that at least 25% rise in the existing allowances should be demanded to be effective from the date of effect of the settlements.

29. Emphasis on More social Benefits

In the ensuing negotiations we should try to achieve higher Social Benefits like better housing facilities, welfare measures, canteen facilities, subsidised supply of essential commodities in cooperative stores/fair price shops, social security measures in order to attain better quality of life of the workers. Fuel subsidy to employees be paid at the rate of cost of one LPG cylinder per month.

30. Demands of the contract workers which comes within the frame work of public sector managements as a principal employer should be raised by the trade unions in their Charter of Demands. While demanding rise in wage and fringe benefits, we should also demand absorption of contract labour in permanent and perennial nature of jobs. All statutory benefits, including PF Act, Gratuity Act, Bonus Act and payment under EDLI Scheme should be extended to them.

31. WOMEN WORKERS' ISSUES

The issues and problems specific to women workers should be incorporated in the Charter of demands with due importance. Some of such issues are employment, separate Rest Rooms, Creche facility, Uniform, Messing Allowance to Nurses, LTC and Housing benefits; the maternity benefit under the existing law be improved.

32. WORKING DAYS/HOURS

We should demand wherever possible introduction of five days/40 hours a week, working week to be finalised bilaterally taking into consideration all the aspects of production and productivity, with a view to effectively savings in overheads etc.

33. RECOGNITION OF TRADE UNIONS

As per the commitment in CMP the UF Government must introduce recognition of trade unions through secret ballot without any further delay.

34. IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE

We should suggest positive measures to ensure full utilization of capacity of Public Sector units. Elimination of wasteful expenditure, end of corruption and malpractice etc., through Joint Vigilance Committee etc., should be proposed by the Trade Unions in the Charter of Demand, so that, our commitment to improve production and produc-

tivity in Public Sector units is stated in clear-cut manner.

A meaningful and purposeful effective scheme for Workers' participation in management at all levels including Board Level should be mutually drawn up and implemented.

35. AGAINST PRIVATISATION AND CLOSURES

Our demands should include our opposition to privatisation and closure of public sector units. This is important to stress as a matter of policy for us.

36. COMMUNITY SERVICES

There are several 'Bastees' around Public Sector townships in which thousands of workers are living and the conditions are extremely bad. It is necessary that the Trade Union movement should ensure in the Charter of Demands should mention the problems of these 'Bastees'.

37. RESERVATION OF JOBS

We should demand that all the quota of SC and ST & OBC, Physically Handicapped and Ex-servicemen should be filled up by the Public Sector Managements.

38. EMPLOYMENT TO DEPENDENTS OF DECEASED EMPLOYEES

The dependents of deceased employees be given employment in the concerned PSU on priority basis.

39. OTHER ISSUES

There are other issues which are not stated here. Every Public Sector undertaking has special problems. The unions should be asked to formulate them and include in their charter of demands.

40. APPEAL TO OTHER TRADE UNIONS

The workshop decided to appeal to the Trade Unions who could not participate in this Workshop to support the conclusions of this Workshop so that a country-wide unity is built up all over the country. It is only by a powerful nation-wide unity of the entire working class in public sector which can result in achieving this Charter of demands.

41. MECHANISM TO CO-ORDINATE THE WAGE NEGOTIATIONS

The Workshop recommends that there should be some machinery to ensure information sharing and co-ordination during the forthcoming wage negotiations. This would help Unions immensely in dealing with the issues arising out of Charter of demands.

42. SICK UNITS

The last but not the least important issue is that the entire work force in all public sector units must rise as a single entity for the cause of those employees in sick public sector industries, who have little strength to fight their causes themselves. The Charter of Demands must give precedence to their wage rise, DA rate revision and issues related to the revival over all other demands. In the present economic scenario more and more PSUs are likely to become sick and, thus, the entire exercise of fresh wage negotiation will

be of no relevance should the workers fail to build up a strong defence against sickness.

43. THANKS GIVING TO JOINT ACTION FRONT (J.A.F.)

The Workshop thanked the Joint Action Front and Public Sector workers of Bangalore especially from BEL for hosting the workshop and making the programme a grand success.

44. CONDOLENCE

The National Workshop at the commencement of the session, strongly condemned the ghastly murder of the trade union leader, Dr. Datta Samant and expressed heartfelt condolence of delegates.

45. ALL INDIA STRIKE ON 2ND APRIL 1997

The National Workshop appealed to all Central Public Sector employees to stand unitedly and make the All India strike on 2nd April 1997 a magnificent success. □

CITU Union Wins Works Committee Election

All the 12 candidates set up by the Port & Dock Workers Union (affiliated to CITU) has won the election to the Works Committee, un-opposed, in the Andaman Labour Force under the Port Management Board, A&N Islands, recently. The INTUC union functioning in the Andaman Labour Force even could not put up their candidates, as they could not even mobilise 48 persons, as candidates, proposers and to support, out of a total strength of more than 400. INTUC union had been in control of the Works Committee in the Andaman Labour Force since last several years and they were being utilised by the Management of the Port Management Board for their vested interests at the cost of the workers. The Port Management Board which is controlling the Andaman Labour Force, has been neglecting the demands of the workers since last several years. The Port & Dock Workers Union (CITU, was revived during 1996 and the Union started taking up most of the long-pending demands, besides day-to-day problems, of the workers with the authorities and mobilised the entire workforce in the movement launched by the Union. The victory in the Works Committee Election, by the CITU Union, will boost the morale of the workers which will help the Union to organise more and more agitations in support of the demands of the workers in the coming days. B Chandrachoodan, All India Working Committee Member of the CITU and T Jagannath, Ex-Member of Pradesh Council, are the President and General Secretary respectively of the CITU union. □