

## Presidential Address

General Council Meeting, Howrah, August 1981

Comrades,

I pay my homage to our martyrs, to those who in recent struggles have laid their lives for the working class. Some of our colleagues and comrades are no longer with us. We cherish their memory and remember their devotion to the common cause. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Bhupesh Gupta—outstanding parliamentarian and leader of the CPI. His death is a loss to the left forces of India. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Bal Dandvate—President of our sister organisation HMS. He was an ardent advocate of trade union unity and his passing away is a great loss to our common struggle for unity. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Dinesh Mazumdar and Com P.C. Joshi.

Comrades, a number of important developments have taken place since we met last in Cannanore. Among them the most outstanding are the successful struggle of the Left Front Government against Congress(I) attempts to destabilise them and the proclamation of the notorious Essential Services Ordinance. These contradictory developments are part of the same political reality—the intense struggle between the authoritarian and democratic forces that dominates the political and economic scene.

The continued existence of the three Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala is itself a victory of the democratic forces because it announces the failure of the ruling party to isolate them from the people. This victory is enhanced by the three big

defeats inflicted on a desperate Congress(I) in West Bengal.

The working class and the people of West Bengal inflicted an ignominious defeat on the Congress(I) party and its followers from the underworld when the 2nd April bandh flopped and its sponsors resorted to raw violence to intimidate the people. The working class kept the wheels of industry running. Praiseworthy courageous and inspiring was the role of our tramway and state transport workers who rebuffed the bandh arsonists by running the trams and buses. We all must honour the memory of the workers who sacrificed their lives in this grim struggle. The CITU raises its banner in honour of our proletarian heroes who knew that they were fighting a battle on behalf of the people, for democracy. The Congress(I) frightened by the indignation of the people over its black deeds on 3rd April ran away from the Municipal elections and got its second defeat. It was again routed in the byelections to the Parliament and Assembly. These victories under the leadership of the left forces headed by the CPI(M) stand in sharp contrast to the defeat of the opposition parties in neighbouring states. Low polling, rigging, malpractices no doubt played their role in those Congress(I) successes. Yet it cannot be denied that the opposition parties neither presented a united electoral opposition nor were able to inspire the confidence of the people with an alternative policy in the interest of the people.

These developments show that the left forces aided by the working class and the people have played an outstanding role in rebuffing the advance of the authoritarian forces and served the cause of democracy in India.

Comrades, we cannot rest on our laurels. The Central Government intends to replace the West Bengal Governor by a nominee of its heart to relaunch an attack for destabilisation. A desperate Government cannot be credited with any norms of behaviour.

#### **Drive Towards Authoritarian Rule**

The Central Government elated by its electoral victory in recent bye-elections in other States has launched its counter offensive in the shape of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance.

The Ordinance carries forward the attack against fundamental rights initiated by the NSA. The provision for preventive detention is now accompanied by conviction and imprisonment for legitimate economic activities. The right to organise is now attacked openly. Emergency is now being introduced piecemeal to lull the

vigilance of the people.

The attacks on the judiciary, preparations for a Presidential form of Government, the NSA and now the prohibition of strikes—these are the successive steps of Indira Gandhi towards the installation of a full authoritarian rule.

This is an assault which demands the united resistance of all trade union organisations and political parties.

I extend my warm greetings to the Chief Ministers of the three Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura for their forthright condemnation of this monstrosity of a legislation. The West Bengal Government has earned the applause and approbation of the entire working class by demanding the withdrawal of the Ordinance.

### What The Ordinance Contains?

Under the Ordinance the Central Government is authorised to prohibit strikes in any essential service. The prohibition may initially be in force for six months, but it may be extended by another six months.

“Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure all offences under this Ordinance shall be tried in a summary way by any Metropolitan Magistrate.”

Police officer here means any policeman. And Summary trial means a police dominated trial with guarantee of conviction. The convicted person can be safely locked up for two years because he has no right of appeal.

Comrades, the introduction of summary trial in trade union disputes constitutes a totalitarian measure. Even the British regime never thought of putting such a measure on the statute book to curb strikes. The Congress(I) Government is outdoing the British and has introduced a measure which has no precedents in our country.

The definition of strike is now made flexible to suit the plans for increased exploitation of workers and increased workload. Strike under the ordinance includes “refusal to work overtime when such work is necessary for the maintenance of any essential service.” It also includes “any other conduct which is likely to result in, or results in cessation or substantial retardation of work in any essential service.” Such are the arbitrary restrictive and prohibitive provisions of the ordinance, placing the workers and their leaders at the mercy of police officials and summary courts.

The essential services under the Ordinance include Postal, Tele-

graphs and Telephones, Railways and other transport Services by land and water loading and unloading at ports, services connected with operation and maintenance of aerodromes, service connected with the safety of employees of industry in Scheduled Industries, services connected with purchase supply storage and distribution of foodgrains by Government Undertakings, services connected with public conservancy system, hospitals etc., in union territory; services connected with banking, oilfield, refinery, mint, Security press etc. It also includes any other service connected with matters with respect to which Parliament has the right to make laws and which the Central Government being of opinion that the strikes there in would prejudicially affect the maintenance of any public utility service....

Such is the wide scope of essential service. It includes almost every industrial activity, every industrial concern and the Government has arrogated to itself powers to ban and prohibit strikes wherever it chooses to do so.

This monstrosity of a legislation has met with universal condemnation. Only the big capitalists and the Congress(I) sychophants nurtured and trained in treachery to the people have welcomed it. This widespread attack on the trade union movement, on the workers' basic right to fight against exploitation, is nothing but declaration of the hated emergency in relation to labour. What has occasioned it? It cannot be said that last year was a year full of strikes. On the other hand in 1980 the strike figure had gone down with Government spokesmen expressing satisfaction over industrial relations and peace. The measure is not due to "irresponsible wild cat strikes". What is its urgency for the ruling party then?

#### **Reasons for This Monstrous Attack**

The Congress(I) Government in face of the urgent need to pass on the burdens of inflation and economic crisis to the working class, has already announced its policy of wage-freeze in the Sixth Five Year plan document. But this is not sufficient. It is in need of direct attack on the existing wages. It has therefore started resiling from earlier agreements the agreement with the Loco workers was broken and they were forced to go on strike. The agreements with the LIC employees was broken and the Supreme Court has to intervene. The Bangalore strike, the Loco strike met with severe repression. Mr. Stephen the Communication Minister had gone back on his word promising certain concessions to the P&T work-

ers. And further with the rise in the prices, the cost of living index rises, and raises the question of dearness allowance. The wage bill of the Government goes on mounting and Government wants to go back on the agreed rate of D.A. There are also plans to start massive retrenchment in many industries—coal, Government departments etc. and other industries.

A direct attack on the wages, on D.A. on the existing living standards and jobs is being planned. But the Government knows that it has to deal with organised workers and employees who are bound to resist such attack.

The ordinance is proclaimed to crush their legitimate agitation and give the Government and the private employers the right to impose arbitrary working conditions of the workers. The Ordinance has the same objective as the recent LIC legislation which puts an end to all collective bargaining.

The Ordinance places the entire trade union movement at the mercy of the policy; makes workers' struggle a law and order question and makes it a criminal offence to fight for decent wages, resist erosion of wage through Government Policies.

### **Resist This Onslaught**

All trade union centres have condemned it. The entire trade Union movement should start a campaign for unitedly resisting it and compelling the Government to withdraw it. All political parties worth their salt must fight this black legislation on the floor of the Parliament and their fight should be supported from outside by huge mass mobilisation.

It is time that all trade union centres and federations unitedly appeal to the international trade union centres, to the WFTU and others to raise their voice in protest against this suppression of workers' rights.

The Ordinance shows the utter desperation of the Indira Government in dealing with the economic situation, its bizarre failure to control inflation and prices. It is bound to be followed by attacks on the unorganised sector. The Government's resistance to remunerative prices for the peasants led to widespread agitation leading to police firings and loss of life. The food for work programme which gave some partial relief to a small section in the rural areas is at standstill and the public distribution system is threatened with collapse. In this back ground the World Bank is demanding withdrawal of food subsidies. Thus the ground is ready to attack all

vulnerable sections to transfer the burdens of inflation and high prices to their shoulders. This will be accompanied by further draconian measures to curtail civil liberties and democratic rights. It is interesting to note that the present Ordinance does not pretend that the arbitrary powers of arrest are given to higher officials. Usually this is a pretence in every ordinance which arms only officers of certain ranks with such power. Under the present measure any police constable, any one who can be legally described as a police officer can drag any worker or trade union leader for a summary trial and quickly despatch him to the prison.

#### **Facade of Impartiality Torn to Pieces**

Also generally every such measure, to show its impartiality, bans lock-outs along with strikes. But this blessed Ordinance forgets to exercise this show of impartiality. And the Prime Minister without batting an eyelash utters a plain untruth when she says that lock outs are prohibited under the Ordinance.

Some one in the legal ministry will pay for this loss of image, for failure to provide a facade of "impartiality."

Comrades, the type of scurrilous propaganda unleashed to justify the Ordinance can be seen from the following from the Home Ministry's note "The industrial climate of the country continues to be characterised by a mainly political trade union movement, with intense intra-union rivalries at local levels, at times cutting across trade union loyalties and discipline." Once again the fictitious excuse of trade union rivalries is resurrected and that too at a time when all the Central Trade Union Organisations and Federations stand united to resist Government's anti-labour policies and the Essential Services Ordinance. And again the bankrupt argument about political motivation. The Home Ministry does not know that there is double digit inflation in the country, that the workers cost of living index is rising every month. It seems to accept the Finance Minister's claim that inflation is under control. Strikes therefore are due to the victimisation of workers by political parties. The Home Ministry's note says further "Utter absence and disregard of trade union norms and industrial action by the labour and at times by the employees, militates against the development of normal relationship. Such a situation which generates climate of distrust and indiscipline takes a heavy toll of the industrial production." Nothing can be farther from truth than this false accusation against labour and the trade union movement. Did the Govern-

ment call a tripartite conference to consider this accusation of inter union rivalries and labour indiscipline? They dared not because they knew the accusation would be torn to pieces.

The Home Ministry's note claims that the repression directed against the Loco, LIC and Public Sector workers has paid dividends. The note says "the strict handling of the strikes by workers of public undertakings, loco men and the LIC employees has led to a definite feeling in the minds of the Central trade union organisations that the Government insisted on handling the labour situation in a firm manner." Therefore, be still more firm with the workers' discontent.

The strike resistance of the working class had of course started increasing in recent months from the low level of 1980. What did the Home Ministry expect with the consumer price index for industrial workers rising by 12.6 per cent in 1980-81? By April 1981 this manipulated index was 427 compared with 373 in 1979-80. Besides people had to purchase at fantastic prices in the black market. The strike wave was bound to accentuate. But instead of controlling the inflation the Government bars working class resistance to inflation.

### Shielding Corrupt and Inefficient Management

It is at the same time clear that the strike resistance is as yet far below what it was in 1978 or 1979. The number of strikes fell from 2,117 in 1978 to 1,338 in 1979 to 899 in 1980. For 1981 upto March the figure was 255.

The Home Ministry officials, it is obvious, do not study the Economic Survey of the Government of India. Otherwise they would have known the havoc done to production by management in private and public sector alike. Electricity generation is vital to industrial production. And yet it is found that the capacity utilised fell from 55.3 per cent in 1976-77 to 45.4 per cent in 1979-80. The Economic Survey, though it casually mentions labour in this connection places the blame mainly on the inefficient and corrupt management.

Commenting on this fall in utilised capacity the Survey says, "Management shortcomings are reflected in inadequate preventive maintenances and frequent failure to follow schedules of maintenance of major issues of equipment such as boilers, turbines, and generators eventually resulting in unplanned outages. Lack of industrial discipline and also inadequate training of labour skills

aggravate these conditions. There are also some complaints relating to the quality of equipment supplied especially the accessory equipment and instrumentation, the latter being particularly important for maintaining plant operations. Inadequate availability of spares adds to the period of time taken for repairs and maintenance. Finally complaints about the quality of coal have risen significantly in recent years. The ash content has been increasing and the coal supplied also contained abrasives. Since the thermal plant equipment is designed for better or different specifications, the steady deterioration, variation in coal quality has contributed significantly to lowering their performance." One may only add that the coal industry is nationalised industry. Comrades, this is how class propaganda is carried on and now the Home Ministry under Shri Zail Singh does not shrink from suppressing truth.

#### **Mounting Attacks**

The fact is that the Indira Government has been planning to launch several attacks against the workers' living standards, with a view to wrest away the gains they had secured earlier. This was to be preceded by a policy of wage freeze.

In pursuance of this policy, the Finance department of the Indira Government has been pressing the various ministries to go back on concessions given in negotiations.

Instead of appreciating settlement between the Central Trade Unions and coal authority, the Finance Ministry castigates the latter for making concessions regarding casual leave, leave travel concessions, Sunday wages and carry forward of casual leave for four days in 1980-81, and it asks the authority to submit all future proposals for concessions to the Bureau of Public Enterprises.

The same department has castigated the Communication Ministry for agreeing to certain concessions like two promotions to the P&T workers and the Minister has been forced to eat his words.

Besides there is an attempt to arbitrarily force Rs. 1.30 per point of rise in consumers cost of living index.

Immediately the attack on the working class manifests itself through the determined efforts of the employers and the Government to erode and eliminate the concept of bonus as deferred wage. This is a big vantage point won by the workers which is now directly or indirectly being assailed. It is being eroded by making new contingents agree to bonus linked with productivity. The first

breach was made when the leaders of National Federation of Indian Railway Workers and others agreed to bonus linked with productivity. This was followed by a number of Central Government Employees' organisations falling in the trap.

The second prong of attack is on attempt to put a ceiling on income for those entitled to bonus. The third prong is attack on D.A.—standardisation at an arbitrary rate and ceiling on the amount, and denial of D.A. to those earning above a certain limit. Now after ordinance the Compulsory Deposit Scheme for D.A., will be soon forthcoming. The fourth is a general opposition to any wage increase. To achieve these aims one agreement after another is broken by the Government.

### **Sixth Five Year Plan**

These attacks on workers' wages are enshrined in the wages and incomes policy of the Sixth Five Year Plan. The Planners do not want to reduce the disparity of incomes between the capitalists and the workers, between the big landlords and the peasants. They want to leave the incomes of the monopolists and millionaires intact.

But they want to reduce the disparity of wages between workers and worker by reducing the wages of those who earn better. Besides they demand that no rise in wages should be sanctioned unless a worker produces more—rise in wages should be linked with productivity. Everyone knows that our present wage is low in proportion to our productivity and far below our needs. But the planners demand unless you accept more exploitation you should not get a higher wage. Besides even if a worker produces more he will not be entitled to a rise for a long time and also till the entire economy shows higher productivity. This is a policy of wage-freeze while demanding greater production. Comrades, these concerted attacks have to be met by growing unity on our part and that is what the CITU is calling for. These onslaughts will continue because the capitalist-landlord economy of our country is in crisis, with everything in disorder. The bourgeois-landlord Government wants to pass on the burden of the crisis to the common man—the working class and is therefore preparing for further attacks accompanied by repression.

### **Class Bias of The Planners**

The new Sixth Five Year Plan advances the interests of the capitalist-landlord classes at the expense of the masses and embarks on

a big attack on the incomes and living conditions of the mass of our people.

While offering nothing to the peasants—neither land nor remunerative prices for his produce, while making some noise about ameliorating the conditions of the agricultural workers and directing attacks against the wages and salaries of workers and employees, the Plan in the name of new targets of production demands heavy taxation load on the people. Under it inflation and high prices will increase because it provides for a deficit financing of Rs. 5,000 crores. This figure will be doubled by the end of the plan period leading to mounting increase in prices.

The Plan calls for additional resources mobilisation of Rs. 21,302 crores. Of these Rs. 5,000 crores will come through additional taxation—mainly indirect taxation borne by the common man.

#### **Attempts to Foist Wage Boards**

To enforce this policy the Government further proposes to reintroduce the discredited system of wage-board. The Labour Minister, Mr. Narain Dutt Tewari, made this announcement in May addressing the annual session of the All India Organisation of Employers. He said "There is a view that the system of Wage-Board, which provides a machinery of collective bargaining in an orderly fashion under the aegis of an umpire, should be raised to evolve the wage structure for each industry on a scientific and rational basis. Our experience of the wage boards set up in the past has not been encouraging. Even so, Government wish to give another trial to the system. It is, therefore, proposed to bring forward a legislation to enable the Government to set up wage boards on a statutory footing investing them with necessary powers and authority."

The wage-boards were discarded by the trade union movement because they proved to be time-consuming and delaying machinery. They took ten years to finalise their recommendations in some disputes. Under the Wage-board the workers are at the mercy of the bogus balance sheets submitted by the employers, which the boards consider to be reliable. There is thus hardly any chance to get a favourable verdict for the workers. And the Government will always have the last word if recommendations go in favour of the workers. This discredited machinery for protracting disputes and tiring out the workers is being revived along with prohibition of strikes.

Comrades will you believe that an Industrial Tribunal a near

cousin of the Wage Board took twenty years to give its verdict? Let me quote from the IPA dated 20th June 1981 "A classic case of 'Justice delayed is justice denied' is that of the 202 workmen of Punjab worsted spinning Mills, Chherta whose services were terminated on December 3, 1960 and the Industrial Tribunal, Punjab was given an award in their case—published in Punjab.... Government Gazette dated May 29, 1981—In these 20 years 5 workmen have died, eighty one were untraceable, young boys have become old and old ones are on the verge of death.

### **Fight For Trade Union Unity**

The CITU has been working for reviving trade union unity for the last year and a half. It took some time for other organisations to get out of the slough of despondency and we could not register much progress for some time. The Bangalore strike and the call for March 11 action which was widely responded to by the workers was the fruit of our efforts to forge unity.

Consultations on other policy matters were going on between the several central organisations. They related to the question of recognition of unions-verification and ballot, ILO representation and common stand in industrial negotiations in Coal, Steel etc.

The June Convention in Bombay was a culmination of this process of coming together and its call has to be carried forward. All our unions must seriously prepare for the March to Parliament and for one day strike of all Industries.

Comrades, we must once more renew our call for a confederation of all central trade unions and Federations acting on the basis of agreed decisions. Nothing short of close association and co-ordination of all trade union centres will put the full strength of the organised working class against the repression machinery of the ruling party- of the bourgeois-landlord government.

### **Brutal Exploitation of Labour**

Comrades, with the collapse of the administration in the greater part of India, with the economy in deep throes of crisis is it surprising that all labour laws have collapsed or are being defied? Lakhs of bonded labourers are mercilessly exploited in brick kilns and farms; contract labour, a euphemism for bonded labour in many cases, continues to increase in number despite official declaration about abolition of such labour.

There is no data on the number of these workers employed by the private sector or the state governments. The number employed by

the Central employing ministries is 3.77 lakhs. Railways employ 2.37 lakhs. P&T 70,000, Ministry of works and Housing 14,000, Defence 14,000 and Bureau of Public Enterprises 36,000.

This section of the working class is most brutally exploited by central government agencies and the trade union movement must uphold their cause and release them from the bonded conditions.

Comrades, safety legislation has collapsed. Welfare measures have cracked. The Employees Provident Fund is being swallowed by employers but the government refuses to take drastic measures.

The EPF Review Committee appointed by the Government found that total arrears of exempted and unexempted establishments has reached Rs. 57.42 crores. And this, when the Committee has not been able to assess the total arrears because the accounts of EPF organisation were drawn on a cash basis while the amount involved in enquiries both pending and in progress had not been assessed.

#### **Attack on Freedom of Association**

The Government of India has been violating the ILO conventions one after another. To earn the certificate of progressism abroad it signs conventions which it takes no time in breaking. It attacks freedom of organisation. It indulges in unfair labour practices when it itself victimises office bearers of trade unions or permits private employers to do it. No wonder the Labour Minister Tiwari asked freedom to repudiate ILO conventions recently. He made this plea on behalf of under-developed countries.

#### **Economic Crisis**

These developments are part of the grim economic situation that dominates that scene today. Uncontrolled inflation, erosion of people's living standards through high prices, increased load of taxation, restricted market, incapacity to use industrial capacity, and mounting unemployment character the crisis. The way out for the ruling party is based on intense exploitation of the peasantry by denying it a remunerative price for its produce and by a general assault on the earnings of all sections—workers, employees, agricultural workers etc.

Deficit financing of the Government has exceeded by more than hundred per cent the budgeted provision. After the budget the country has seen at least two spurts of taxation and increase in prices of petrol, diesel, fertilisers—the latest increase netting more than Rs. 1,000 crores from the consumers. No wonder the consumer

price index number rose from 373 in March 1980 to 408 in December 1980 and to 433 in May 1981. The sufferings imposed on our people by the unscrupulous rise in price are beyond description. The working class and employees alike, are finding it impossible to meet their daily needs. The rocketing prices of necessities of life like oil, vegetables, milk, the non availability of foodgrains in ration shops have all reduced their living standards to a farce. Add to this the prohibitive cost of medicine geared up by foreign multinationals who are allowed by the Congress(I) government to play with our peoples' lives, and the black market price and captitation fees people have to pay for seeking admission into colleges and universities—and the cup of bitterness is full.

If this is the position of those who have regular jobs and who hold them in organised industry, what can one say about the lakhs in cities who have no regular jobs, who are employed in unorganised industry unregulated by any law. The organised working class, may I say, is callous to the conditions of outright misery imposed on this section. Its demands are hardly taken by our unions. And but for this callous and indifference the Antulay Government of Maharashtra would have dared launch its illegal and inhuman ejection of "pavement dwellers" in Bombay.

And finally comrades the inflation and high prices have brought about the ruination of the small peasant and agricultural worker. The farmer is doubly ruined. He is denied remunerative price for his produce and he has to pay rising prices for what he has to purchase.

The question of high prices, of fight against inflation, has become an acute problem for the entire people. It is proper that the CITU and the Bombay Convention have recognised this and in their fight against high prices have raised the demands of the entire people including the demand for remunerative price for the peasantry, no rise in issue price to the consumer. The fight against high prices arising out of the crisis cannot be confined to fight over the cost of living indices and rates of D.A.

### **Crisis In Industry**

Comrades, I have already referred to the inability under the capitalist path to utilise full industrial capacity.

According to the Sixth Plan document integrated steel plants were able to utilise only 69.2 per cent of their capacity in 1979-80; the aluminium industry 58.2 per cent; fertilizers (N) stabilised plants

75.6 per cent; newsprint 68.2 per cent and so on. Commenting on this the Sixth Plan document observes "As is evident from the table recent trends in capacity utilisation in several industries are discouraging. This is also true for agriculture, the irrigation potential which has been created is not fully utilised. Levels of yield per acre for many parts of the country are far below what can be attained with known technology".

In some cases there may be deliberate suppression of capacity to peg up prices. In some cases understatement of production by private producers to be able to sell clandestinely in a seller's market.

The basic cause is the economic crisis and inability to use the production capacity with 'profit'. Naturally industrial sickness grows.

According to the Reserve Bank of India at the end of June 1979 there were 345 large sick industries units in which bank credit amounting to Rs. 1,011.2 crores was locked up. This exceeds the value of the total investment in the Public Sector under Heavy Industry. According to returns received by the RBI from Commercial Banks the number of sick units in small sector was as high as 20,326 involving bank finance of Rs. 231 crores. During the calendar year 1980 four industrial undertakings had to be taken over. Industrial sickness involving both large and small-scale industries is a matter of serious concern. This is explicitly stated in the Industrial Policy Statement made by the Government in July 1980, which also took note of the mismanagement sickness". (Economic Survey 1980-81)

The sickness which locks hundreds of scores of rupees cost tens of thousands of workers their jobs, wages and inflicts untold misery on thousands of working class families.

Figures for unutilised capacity in 1980-81 are not available. But the situation does not seem to have very much improved judging by the index of industrial production of 1980-81. It was 153.9 last year compared with 148.6 in 1979-80 an increase of 4.4 per cent, the cost of this increase itself has been too high for the people.

Comrades, the Economic Survey and the Finance Minister promised pick up in the economy basing themselves on the figures of consents for capital issues.

The consents for capital issues which decreased from Rs. 417.63 crores in 1978-79 to Rs. 378.63 crores in 1979-80 picked up during

the first two quarters of 1980-81. The amount of consents for capital issues more than doubled in three quarters of 1980-81 as compared to the corresponding period of 1979-80.

### Concessions to Multinationals

However the Survey failed to note that this widened record foreign collaboration agreements. The total number of collaboration approvals during the year reached a new record of 596, surpassing the previous peak of 403 in 1961. Foreign collaboration approvals as well those involving foreign capital participation in 1980, doubled as compared with those in 1979. As in the previous year, the majority of collaboration approvals was with three countries, namely FRG, USA and U.K. (Commerce 11th April.)

This spurt was perhaps due to the various concessions offered to multinationals and foreign capital in recent Government decisions.

This was done at a time when the multinationals were defying governments' directives regarding dilution of equity. The drug and other multinationals have protested the requirements to reduce their equity share to 40%. Their protest seems to have earned them the freedom to violate FERA Regulations and maintain 74% holdings under the plea that they are contributing advanced technology or that they are exporting large part of their product. They are so powerful that neither the Janata Government nor the Indira Government dare implement the recommendations of the Hathi Committee to nationalise the drug multinationals. The increased foreign collaboration and investment, the concessions made to them are not unconnected with the World Bank pressure to make more use of private foreign sources if Bank aid was to continue.

This reveals another aspect of the crisis-ridden economy, its increasing need for private foreign capital which intensifies all the elements of the crisis.

Comrades, our trade union movement has not properly understood the danger arising from the increased penetration of multinationals in our economy. They come to dominate and subjugate our country. To start with they demand favourable conditions for exploitation—withdrawal of concessions, of welfare measures, of trade union freedom and finally repression.

The duty and privilege to defend the country's economic independence along with our livelihood rests on the shoulders of the workers. We must make fight against multinationals a part of our

daily struggle rousing the working class to the portending danger. We must consistently resist all concessions to the foreign exploiters and along with other organisations demand nationalisation of multinationals. It is heartening to note that Bombay Convention expressed complete unanimity of opinion on this vital issue.

### **Dependence on Foreign Aid**

Comrades, the crisis and dilapidated condition of the economy have led to greater and greater borrowing by the Government from the World Bank.

Successive plans have relied on larger amounts of foreign aid. They also reveal that a greater part of new aid is spent on repayments. In 1976-77 out of a gross disbursement of Rs. 1,599 crores, debt servicing absorbed Rs. 755 crores, leaving net external assistance of Rs. 844 crores. In 1977-78 total gross disbursement was Rs. 1,290 crores and debt servicing amount to Rs. 821 crores. In 1978-79 the corresponding figures were Rs. 1,266 crores and Rs. 882 crores, in 1980-81 they were 2,341 crores and Rs. 882 crores.

The Sixth Five Year Plan document contemplates net external assistance of Rs. 10,000 crores which means the gross 'aid' may amount to Rs. 15,000 crores to Rs. 20,000 crores.

Comrades, this is a dangerous situation which may end in mortgaging the resources of the country i.e. our labour to pay the foreign charges. Already export orientation means enforced exports to creditor and other countries to earn sufficient foreign exchange to pay off the debts. This also means exporting at dictated prices by some of our creditors.

The Government is now seeking a big loan from the IMF to meet the economic situation. The loan will not be granted without stringent conditions. We know that the fund imposed rigorous conditions on Great Britain when the Conservative Government approached for a loan. The result is now seen in widespread unemployment cut down in welfare measures and widespread riots.

We should not be surprised if the Essential Services Ordinance is a propitiatory measure to secure the favours of the IMF, in anticipation of demand it is likely to make or the pursuance of what it has already demanded. It is no doubt an assurance to the multinationals that Indian climate will be healthy for their profit-making.

Protesting against these developments we must demand an immediate moratorium on foreign debt payments. We should de-

mand reliance on our own resources mobilised through nationalisation of all foreign and Indian monopolies. In this respect the Socialist countries have proved to be reliable friends and their help has been extremely valuable to us.

### **Bankrupt Path of Capitalist Development**

Comrades, there is no relief from this crisis imposed misery of the capitalist path. According to the Government's Sixth Five Year Plan document, there will be no less than 215 million of our people living below the poverty line i.e. 30 per cent of the population—at the end of the plan period. This is supposed to be achieved by expenditure of thousands of crores of rupees to eradicate poverty. In reality the percentage of people living below poverty line will not be reduced from the present 48 per cent. On the contrary it is going to increase.

I have already mentioned rising unemployment as a manifestation of the crisis. Every successful Five Year Plan has added to the number unemployed. The backlog was 5.3 million at the end of the First plan; it was 7.1 million at the end of the 2nd plan; it stood at 9.6 million at the end of the Fourth and 22.1 million at the end of the Fifth Plan.

The official figures however understate the real extent of unemployment.

In the next five years there will be 32 million new entrants into the labour market and the planners claim to find jobs for 30 million, still leaving a backlog of 24.2 million.

The claim to find 30 million new jobs is a fantastic claim, since it is based on remedies and Schemes which stand exposed during the last three decades. The Planning Commission observes; "The major employment generation activities are to be found in agriculture, rural development, village and small-scale industries, construction, public administration and other services". i.e. mostly in industries with low pay and sweated labour.

Organised industries can give employment only to a small number. "The increase (in employment in organised sector) from year to year has been around 0.8 million. Even if it is found that the future increase in employment in the organised sector is wholly taken by the educated person alone we find that there is not enough room for educated persons unless they are diverted into self-employment "...The lure of self-employment in the present condition of the economy is nothing but a fraud on the millions waiting for

jobs.

### **On to The Slums**

The planners observe: "of the total urban population nearly a fifth is estimated to constitute the slum population. In 1985 the magnitude of such population needing housing accommodation is estimated to be about 37 million." For these the capitalist path-planners will provide 21 lakh houses, the rest being left to the private sector, i.e. to the slums.

Equally bizarre is the achievement of capitalist path in relation to rural housing. "It is estimated that the number of eligible families needing housing assistance would be around 14.5 million families by March 1985. Of these 7.7 million families have already been allotted house-sites.... of the families who have been provided house-sites only about 0.56 million families have been given construction houses."

### **Fight Against Unemployment**

This situation once again calls on the organised trade union movement to take up the fight against unemployment seriously and demand relief for the unemployed. Let it be remembered that there is very little chance for the sons and daughters of workers on job to find permanent jobs in the near future. Besides the danger of the mass of unemployed will be definitely used by the bourgeois-landlord government against the workers. The question of unemployment cannot be sloved without nationalising big industry which means a serious economic and political battle for power. In reality only under socialism unemployment will finally disappear. The movement has to prepare itself for this big battle.

In the meanwhile it must demand the right to work to be enshrined as a fundamental right and pending it adequate relief to the unemployed. Let it be remembered that unless we fight a major part of our youth will have not jobs and will be forced to live in slums.

Recently it was reported in the Press that the Labour Ministry of the Government of India is strongly opposed to payment of allowance to the unemployed. This means it does not approve of the schemes in operation in West Bengal and Kerala. One of the grounds of opposition is that allowances to registered unemployed will mean discrimination against those who are unregistered? Can you beat this reasoning? It is not known whether the Labour Ministry intends to go to the Supreme Court against the West

Bengal Government for this discriminatory practice and assert the equal right of all to starve outright.

### **Build up Worker-Peasant-Agricultural Labour Alliance**

Comrades during these years the peasants and agricultural workers have been the worst victims of the economic crisis and official policies. Exploited on all sides they are being driven to destitution. They have borne the main brunt of the burdens of the crisis because they were unorganised. But now the situation has changed.

In recent months several sections—students, teachers, professional have fought various battles. The battles against rise in bus fares in Punjab and other States have been widespread, with mass participation of students. But the most outstanding feature of recent agitation in the country is of the peasant masses in the battle arena. They fought in Karnataka and got bullets. They fought in Maharashtra and got bullets and jails. They fought in Andhra and Punjab and were again repressed. But the movement went on. It forced the Congress(I) Governments to make several concessions.

The Kisan Morcha of 26th March in which the CITU participated was a visible demonstration of Kisan awakening and fraternity between the working class, the agricultural workers and the peasants. The CITU and the working class warmly support the movement of the peasants, for remunerative prices and other demands like cancellation of debts and loans, it supports the demands of agricultural workers for wages and other reliefs. It supports the demand in the charters of the peasants that the issue price of foodgrains should not be raised.

The alliance of the workers, agricultural workers and peasants will be the strongest democratic and revolutionary force in India before which no Government of the exploiting classes can stand. The trade union movement has to contribute to the shaping of this alliance by championing the cause of peasantry. The working class has to realise that there is no end to its exploitation, no socialism, unless the present ruling class are deposed, a new state expressing genuine democracy of the people is reared and the present iniquitous order is liquidated. This cannot be done without enlisting the help of the mighty force of the Indian peasantry.

The sympathy and intervention of the working class are all the more urgent and necessary because in their absence, in the absence of a radical kisan organisation, the landlords and richer gentry in

the rural areas head the peasant discontent to protect their own narrow interests.

### **Divisive Attacks**

Comrades, while we are endeavouring to unite the trade union movement and our class, divisive forces are attacking our unity—and sometimes, succeeding in pitting one section of workers against another in open battle.

This happened during the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat where all bourgeois opposition parties supported it. The CPI(M), the CPI, the CITU opposed it and stood by workers unity.

The agitation lasted three months. In the course of it, almost all major towns came under curfew one time or another. Repeated firings were resorted to by the police. The total toll of lives was 45.

The Harijans were the worst sufferers from police brutalities in the beginning. Later on, perhaps, the police beat everyone they came across.

The big bourgeois press, the capitalists, mill owners, the medical profession, all non-Harijan University students, Professors Teachers, Central and State Government employees, the trading community and mill workers supported the agitation. Some leaders of the Central Government employees' organisations and some leaders of the All India Insurance Employees' Association waged a heroic battle for unity and refused to succumb to the anti-reservation mood. Some of them were removed from the office-bearership of the AIIEA, but later on were restored to their position when the call for LIC strike came.

As against this 75,000 Harijan mill workers employed in the spinning departments of the mills went on strike to support reservation. On this the Sawarna Hitrakshak Samiti called on the Sawarna workers to go on strike and the caste division among the workers was complete.

This divisive mobilisation, this confrontation between two sections both of whom are victims of the bourgeois-landlord rule, was rendered possible because of the deteriorating economic situation and the mounting mass unemployment of recent years.

Comrades, the Gujarat experience in which thousands of Harijan workers were pitted against thousands of others should be a warning to the trade union movement. The gimmick of reservation will be used again and again by the ruling party to keep the Harijan workers away from the common struggle. The opportunism of

bourgeois parties will rouse the caste feelings of other workers against untouchable workers, to gain petty electoral successes. The ruling and the opposition bourgeois parties will not take the really effective step against untouchability—overhaul of agrarian relations accompanied by a genuine anti-casteist outlook.

The ruling and the opposition bourgeois parties exploit the weakness of our movement to divide our class. Reservation in promotion is again generating angry feelings in some undertakings. It is an inevitable consequence when one individual feels that he is cheated of his legitimate promotion because of reservation. By holding counsel with other trade union centres and with the leaders of untouchable workers we should be in a position to find a solution for this touchy problem regarding promotion. One way would be not to deny promotion to any one who deserves it according to normal rules, but ensure proper quota for Harijans etc. by creating additional posts.

Considering the revolting conditions imposed on the untouchables, the caste-discrimination, reservation in jobs cannot be opposed. It should be realised that there is absolutely no change for a Harijan or adivasi to get a job on merit in this caste-ridden society. Besides the claims of the Congress(I) Government to have given them adequate jobs in services are bogus claims. They may have got proper representation only in the lowest paid jobs. It is at the same time futile to expect that under the bourgeois landlord rule they will get jobs in higher services according to their population strength.

The day to day mass struggles led by the trade unions in the country have been insensitive to the special problems of Harijan workers as Harijans and this has created an indifference in the minds of these sections to the common class struggle.

Whether it is working class struggles, struggle against high prices, movement of peasants and agricultural workers, fight against the emergency rule or movement for socialism, the Harijan masses whose emancipation is linked with the success of the movements largely keep away from them.

These weaknesses have to be removed by the trade unions and the walls of separation have to be broken down. The trade unions have to pay special attention to this downtrodden section and bring it in the common movement. Simultaneously the Harijan masses should be made to realise the truth that the condition of their real

emancipation is the same as the condition for the emancipation of all the poverty stricken people of India—a new social order, overhaul of agrarian relations, nationalisation of monopoly concerns and power in the hands of the people.

### **Defend National Integration**

Comrades, the divisive forces are not active only to divide the working class. Their target is national unity, their objective is national disintegration so that India becomes an easy prey to the neo-colonial designs of imperialist powers. The Congress(I) government at the centre is unable to protect nation's unity and the ruling party leaders themselves undermine national unity in the most blatant manner. Communal riots in which the Muslims suffer the most are unleashed. Both Hindu and Muslim communalists exploit them to fan feelings of separatism. RSS talks about the Hindu character of our nation. Extreme wings of Muslim communalism virtually preach that the Muslims are a separate nation. There is talk of another partition of India. Reactionary Sikh agencies claim that Sikhs are a separate nation and demand Khalistan. Some of these communal agencies preaching for separate nationhood get funds from reactionary circles abroad. The hand of imperialism is evident in this propaganda. Certain foreign Christian missions propagate among the tribals for an independent State of tribals.

And finally some Congress(I) Chief Ministers openly rouse provincial and chauvinist feelings. The sons of the soil slogan supported at one time openly by the ruling party is again used to divide Indian from Indian. Maharashtra Chief Minister Antulay a few months back patronised the Shiv Sena which carries on a campaign against people from other States. A few months back shops of non-Maharashtrians were attacked in Bombay. Antulay's recent cruel drive against pavement dwellers was perhaps more in the spirit of Shiv Sena ideology than anything else. A large number of these pavement dwellers were poor people from Tamil Nadu who were forced into trains and sent back to Tamil Nadu. And now Antulay is announcing that he intends to introduce work permit system for entry into Bombay. It seems Maharashtra has already been declared to be an independent State and people from other States would require a visa to enter Bombay. Such are the misdeeds of Congress(I) Chief Minister undermining national unity. But Smt. Indira Gandhi will not disturb Antulay even to protect national

unity.

But Antulay is not the only Chief Minister openly torpedoing national unity. Gundu Rao, the Karnataka Chief Minister, does not lag behind. Last year he openly threatened to create Assam like situation in Karnataka—i.e. secessionist situation. During the Bangalore Public Sector Workers' strike chauvinistic threats were uttered against workers from Kerala and Tamil Nadu who formed a substantial part of the strikers. It was known that the source of the threat was Congress(I) circles. Comrades, a large section of the people of Assam is victim of the secessionist movement—fearful of the consequences of influx of foreign nationals. The USA imperialists are secretly helping this agitation to partition our country.

We all must congratulate our Assam CITU our valiant workers and their leaders on the heroic fight they are waging in defence of the unity of the country and the unity of the working class. They had to brave the fury of the reactionary secessionist forces. Many of our comrades were assaulted, maimed and wounded but they continue to uphold the banner of unity. All glory to them. Comrades, the working class led by CITU should take up the challenge of the divisive forces which directly or indirectly support imperialist plots to dismember the nation. To uphold the banner of national unity, to frustrate the designs of imperialism, to gather in one common fold the people and toilers irrespective of their religion and caste in the battle for the existence of our nation is the duty of the organised trade union movement. In discharging it, it has to see that our functioning and outlook is such that it is able to draw the Muslim minority, the untouchables, who today stand aloof from the trade union struggle, in the common class struggle.

#### **Forging Ahead Braving Repression**

Our CITU unions have been facing intense repression in a number of States and yet they are courageously carrying on the battle. In Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and above all in Assam our unions, workers and our leaders face incessant attacks from the police.

In Haryana, in Sirsa, Hissar and Sonapat Workers have been attacked by police, in-Sirsa for the crime of forming a union and preparing a charter of demands. Hired gangsters followed the police and women had to leave the workers' locality. In Sonapat in the factory of Milton Cycle Co. police followed by anti-socials entered the factory to beat the workers. The Textile strikers of

Hissar had to face the same ordeal.

Bhilai in Madhya Pradesh has become a hotbed of goonda assaults, managerial intrigues, and police attacks against our rising strength. Com. P.K. Maitra Vice-President of Madhya Pradesh CITU has been arrested and refused bail and several workers have been harassed with false criminal cases. All because our unions carried on a struggle against the owners of a number of factories, against retrenchment and victimisation in these industries. In Rajhara in the same State the police know no law. They have used NSA to suppress the contract workers' struggle in iron ore mine. Externment orders were issued against our leaders and workers and workers' residences were attacked. In Bihar during our Joint struggle for 12,000 contract workers employed by the Tatas in Jamshedpur 450 workers were arrested. Police lathi-charged on several occasions. The entire Executive of our TISCO Karmachari Union has been suspended by the management. Nothing however compares with the revolting crimes against Krishnakali Estate Workers. Tea Plantation hospital was converted into police camp. Family members of workers were attacked by the manager, the police and INTUC goondas. The police superintendent refused to take serious note of charge of rape, made by the women workers. Manager's bungalow was turned into a torture chamber, in which arrested workers were beaten severely. When a belaboured worker asked for water, the manager urinated on him and urine was poured in his mouth. When a worker excreted, he was forced to eat it by the police officer. This is Indira regime and our CITU has sent the details of these sadistic happenings to the ILO. Comrades, MICO Workers' union in Bangalore, whose President is our esteemed Comrade Surya Narayan Rao—President of Karnataka State Committee of CITU—is facing similar ordeal. One day gangsters attacked the union office and INTUC goondas captured it, but Gundu Rao's police took no action. These attacks it seems, were organised by the followers of F.M. Khan Congress(I) M.P.—INTUC leader and Plantation owner from Coorg. The Raza Textile Workers in Rampur, U.P. had to undergo prolonged strike and repression.

Com. Harsahay Singh, President, UP State Committee of CITU and Com. Ravi Sinha were assaulted upon during the course of the struggle, in J.K. Rayons', Kanpur, the management has imposed an illegal lay-off after having failed in the attempt to break the CITU

Union. The INTUC Camp before the mill gate has become the sanctuary of anti-socials who have repeatedly beaten up our workers and leaders. When the Police searched the camp under pressure from workers, bombs and other lethal weapons including fire arms were siezed. In orissa, our Com. Ajeya Rout, General Secretary of State Committee narrowly escaped from a murderous attack launched by the goonda hirelings of the management who were led by INTUC. In Tamilnadu our Comrade C. Govindarajan, a member of our General Council was attacked by anti-social elements and stabbed in the abdomen. He is lying in hospital now, though progressing well.

We also know that many of our sister organisations are objects of attacks. The Loco and Public Sector strikers were objects of police intimidation. Modinagar in U.P. is a place where workers have to face the collusion of Police with management and goondas. We denounce the murder of brother Jai Prakash HMS leader of Modinagar. The police showed no urgency to catch the suspects. There are serious allegations that the murder was organised by some men connected with the management. I have mentioned only a few instances of police highhandedness and oppression that our comrades have to meet at every step. Every step forward of the CITU is studded with intense sacrifice and suffering of our comrades, and rank and file workers whose families have to bear the brunt of this attack.

While appreciating the progress we have registered in the States like Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Karnataka we must ponder whether we are progressing at the speed required and rendered possible by the urgent economic situation. It will be realised that the momentum we developed in filling a vaccum, fulfilling the need for a militant and principled organisation can now be sustained only by a very planned work and a systematic review of our activities which should not be slackened in the name of trade union unity and review of our joint activities with others. Unless such reviews are available for the Central CITU it will be difficult to provide concrete guidance for the future.

Our State Committees and unions have loyally and consistently worked for united action of trade unions. They have overcome many difficulties created by others, put up with obstacles and carried forward the struggle for trade union unity. What effect has it produced on the consciousness of the workers? How has it

brought accession of strength to the CITU—these questions need to be answered. The struggle for correct policies, a struggle to overcome erroneous outlook and policies, and it must secure a change in the correlation of forces—the correct policies and outlook must be better appreciated by large and large sections of workers. We have instances when after prolonged united struggle for months, workers are enticed by opportunist elements. We have instances where in spite of our image some individuals mouthing left phrases or indulging in demonstrative action are able to draw large masses. The rise of individualist leaders with no ideology demands our vigilance and criticism of our weaknesses.

For lack of review the hurdles in the rapid expansion of trade union unity and its achievements are not properly understood. The Bombay Convention provided an instance in the midst of a genuine all round desire for trade union unity. In this struggle what should be ensured is not only agreement at the top but carrying the spirit of unity to the bottom. It is necessary that all organisations marshal their full force in demonstrations and actions and it is the duty of the CITU to overcome obstacle to this urgent step.

#### **Defend The Left Front Government**

Comrades, we all offer our congratulations to the West Bengal Ministry for completing four years in office. This is a memorable feat accompanied by memorable achievements in the service of the Working Class and the people. But reactionary forces are again hatching their conspiracies.

Like the West Bengal Ministry the Tripura Government has notable achievements to its credit. These achievements have been recorded despite a very difficult and acute situation created by the combined conspiracies of Congress(I) Amra Bengali and certain reactionary tribal elements some of whom were financed from abroad. The Ministry had to face the challenge of organised killings and massacres and it succeeded in upholding the unity of the people and enacting measures for their benefit.

The Kerala Ministry also had to face a hostile attack from Congress(I), RSS, Naxalites and other reactionaries. But relying on the people, it has succeeded in initiating a number of progressive measures—like relief for the unemployed etc. and consolidated popular unity. The three ministries have ensured fundamental rights for the people and refused to use the NSA against its opponents.

To defend these outposts of democracy constitutes the urgent task of the working class of India. Our General Council should ensure that this task is discharged. Comrades, I once more wish to refer to the battle between the forces of democracy and authoritarianism that dominates the political and economic situation in India. There is no chance for democracy for economic advance unless the authoritarian party is curbed and its mandate to rule is withdrawn by the people. It is intent on establishing one party dictatorship through the Presidential form of government.

The working class is now called upon to play a leading role in this battle. It is called upon to marshal the full strength of its class through trade union unity and further attract all other oppositional and democratic forces for a common battle against authoritarianism. That is the urgent task facing us today.

### **Crisis Gripping Capitalist World**

Comrades, we are meeting in the midst of a crisis situation for the capitalist world. All the countries of advanced capitalism are face to face with unheard of unemployment and inflation. The number of unemployed in the EEC nations has reached 10 million. In Britain itself the figure is 2.5 million—over one million more than last year. The unemployment rate of the country as a whole is 10.6 per cent. This year 720,000 British School leavers are getting ready to enter the labour market. Only 4,000 jobs await them. The recent riots has forced the Conservative Government to promise jobs to new entrants, but it will be only a promise. In the USA also there is massive unemployment and it is expected to mount. Unsold stocks have risen by \$20.4 billion and a decline in GNP is likely.

Comrades, let me quote an American writer on the situation; 'Never before has there seen such a wave of plant shut-downs affecting such basic industries as steel and transportation equipment— But the selection of plants to be shut down and the location of the new enterprises are highly influenced by considerations of class-warfare—For the first time since the 1930s, corporations in major industries such as automobiles and air lines are able to impose direct wage-cuts on hundreds of thousands of workers. They insist that the cuts are necessary to save jobs, which would be forfeit in the event of bankruptcy. Chrysler Corporation Workers have already agreed to beg wage cuts and General Motors and Ford are demanding equal takeaways.

"Of course, with Washington taking more openly anti-labour positions, enforcement of labour-protective laws is deteriorating. In particular, the protection offered by minimum wage and minimum hours legislation has virtually vanished in industries where it is most needed—especially textiles; apparel and other light industries; agriculture; and service industries.

"At the present time, in New York City, there are reportedly, some 3,000 'sweatshops' employing 50,000 workers in the apparel trades. These workers are forced to work up to 12 hours a day and are paid less than half the official minimum wage. Many of them are 'undocumented workers'; from the Latin American and Asian countries they have fled to escape the even more brutal conditions imposed by the puppets of U.S. imperialism. Thousands, in fact, have fled EL Salvador to escape the murderous junta acting under the direction of U.S. military and political 'advisers'—as earlier victims fled the after-effects of the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic.

"A New York Times (Feb. 26 1981) journalist describes conditions in the sweatshop:

"Rows of women bent over sewing machines, separated by narrow aisles often made impassable by dress racks and piles of piece goods. Five exits and windows, too, are often blocked or even padlocked, reducing emergency escapes—Sweatshops may fail to comply with minimum wage and hour laws, child labour regulations and fire and safety codes laws..... The resurgence comes nearly 70 years after the fire at the Triangle Shirwaist Factory, where 146 garment workers died."

### **New International Tension**

And these USA imperialists now want to save Poland to introduce massive unemployment and inflation.

Comrades, this is the desperate background to the international situation, to the new international tensions.

The Reagan administration has intensified the drive against détente initiated by the previous U.S. Administration. This is endangering world peace, threatening the security and peace of the countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and America. The people of Europe face the threat of a military confrontation involving the use of nuclear weapons and neutron bombs.

Reagan administration's decision to mass produce neutron bombs—that diabolical weapon of genocide, constitutes a crime

against humanity.

The nations inhabiting the West Asian region are faced with direct American intervention. Israel, with the aid of the Pentagon, is carrying on a regular war against Lebanon. And the same Zionist force, under the direct instructions of the USA, raided Iraq to destroy its nuclear reactor, U.S. imperialism though it has received a rebuff in Iran, is intent on firmly planting its feet in the oil region and is making Pakistan its military base under the excuse of helping the Afghan 'freedom-fighters'. The Soviet help to Afghanistan's progressive forces to ward off imperialist attacks is made the excuse to militarise the region.

#### **Danger of War in Indian Subcontinent**

The report of the External Affairs Ministry, placed before the Lok Sabha in March, notes the U.S. plans for a rapid deployment force of 110,000 personnel for use primarily in the Indian Ocean, The Diego Garcia base situated in the Indian Ocean makes it possible to carry on operations against the littoral States. It is a standing danger to India and all littoral States.

But the danger to India does not end here. The USA is bent on feverishly arming Pakistan's military rulers with the latest weapons to create a constant threat of war between the two countries. It encourages Pakistan to build its nuclear potential to produce nuclear bombs while it asks India to accept prohibition safeguards. The Pakistani dictator, unable to seize any issue to befool the people, is using the Afghanistan card, acting as the anti-Soviet spearhead of the USA, and is bent upon stockpiling arms to be used against India. Some reactionary Pakistani media are openly speculating on war between the two countries.

The USA is playing the Pakistan card to heighten tension and create threat of war to pressurise India to shift its foreign policy, especially its stand on Afghanistan.

These are pressures to weaken the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation and shift the Government's policy towards the imperialist camp. They are supplemented by other measures like refusal to supply uranium to the Tarapore nuclear plant, threat to cut off-economic aid to countries not toeing the U.S. line and so on.

The Indo-Pakistan talks outlined the gravity of the situation as they showed the firm resolve of Pakistan's rulers to ally with the U.S.A.

Comrades, it should be noted that while the working class and people of India denounce U.S.A, military aid to Pakistan as a conspiracy against the people of Pakistan and India, as an instrument of war between the two countries, the Government of Peoples' China takes an opposite view and supports the arming of Pakistan's military regime. Our country which has experience of three wars with Pakistan cannot be complacent on this issue, cannot turn a blind eye to the U.S.A conspiracy against our freedom.

We stand for friendly relations with our neighbouring countries. We stand for relations of peace and goodwill among the nations of the world. We are happy that the process of normalisation of relations with Peoples' China has started at last. The visit of the foreign minister of People's China to India no doubt marked an important step in this direction. The working class and people of both countries expect further progress to restore the close friendly relations which obtained in the earlier years of our independence.

#### **Foil Imperialist Design, Fight For Peace**

It cannot be said that our Working Class is prepared and trained to understand the danger facing the country. Reformist leaders, INTUC opportunists and others who look upon the workers as only voting cattle have combined to create indifference among the Working Class towards questions of foreign policy and external danger from imperialism. If this weakness is not overcome by us, the nation's independence might be imperiled any day. The bourgeois-landlord Government of Indira Gandhi is unable to mobilise popular forces and fight the imperialist designs. Some opposition parties like the BJP screen these very designs and mislead the people. It is again the duty of our trade unions to raise the warning signal in defence of our country, foil imperialist designs to create enmity between India and Pakistan and prepare the people to rebuff any aggressive move of imperialism or its stooges. Simultaneously we must now raise our voice in defence of world peace and against U.S.A. designs for aggressive confrontation. We all must endorse the struggle carried on by the U.S.S.R. and socialist camp to save the world from war and military confrontation.