



# THE WORKING CLASS

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## The Ninth General Elections

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THE Ninth General elections have ended in a smashing defeat of the Congress (I) as called for by the CITU and the Left and secular forces. Rajiv Gandhi's Govt has resigned. The old Lok Sabha with its huge majority of the Congress (I) is dissolved and a Govt of the National Front has already taken office. This victory of the people against the Congress (I) and its rule is an outstanding political event and it removes from the scene a rotten regime which had totally failed to defend national unity, which was surrounded by scandals of corruption and which was inflicting mass misery and huge unemployment on the people and above all growingly surrendering the self-reliance of the economy to the dictates of the World Bank, the IMF and foreign capital.

These are questions of urgent national importance and unless the new Government devotes its energy to deal with them effectively people's will and verdict will not be realised in practice. It was not just for the pleasure of having a change in the Govt that the call to defeat Congress-I was given by the working class organisations and Left and secular parties.

As expected the Congress-I which had realised that it had alienated the people, did everything arbitrary and illegal to take an electoral verdict in its favour. It was no doubt an unprecedented election. The Election Commissioner had to order repolling in some of the segments of the Amethi Constituency from where the Prime Minister was contesting. This was the first time since independence that charges of rigging and unfair polling practices were made in connection with the Prime Minister's election. But this was not the only instance. There were attempts at massive rigging and booth capturing spread over several constituencies in the country and the Election Commissioner had to order repolling in more than a thousand polling stations. In Tripura there was open mass rigging accompanied by violence, beating, bomb attacks and assaults on CPI(M) polling agents. But despite protests and complaints the

Election Commissioner was not disturbed and he did not take any step to stop these malpractices. So open and 'official' was the mass rigging in that state that it appeared as if the Cong(I) was not prepared to trust its own followers to vote in its favour; no wonder, because there was revulsion among the people against the ruling party after months of its gangster like methods of administration.

The Ninth General Elections will go down in history as an unprecedented election also because of the terror and violence unleashed. More than 100 people were killed in the pre-poll campaign and the polling day clashes. This excludes the mass killings in Bhagalpur in Bihar and the pre-election riots in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh organised by communal parties and fanatics in the course of the Ramshila processions. Never before in India did the democratic process of elections claim such a heavy toll of human lives mostly from the minority community.

In no previous election, besides, was a communal issue projected in a blatant manner. The BJP had made the Ramjanambhoomi issue an election issue notwithstanding protestations to the contrary. The pre-election Shilanyas riots were calculated to polarise the electorate on a communal basis.

And what was this Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhoomi dispute? It was not just a question of building a new Ram temple near a mosque. The demand was that the temple must be allowed to be built at the site where the old Babri Masjid is standing. The demand was for the demolition of the Mosque as the site is claimed to be the birth place of Ram. One cannot imagine a more fanatical and explosive issue for projecting in the elections.

But it was not only the BJP which was seeking electoral fall out from the Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhoomi dispute. The ruling party instead of taking a straight secular position and assuring both communities that it would stand by the verdict of the

played to the demands of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad hoping to gather the majority community's vote. It made a wrong assessment that the majority mass was won over by the cry of the Ramjanmabhoomi. The Rajiv Govt pretended to pursue a mediatory role, made contradictory statements every few days, but day by day tilted the balance in favour of the VHP. The climax came when the Allahabad Court gave a decision that the site chosen for the temple foundation ceremony was a disputed area. Trampling down the court verdict the Govt permitted the VHP to lay the foundation stone of the proposed temple at the disputed site.

In the meanwhile Rajiv Gandhi was campaigning throughout the country calling for defending and strengthening national unity, attacking the Left parties and especially the CPI(M) for joining hands with the communalists. The people were not taken in by this double dealing and double faced tactics. The Congress(I) could not carry conviction to the democratic mass by its hypocritical concern for national unity, nor could it exploit its Ramjanmabhoomi opportunism and Rajiv Gandhi's promise of 'Ram Rajya' to garner votes from the majority community. It also lost the confidence of the minority who had been its steady supporters for years. The Congress(I) appeasement of the VHP, the open flouting of the court decision to accommodate it, alienated the Muslim minority which in a large measure voted against the Congress(I) ensuring its rout in UP. The Congress(I) also failed to side-track the majority community vote which did not abandon its secular and democratic stand. The Rajiv Govt and the Congress(I) were rejected by the electorate. It constitutes a decisive assertion of people's will. But have the people secured a decisive democratic victory opening the way to firmly pursuing democratic policies to strengthen national unity and give a fair deal to the common citizen? Has the electorate succeeded in placing in power a Govt firmly based on secular and Left forces? It is clear, the answer is 'no'.

The elections have resulted in a hung Parliament, meaning a situation in which no single party has won a majority. The Congress(I) is still the biggest single party with 193 seats; National Front comes with 144; the BJP has 88 seats and the CPI(M) 32; Left forces together with the CPI(M) is 52.

The Congress(I) notwithstanding its virtual rout in the North has staged a spectacular come back in the South defeating the TDP and the Janata Dal in Andhra and Karnataka respectively in the Assembly and Parliamentary elections. The TDP has secured only two seats out of 38 seats in the Andhra Pradesh Parliamentary elections and its Assembly seats are 74 compared to 180 of the Congress(I). In Karnataka Janata Dal has secured only one Parliamentary seat and 24 assembly seats as compared to 27 Parliamentary seats and 177 Assembly seats secured by

the Congress(I). In both these States the Congress (I) will be forming a new ministry.

In Tamil Nadu again the Congress(I) with the aid of the AIADMK has swept all the seats in the Parliamentary elections except one. The NF constituent in the State has drawn a complete blank. In Kerala also the Left and secular parties have secured only three seats out of 20.

The electorate has not given the same verdict in all the States of India. However, it has effectively prevented the Congress(I) from coming to power. But it has not given a decisive verdict in favour of any party in the opposition to run the government.

The CITU and the working class were concerned not only in defeating the Congress(I) but also in isolating the communal forces and increasing the strength of the secular and left forces in the country and formation of a government by them. But the elections have failed to produce the desired result. It will be seen that the objective of isolating the communal forces has not been achieved. The BJP has won nearly 90 seats in the Parliamentary elections. Its numerical strength is more than 1 and 1/2 of the strength of the Left parties. This is the first time since independence that a communal party has more strength in the Lok Sabha than the Left. It is also clear that an opposition Government cannot be formed without the support of the BJP. In West Bengal, however, the Left Front headed by the CPI(M) has succeeded in routing the Congress (I). The Congress (I) could get only 5 out of the 41 seats for which elections were held. The BJP of course has drawn a blank. There was no room for communal forces in West Bengal. Beaten straight in a polling contest free from all violence, intimidation and rigging, the defeated crowd is bleating about election malpractice with hardly anyone to listen to them. The virtual rout of the Congress(I) in West Bengal with the Left parties capturing all seats except five is the main source of the increased strength of the Left in the Parliament. With the additional seats secured by the CPI(M) and CPI outside Bengal the Left has increased its strength to 51 in the Lok Sabha, putting the Left parties in an important and strategic position to help forward the democratic aspirations of the people. It is also clear that a government of the opposition cannot be formed without the support of the Left forces. This is an important and strategic position secured by the Left through the electoral verdict.

This is a new situation. The new Govt. cannot be formed without the support of the BJP, without the support of the Left. It is obvious that in this situation the best way to carry out the verdict of the electorate is to allow the National Front, the biggest party in the opposition to form the Government and other two parties to support it from outside. The Left parties have already announced their support for a National Front Government and it seems that

*Contd. on page 4*

# List of Left Candidates Who Won the Ninth Lok Sabha Elections, 1989

Sl. No.	Name of the candidate	Party	State	Votes polled
1.	Sudhir Roy	CPI (M)	W. B.	5,15,140
2.	Ramchandra Dome	"	"	3,45,898
3.	Tarit Baran Tapdar	"	"	3,64,424
4.	Manik Sanyal	"	"	3,87,805
5.	Satyagopal Mishra	"	"	3,92,393
6.	Hannan Mollah	"	"	3,93,735
7.	Syed Masudal Hossain	"	"	3,68,860
8.	Sukhendu Khan	"	"	4,38,322
9.	Sudhir Giri	"	"	3,64,318
10.	Haradhan Roy	"	"	3,74,281
11.	Sushanta Chakraborty	"	"	3,97,138
12.	Saifudin Choudhury	"	"	4,19,042
13.	Sudharshan Roychoudhury	"	"	4,26,994
14.	Amal Dutta	"	"	3,74,532
15.	Radhikaranjan Pramanick	"	"	3,59,941
16.	Asim Bala	"	"	4,69,062
17.	Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee	"	"	5,56,139
18.	Basudev Acharia	"	"	3,81,087
19.	Anil Basu	"	"	4,23,062
20.	Matilal Hansda	"	"	3,97,944
21.	Rupchand Pal	"	"	4,23,701
22.	Abedin Zainal	"	"	3,09,798
23.	Somnath Chatterjee	"	"	4,21,483
24.	Biplab Dasgupta	"	"	3,68,674
25.	Ajoy Mukharjee	"	"	3,45,359
26.	Malini Bhattacharya	"	"	4,41,188
27.	M. Ramanna Rai	"	Kerala	3,58,723
28.	A. Vijay Raghavan	"	"	3,48,401
29.	Shaupat Singh Maukasar	"	Rajasthan	2,96,719
30.	Subhasini Ali	"	UP	1,74,438
31.	Shivaji Patnaik	"	Orissa	3,32,005
32.	Prem Pradeep	"	Bihar	NA
33.	Tej Narain Singh	CPI	Bihar	NA
34.	Ram Ashrey Prasad Singh	"	"	NA
35.	Suryanarayan Singh	"	"	NA
36.	Bhogendra Jha	"	"	NA
37.	Gita Mukherjee	"	W. Bengal	4,22,930
38.	Monoranjan Sur	"	"	3,82,555
39.	Indrajit Gupta	"	"	4,28,260
40.	Mitra Sen Yadav	"	UP	NA
41.	Ram Sanjivan	"	UP	1,04,142
42.	Lokanath Choudhury	"	Orissa	4,08,057
43.	Sudam Deshmukh	"	Maharashtra	3,09,699
44.	N. Selvaraju	"	Tamilnadu	NA
45.	Amar Roy Pradhan	FB	W. Bengal	4,22,168
46.	Chitta Ranjan Mahato	"	"	3,79,191
47.	Chitta Basu	"	"	4,48,543
48.	Nani Bhattacharya	RSP	"	3,76,069
49.	Pius Tirkey	"	"	3,84,119
50.	Palas Barman	"	"	3,88,103
51.	Sanat Kumar Mandal	"	"	3,31,611
52.	A K Roy	MC	Bihar	2,47,013

the BJP also had done so though stressing on a number of issues and reservations which the Party considers as urgent and important. The Left parties have assured their support on condition that the National Front abide by its manifesto and does not contemplate coalition with any other party. This arrangement is absolutely essential considering the sharp differences among the opposition parties, to carry forward the will of the people to have an alternate Government of their choice. A heavy responsibility rests on the NF Government and Shri V P Singh, the new Prime Minister to carry out the mandate of the people and implement the promises made during the elections. The confidence which the Janata Dal and the National Front have earned among the Muslim minority constitutes a great asset for national unity. To strengthen and develop it is one of the important tasks to consolidate national unity.

The new Government headed by V.P. Singh will be faced with many urgent problems, problems pertaining to the immediate condition of the masses, high prices, unemployment and many other issues. It will be the responsibility of the new Government to maintain and strengthen the country's policy of non-alignment and its cooperation with democratic and socialist countries. The CITU and the working class send their best wishes to the National Front Government and its leader Mr V P Singh. They are confident that called upon to serve the interests of the country at a critical period the National Front and its leaders will show complete one mindedness in carrying out the will of the people and assuring the masses that they were justified in putting the trust in the National Front.

## **CITU Condemns Harassment of Woman Typist by HSCL Management**

**T**HE CITU lodged a complaint with the HSCL Chairman regarding the sexual harassment by an official at Visakhapatnam of a woman typist Joice A Violet who was repeatedly transferred by the official concerned since she opposed his advances towards her.

Joice Violet was recruited as typist at Salem, who was transferred to Tandur (Karnataka) unit leaving her husband and newly born child. What is surprising is that the transfer order was issued when she was under maternity leave.

Violet was again transferred to Visakhapatnam and was forced to live away from the family. She sent repeated applications for transfer back to Tamilnadu but no attention was paid to her appeal. It should be noted that some male employees were transferred in this period to Tamilnadu but Violet's genuine appeal was purposefully ignored by the HSCL management. Her child was suffering from brain fever but it was of no consequence to HSCL bosses.

In Visakhapatnam a senior HSCL official subjected her to sexual harassment. When she protested she was transferred 3 times during the period of one year in the same office.

When the CITU complained to HSCL Chairman he sent a senior officer to enquire about the case. However, instead of solving the problem, attempt were made to force her to accept voluntary retirement from HSCL.

M K Pandhe, Secretary CITU in a communication to the Chairman, HSCL, Col. S.P Anand, while protesting against the callous attitude of the HSCL management, demanded immediate action against the culprit and transfer of Joice Violet to Tamilnadu so that she can stay with her family.

## **Higher Workload in the Name of Work Culture in Vizag Steel Plant**

**U**NDER the guise of new work culture, the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant management is imposing humiliating working conditions on skilled workers in the plant. Highly skilled workers are asked to lift cylinders and other materials dispensing with the unskilled workers. Technicians are being forced to do the work of breaking coal.

The employees working on computers were given special computer increment but now they have been deprived of that also. Clause 44 of the agreement even debars the workers from going to the court on the principle of equal pay for equal work. The recognised union in the plant affiliated to AITUC has signed an agreement which is silent on several other benefits available to the workers in other steel plants. It is also silent on topics such as enhancement of school fees, medical facilities and bus facilities.

There is deep resentment among the workers of the steel plant about the agreement signed by the AITUC union behind the back of workers. Any worker who tries to oppose the clauses of the agreement is immediately given warning or charge-sheet is issued against him.

Steel Plant Employees Union (CITU) has called upon the workers to oppose the detrimental clauses of the agreement and the response among the workers is very good.

The employment in Visakhapatnam steel plant would be much less compared to other steel plants. This is partly due to the introduction of modern technology but it is also due to imposition of additional workload on the workers on the plea of "new work culture".

# Tamilnadu State Conference of Working Women

R. Umanath

THE 2nd Tamilnadu State Conference of the Working Women, convened by the Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU, was held in Nagercoil, headquarters of the Kanyakumari district on 20th September 1989. It turned out to be a momentous session, which promised to bring about a turning point in the movement of the working women in Tamilnadu.

Nagercoil being located at the southern most tip of Tamilnadu, delegates from all over the state started trooping into Nagercoil from the 19th night itself, to be in time for the start of the session the next day morning.

The recent growth of the working women's movement in Tamilnadu and their urge to gate crash into the movement was reflected in the face of the conference itself. 107 delegates and 164 working women observers, in all 271 attended the conference. Excepting 22 who attended the earlier State conference, the rest of the 107 delegates, were attending the convention for the first time.

The composition of the delegation showed that the movement has drawn wider sections into it. Delegates hailed from among industrial workers, unorganised industry, Central Government employees, State Government employees, other sections of employees, anganwadi agricultural labour and nursing staff etc. The CITU flag was hoisted by Mrs Sukumari, a union activist in the New Ambadi Estate (Kanyakumari district) from where Com. Gopi a worker was martyred by police torture in custody, for participation in August 30th Bandh. The participation of the entire delegation and observers at the hoisting of the CITU flag had a significance, in so far as it showed a breach of a misconception that the CITU stamp on the movement might inhibit the prospects of widening the working women's movement into middle class sections.

The State Committee of CITU had provided separate seating arrangements in the conference hall for all the office bearers and members of the CITU State Committee members to enable them to have a first hand appraisal of the entire proceedings. As Com. BTR entered the hall, the entire conference enthusiastically gave him a standing ovation.

The conference elected a presidium consisting of Com. Sukumari (CITU Plantation Workers Union, Kanyakumari), Com. Easwari (Tiruppur Banian Workers Union) and Com. Uma Maheswari (belonging to a middle class organisation).

The conference observed a minute's silence in memory of the martyrs including Com. Gopi, who sacrificed their lives in the cause of working class movement and in defence of national unity. Com. J. Hemachandran, Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates and observers. Com. Papa Umanath, General Secretary of the State Committee of DWA, while inaugurating the conference, exhorted the delegates to associate themselves with day to day trade union activities, fight for emancipation of women and in the struggle to defend national unity.

Com. Mythili Sivaraman, Convenor of the Co-ordination Committee introduced a detailed report on the present conditions of women and working women in our country, their condition in Tamilnadu, CITU State Committee efforts to activate the movement during the past 6 years, and formulated a 12 point charter of demands for future and placed it before the conference for discussions, amendments if any.

Then followed a frank and outspoken discussion in which 32 delegates participated. It was the real voice of the working women. A part of it was a powerful exposure of their worst working conditions.

"Women engaged in stone breaking are treated as bonded labourers; they are paid Rs 15/- a day, out of which they have to spend Rs 10/- for dynamite to blast the rocks and retain only the meagre Rs 5/-", said Mrs Kannamma a delegate from Pudukottai district.

"We Anganwadi and Nutrition Meals Scheme workers work from 9 AM to 4 PM. We work all the 365 days round the year. Should we not get at least a day off for maternity? We are sent away for 3 months without any payment. On return from leave we are transferred to far off places. Demonstrations, processions have not changed our conditions. How long are we to suffer this", thundered a Nutrition Meal Scheme worker from Kanyakumari district."

Mrs Rajeswari, who attended the recent All India Anganwadi Workers' conference convened by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said, "I attended the conference. Rajiv Gandhi posed as the champion of the Anganwadi employees. But when all of us present there, unanimously pleaded for decent wages, maternity benefit etc for Anganwadi workers the bubble was pricked and Rajiv came out with his true colours, and asked us to give up commercial mentality and be service minded."

"The employer will not provide us with creche in our factory, and if we bring the child with us to the work place, we are turned out of work", said a delegate hailing from a small scale industrial area in Periyar district.

"We have to work in chemicals. We have to eat food with goat hair around us. And yet the employers would not provide us with a shed", complained a tannery worker. "Strength of women is slashed in textile mills and young girls are compelled to work in 3 shifts which threatens their security," complained Com. Ailin from Tiruchy dist. "NTC, a public sector undertaking itself is trying to force night shift on women", said Easwari, a delegate from Coimbatore. "We women are denied pass books. They are issued in male members' name. We muslim women have come out and we will fight against social discriminations as well", thundered Rahimabi, muslim beedi worker delegate from Tirunelveli Kattabomman dist.

Delegate after delegate from among middle class employees blasted the employers and administration. "Even mutual transfers are not allowed. Only alternative is to resign after marriage to win their husbands, This prospect has kept many young employees to remain unmarried", said one delegate.

A delegate working in the State Electricity Board said: "We are 2000 women working in an elegant 10 storeyed office building. Every officer is provided with an Air Conditioned room, but the 2000 women are denied even a single room as rest room. Drinking water provided to us produced urinary infection in many employees. The elegance of the building is covering up these injustices."

Another delegate thundered that hostels are not provided to working women. But a delegate from Dunlop India, Madras burst out in anger: "Our factory has provided us with a hostel near a burial ground, where there is no human habitation we are exposed to absolute insecurity there. One night the resident nursing staff was called out on the pretext of attending to a delivery, and raped. On her complaint to the village head, they spread the canard that the nurse was 'not a good woman'. It was pathetic to see that she was abandoned by her husband and she had to leave the place once for all."

Subbuthayi, a delegate from Dindigul said that hostel provided to them was located far away from the work spot and adjacent to a toddy shop and a 3-star hotel, due to which there is absolutely no protection to girls there. Both the delegates demanded that the hostels must be located in towns or industrial or office areas.

Sharp criticisms were voice by many delegates on the CITU committees role. Mrs Rita, a delegate from South Arcot district blatantly said, "working women participate in struggle; but our CITU district committee did not care to form a co-ordination committee all these years; it did not initiate any campaign or movement on working women's

demands. They think their responsibility is over by sending one or two representatives to state representatives' meeting". Rajalakshmi, a delegate from Salem dist. said, "Our co-ordination committee was formed in 1979. Our dist. committee of CITU never functioned it to this day." Umamaheswari, a Madras delegate said, "it is 5 months since our committee was elected. It met only once, chalked out a programme and stopped with that. In many districts where committees have been formed, the committees do not take off."

Mrs Isaikki, a handloom workers' delegate from Madurai dist. complained that dist. CITU also does not make effort for convening the co-ordination committee. Mrs Kannamma, criticised, saying that, "we deal more about the problems of middle class working women and less of the most oppressed and down trodden among the working women. By organising the most oppressed section CITU can draw large number of women".

The delegates did not spare the State Committee of the CITU. One delegate asked, "despite our urge to be active why did you take 6 years to convene this conference. Here after you must hold the convention once in 2 or 3 years. Our CITU union does not do anything to raise the political consciousness of working women."

But the climax was the sharp attack by Mrs Ailin a delegate from Tiruchy dist. who said at the next day's CITU conference: "Our union has taken some of us on the executive. But they consider us to be a burden. And so they convene the committee meeting and take decisions without us. They have taken some of us as office bearers. But they will not take us with them for negotiations with the management even while arranging buses for workers to attend conference, they will not provide for us seats in their buses. We are treated a second class citizens. This must stop" she blasted.

But some delegates also paid encomiums to their local CITU committees for having organised women workers, led their struggles and led them to victory. Com. Mythili Sivaraman replied to the discussion and the conference adopted the report and a 12 point charter of demands. The conference resolved to: (1) observe demands week between 6th and 11th November 1989 when signatures on the charter of demands memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister will be collected from mass of working women in factories, offices and fields. 10 paise per signatory will be collected towards postal expenses.

(2) 14th November 1989 will be observed as "creche day" throughout the state with meetings and demonstrations.

(3) District wise conventions of working women in unorganised industry will be organised and common charter of demands and follow up campaign will be evolved.

The conference adopted the Credential Committee report. Co-ordination Committee of 22 members, with Com. Mythili as Convenor and Com. Uma Maheswari as Asstt. Convenor was elected unanimously.

Com. B.T. Ranadive, President of the CITU while greeting the conference said, "Working women's movement in our country has reached a new stage. Consciousness among working women is rising. Prospects for building up a powerful movement are increasing." Stating that CITU's initiative in organising working women has increased during past 3 years, Com. BTR, said, "with timely initiative and planned work now working women can be mobilised in a big way, is shown by the recent massive rally of working women on September 8th.

Referring to the fight for including the right to work as a fundamental right in our constitution Com. BTR pointed out, "Rajiv says it is not included in any constitution in the world. True, it does not find a place in the American, British and other capitalist constitutions. But it is very much there in the constitution of Soviet Union, China, Cuba and other socialist countries. Hence we must work for ending the present day capitalist society and build a society which recognises the right to work as a basic fundamental right guaranteed by the constitution."

Citing the recent attempt by the Goa speaker to molest a working woman, the recent rape of an Adivasi woman and throwing her naked body in a river in Maharashtra and recent murder of a harijan woman which sparked off riots in Madurai district Com. BTR said, "working women of our country, while fighting for their rights, have to fight to protect their honour and dignity as well."

Com. BTR stressed on the need for paying special attention to organise working women in the unorganised sector and said that our TU organisations must extend to those sections in a big way. Pointing out to an important criticism during discussions Com. BTR said, "Many delegates who participated in the discussion here said that they are called to participate in demonstrations strikes and picketing, but are not entrusted with responsible work in trade unions. It is most important that working women are promoted to the leadership of trade unions and entrusted with responsible work."

Com. BTR exposed the latest manoeuvres of Rajiv Gandhi to deceive and secure the votes of the women to be vigilant and be in the fore front of the struggle to defeat Rajiv Gandhi and Congress(I) in the coming parliamentary elections.

Winding up the conference Com. BTR exhorted the delegates, "you are facing many problems of social injustices like dowry, bride-burning unequalities, superstitions etc. As a women you have to fight against these atrocities and assert your rights. When Rajiv Gandhi is going ahead with attack on democratic rights, you must join the fight against these attacks to protect democratic rights as a citizen. You must fight for the rights of working women, as a representative of working women. Conscious of your tasks in all these three roles, I hope you will go ahead with success.

The conference roused tremendous self confidence and inspiration among the delegates, guaranteeing a further advance of the working women's movement. It will be no exaggeration to say that the conference and discussions helped the CITU execu-

tive committee a great deal to deepen its understanding of the immensely serious problems faced by working women and created a greater urge among them to take further initiative in building up this movement.

## Victory of SWAPO

**T**HE victory of the South West Africa People's Organisation in the elections held in November was a most important event in the history of the national liberation movements of the oppressed people of the world. The victory laid the foundation of the independence of Namibia, the last colony in the African continent.

Namibia was formerly a colony of Germany. It was then illegally occupied by the racist South African regime for the last 74 years. The SWAPO carried forward the struggle for independence for the last 23 years. Its legendary leader Sam Njuma had to leave the country and lead the struggle in exile. The brutal regime even launched attacks inside Angola, where the Cuban troops were stationed to help the freedom fighters. Brutal repression by the military of the racist regime could not deter the valiant struggle of the Namibian people. While the struggle by the SWAPO acquired world wide support, the South African regime was condemned by the world community. The regime got sustenance only from the imperialists led by the USA. The struggle of SWAPO for independence from the occupation of the apartheid regime thus became a part of struggle against imperialism too. The entire people of Africa, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana and India alongwith the Non-Aligned Movement and the socialist countries and others extended all support for the independence of Namibia. The United Nations Security Council adopted the Resolution No. 435 calling for free elections and independence of Namibia. South Africa was compelled to arrive at agreement and commit itself to end its support to the UNITA rebels and for holding elections. The Cuban troops withdrew from Angola after the agreement. The South African regime still tried to subvert the election process with the help of its notorious secret police Koevet. But all its nefarious designs failed. The UN had to send the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) to supervise the elections. Sam Njuma returned to his homeland after a long exile.

The SWAPO however could not get the required two-third majority to write its Constitution alone. It got 42 seats out of 72. A sizeable part of the cake was eaten by the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), the right wing party backed by the South African regime. So SWAPO will have to take into account the DTA to write the Constitution for free Namibia. The forces of peace, democracy and socialism are however confident that SWAPO will be able to overcome all difficulties to form their free non-racial Government within the framework of national reconciliation.

# Railwaymen's News

## AIGC

THE Twentythird Annual General Meeting of the All India Guard's Council was held at Ujjain (M.P.) on 21st & 22nd October, 1989 preceded by its Central Working Committee Meeting on 20th Oct '89. The AGM was attended by about 500 delegates covering all the Zonal Railways.

The session was inaugurated by S.K. Dhar, Secretary General All India Loco Running Staff Association and presided over by its president, A S Ahuja. The welcome address was given by the Chairman Reception Committee, Shrinivas Ratha. Then the Chief guest, Satyanarayan Gadeys greeted the conference.

The conference dealt with the several problems of guards in particular and trade union movement in general as placed through the report of the General Secretary and further developed by discussions by several delegates.

The conference elected a Central Committee taking A S Ahuja as the President, C.L. Upadhyaya as General Secretary, M M D'Souza as Vice President, M.L.N Murty as Joint General Secretary and R K Sharma as Treasurer among others.

## AILRSA

The 6th General Body meeting of All India Loco

Running Staff Association, South Central Railway was held at Secunderabad on 9.11.1989 attended by about 200 delegates and presided over by Zonal President, A. Munni Reddy.

The conference was inaugurated by S K Dhar, Secretary General of the Organisation. The session was graced by the representatives from AIREC, AISMA, AIGC and S & T Workshop Staff and Workers Association.

A well attended mass meeting was held before the General Manager's office (Rail Nilayam) preceded by a huge procession, addressed by S K Dhar, Babul Reddy, Senior Advocate, contesting Lok-Sabha Election as Janata Dal candidate, T. Hanumiah, K Rajamma of AILRSA and D G Narasima Rao of CITU.

The Conference demanded reinstatement of victimised employoes, scrapping of Art. 311 (2) (A) (B) (C) and all the black Acts. Implementation of 10 hrs. duty rule and classification of Running Staff as "Intensive" and demanded withdrawal of all unsafe working system in train operations.

The Conference elected a new Committee with D. Bhaktavatsalam as President, T. Hanumiah as Zonal Secretary and R. Narayan Swamy as Zonal Treasurer.

## New Series of Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers

(Base 1982 = 100)

Centre	Aug. 1989	Sept. 1989	Linking factor for old Base										
ALL-INDIA	174	176	4.93	Hubli-Dharwar	179	179	—	Calcutta	178	180	4.74		
Gudur	168	171	4.33	Mercara	165	165	—	Darjeeling	163	166	4.55		
Guntur	168	170	5.60	Alwaye	166	162	5.19	Durgapur	173	176	—		
Hyderabad	167	169	5.23	Mundakayam	172	170	4.67	Haldia	180	182	—		
Visakhapatnam	182	183	—	Quilon	185	179	—	Howrah	181	183	4.12		
Warrangal	167	168	—	Trivandrum	183	179	—	Jalpaiguri	171	174	4.16		
Doom-Dooma-				Balaghat	181	183	5.24	Raniganj	163	165	4.40		
Tinsukia	165	165	4.05	Bhilari	162	166	3.49	Chandigarh	186	173	—		
Gauhati	184	185	—	Bhopal	177	179	5.46	Delhi	182	185	4.97		
Labac-Silchar	166	170	3.96	Indore	179	181	5.18	Pondicherry	177	178	—		
Mariani-Jorhat	172	173	3.95	Jabalpur	191	193	6.41						
Rangapara-Tezpur	169	170	4.29	Bombay	181	181	5.12						
Jamshedpur	166	167	4.68	Nagpur	180	181	4.99						
Jharia	166	168	4.63	Nasik	183	185	—						
Kodarma	163	163	5.43	Poona	179	181	—						
Monghyr-Jamalpur	172	173	5.29	Sholapur	182	184	5.03						
Noamundi	168	170	4.58	Barbil	167	170	5.00						
Ranchi-Hatia	174	175	—	Rourkela	159	161	3.59						
Ahmedabad	172	175	4.78	Amritsar	168	175	5.19						
Baroda	177	179	—	Ludhiana	166	172	—						
Bhavnagar	176	180	4.99	Ajmer	176	178	5.01						
Rajkot	175	178	—	Jaipur	175	176	5.17						
Surat	186	186	—	Coimbatore	168	171	5.35						
Faridabad	167	172	—	Coonoor	182	187	4.80						
Yamunanagar	165	160	5.53	Madras	173	175	5.05						
Srinagar	167	172	5.47	Madurai	173	177	5.27						
Bangalore	166	169	5.66	Salem	169	170	—						
Belgaum	178	178	—	Tiruchirapally	182	186	—						
				Agra	170	173	—						
				Ghaziabad	175	177	—						
				Kanpur	178	181	4.69						
				Saharanpur	169	174	5.06						
				Varanasi	185	185	5.12						
				Asansol	171	173	4.77						

### Additional Series of Labour Bureau

Centre	Base	Aug. 1989	Sept. 1989
Kothagudem	191	192	3.25
Himachal Pradesh	168	171	3.75
Bhilwara	172	174	3.20
Chindwara	187	188	2.59
Tripura	187	188	4.37
Goa	185	188	3.40

### Other Series of Labour Bureau

Centre	Base	Aug. 1989	Sept. 1989
Digboi	1960	876	858
Ammathi	1960	852	853
Chikmagalur	1960	854	869
Kolar-Gold-			
Field	1960	852	872
Alleppey	1960	913	921
Gwalior	1960	886	918
Sambalpur	1960	938	939
Berhampur	1949	1128	1132
Cuttack	1949	1060	1060

Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number.

—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series.

# The Raniganj Colliery Accident—Facts & Facets

P.K. Ganguly

THE colliery accident which occurred on November 13 at Mahabir Colliery, Raniganj under the Eastern Coalfields Ltd., a subsidiary of the Coal India Ltd., a central public sector undertaking, was not just an accident. It was the inevitable result of long drawn neglect, callousness and refusal on the part of the Government of India to prepare an action plan to prevent the perennial danger of land subsidence in the vast colliery belt which produces more than one third of the coal requirement of the country. About 50 lakh gallons of water were gushed in, trapping 73 workers about 400 ft. underground for about three days, and ultimately six were dead and their bodies have not been found yet.

Despite continuous movement by the CITU and repeated cautioning of a major accident sounded by even Com. Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of W. Bengal to the Union Minister of Energy, Vasant Sathe and to Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister, the Government sat pretty over the years and did nothing to control the danger of subsidence.

The history of coal mining in the Raniganj area dates back to over 150 years. The problem arose and accumulated due to unscientific mining operations adopted by private colliery owners during the decades preceding nationalisation. When the mines were abandoned, no proper plans of the mines were prepared by the owners. With the march of time they got water logged. Numerous ponds and lakes have formed in the open depressions. Mine planning was almost completely non-existent with complete disregard for safety of lives and property.

In a detailed note prepared by the Govt of W. Bengal based on the report on Geological studies by the Geological Survey of India made in 1986, and presented to the Govt. of India in May, 1989, pointed to the following two major and imminent problems confronting the Raniganj Coalfield:

1. Subsidence caused by unscientific underground mining endangering the lives and properties of lakhs of people.
2. Environmental hazards posed by open cast mining.

## Subsidence of Land Surface

Unfortunately, after nationalisation in 1973, the same method of pillar and stall system of working is being followed, albeit with some modification. The pillar formed after extraction of coal were unstable to support the surface land and became more so due to ageing process. Legislations guiding the method of mining have been enacted from time to time. But they are not followed in practice.

Sand stowing of the void spaces in underground mining is absolutely necessary to stop subsidence of the land surface above. But stowing is not being

done in all the mines, as according to the ECL, it is uneconomical, despite the fact that stowing increases the life of the mine and facilitates better extraction and conservation of coal. Stowing is done only in some selected mines above which habitation is there. The others are left void leading to occurrence of subsidence in many areas.

The report of Geological Survey of India had pointed out that as a result of prolonged underground mining and extraction of coal by depillaring, subsidence of land surface had taken place in many localities in the Raniganj coalfield due to formation of goafs (void space) beneath the ground surface. In all these places rounded "caves in" of various sizes with vertical or sloping walls associated with tension cracks are commonly observed. At some places smoke and gases emanate through the cracks indicating the existence of old mine fires in the underground goafs. In addition to instances of subsidence in areas not inhabited, several localities, including residential areas, townships and villages have become unsafe, as these stand on old, abandoned underground mines, the plans of most of which are not available. These may be subjected to subsidence any time. Apart from 31 villages, the townships of Raniganj, Barakar, part of Asansol and part of Jamuria are situated in these subsidence prone areas.

Apart from the above subsidence prone areas with thick population and important townships, a total area of approximately 4600 Ha has already subsided till 1987-88. Since 1978 only, subsidence occurred in 16 places. This apart again, there are 45 locations where void was created prior to nationalisation and which may become subsidence prone in near future.

## Open Cast Mining

Since open cast mining are cheaper in cost and fetch quick returns on capital, there has been a tendency on the part of ECL to opt for it indiscriminately. It requires huge surface area both for mining and for dumping of overburden. Thus it results in eviction of large number of people. Before quarry operations are undertaken, the buildings are vacated, roads and electric lines are uprooted and the trees are uprooted. After abandonment of the quarries, neither the lands are restored to original form, nor the trees uprooted are replanted. The shape of the entire areas undergoes a metamorphic change due to depressions and elevations. The areas get either waterlogged at depressions or absolutely devoid of water with thick bushes on the slopes and basins. There is no attempt either for reclamation of the lands or to repair the environmental damage. The process thus not only displaces the people, but also spoils the agricultural land, environment and ecology. In most of the

collieries mine water is pumped up to the surface infiltrating into the dug wells. Some times this water is supplied to the colliery colonies with or without nominal filtration.

Since heavy explosive charges are used in open cast mines, they cause cracks in old buildings. Though the quarry sites are to be at least 300 metres away from the residential areas, this rule is not observed in many cases. Huge quantity of coal is stacked near the projects leading to self ignition, causing pollution. The entire process of open cast mining starting from quarrying, blasting operation, cutting of coal, transporting, dumping, open stack burning for making soft coke and burning in coke bhettas for hard coke, etc causes noise beyond normal tolerance limit and produces thick cloud of dust and smoke continuously. The entire process thus causes extreme environmental and ecological hazards and pollution.

### Government's Attention Drawn Repeatedly

As already said, the CITU drew the attention of the Government of India, the ECL management and the CIL repeatedly. Continuous and massive movements and conventions drawing all other trade unions and the people have been held during the past several years at Raniganj and in the entire Asansol-Burdwan belt. Massive demonstrations were held before the Head Qrs. of Coal India at Calcutta. Both the question of subsidence and indiscriminate open cast mining were raised by the CITU in the meetings of the Standing Committee on Safety in Coal Mines. But except for giving assurances by the managements of CIL, ECL and the Union Minister of Energy Vasant Sathe, nothing was done by the Government.

Apart from the CITU, the left front Government of W. Bengal and Com. Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister repeatedly drew the attention of the Government of India. In early 1981, the Government of W. Bengal entrusted the Asansol-Durgapur Development Authority (ADDA) to devise a scheme to stabilise the unstable areas in Raniganj. The ADDA devised a scheme for stowing the underground voids/tunnels with sand through surface bore holes with the help of water and compressed air. The Department of Coal, Government of India accepted the Scheme. The Central Mine Planning and Design Institute, Ranchi also made a pilot study of the scheme at Ramjibanpur Colliery of the ECL. But the matter ended there because of "high costs and lack of financial resources."

Due to increasing movements, the ECL constituted a committee to examine the need to control land subsidence. The Committee submitted its report in October, 1986. But there was no follow up action on its recommendations.

The problem of subsidence came up for discussion in the meeting of the State Secretaries of Mining and Geology in New Delhi in February, 1987. The officers of the Central Government informed the meeting that a plan for control of subsidence was already prepared in collaboration with Polish

experts. But it could not be implemented due to financial constraints.

During the period, reports of more and more subsidence were received. Com. Jyoti Basu therefore drew the attention of the Union Energy Minister on Nov. 13, 1987 urging for immediate action to control the situation before it went out of control. But the Government of India did not take any action. Instead, it set up another Committee, viz. Advance Environmental Planning Group for Raniganj Coal-fields. But the matter again ended there. By this time, substantial and serious subsidence of lands were occurring at regular intervals. Com. Jyoti Basu again wrote to the Union Energy Minister on September 13, 1989. Then the reply came from Vasant Sathe. But instead of taking cognizance of the dangerous situation and accepting the Government's responsibility to draw up action plans to control subsidence, the Minister put the blame on the W. Bengal Government for non-implementation of the State legislation restricting constructions in unsafe areas. The Union Minister found it convenient to forget that the Director General of Mines Safety had expressed inability to pinpoint the unsafe areas due to non-availability of the plans of the abandoned mines. It was thus clear that although the Union Minister stated that "since nationalisation the Government of India has been looking into the problem of land subsidence in Raniganj area by various solutions and will discharge its responsibility by applying tested stabilisation techniques to mitigate the problem," he pinpointed to the necessity of "no further constructions" as the only solution to the problem. The Central Government thus appeared to have absolved all responsibilities to check subsidence or to draw up any action plan to control it. Thus all the Committees and plans formulated became irrelevant, even sand stowing could not be done, as all these processes were prone to financial constraints even though the land subsidence may cost the lives of lakhs of people. While the dangerous question of land subsidence was given such an irresponsible treatment by Vasant Sathe, the question of indiscriminate open cast mining, land reclamation, ecology and environment was completely ticked off by him.

Reports of more subsidence came during the period. Com. Jyoti Basu therefore drew the attention of the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi in his letter dated February 15, 1989. He pinpointed to the imminent danger of any major land subsidence any moment. He also demanded prohibition of open cast mining in locations having build-in-areas and agricultural land, or in exceptional cases where open cast minings are to be operated, lay down strict guidelines. He demanded that the guidelines should take care of not only prevention of environmental damage, but also for restoration of the damaged lands to their original form.

But this representation to the Prime Minister also remained unattended to.

The W. Bengal Assembly therefore unanimously adopted a motion on 30th March, 1989 asking the Government of India to take immediate measures to

implement the recommendations of the various Committees to draw up a comprehensive action plan to check land subsidence as well open cast mining and for protection of environment. An all party delegation including the Cong (I) headed by the State Labour Minister, Santi Ghatak meet the Union Energy Minister at Delhi in May, 1989 and submitted a memorandum to him. Based on the report of the Geological Survey of India, the memorandum gave a number of suggestions with the central demand for an action plan in line with the logic of the Ganga Action Plan and demanded its immediate implementation. But again the Government sat pretty with the memorandum. The apprehensions came true resulting in the Mahabir Colliery land subsidence, the most serious after the Chasnala disaster.

The criminal callousness of the Government of India has left the people of the entire township of Raniganj and the adjoining belt and villages in perennial danger. The only way left for the CITU, all other trade unions and the common people is to intensify the agitation unitedly and force the Government of India to take immediate steps to stop further disaster.

### Statement by CITU

*Apart by the CITU Centre, M.K. Pandhe Secretary and Monoranjan Roy, Vice President of CITU issued the following Statement from Calcutta;*

Though the possibility of rescuing the 73 trapped miners has been there, the accident has raised several issues which have far reaching consequences on the question of safety in coal mining industry.

The CITU affiliate Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India has been raising the question of subsidence in Raniganj Coal belt for several years but the Government of India and the CIL management miserably failed to take any action in the matter. During 1985 two cases of subsidence were reported in the same colliery but the ECL management did not take much notice of it.

The Government of West Bengal, seeing the callous attitude of the Central Government took initiative and appointed a Sub-committee in 1985 consisting of representatives of the Burdwan Dist. Administration, Eastern Coal Fields Ltd. Director General of Mines Safety, CMPDIL and Asansol-Durgapur Development Authority to go into question. The Sub-committee recommended 10 measures of precaution to protect the life of the workers and the people living in Raniganj township. We are surprised to note that ECL management continued mining operation ignoring the suggestions given by the Sub-committee while the office of the DGMS failed to ensure implementation of the measures to which its office was also a party. The accident of 13 November could have been averted if these measures would have been fully implemented.

The entire Raniganj township including the railway line is having tunnels and dewatering of these tunnels may lead to serious mishap any moment. The water in these tunnels may join the workings which are below the levels of the earlier mishap.

Since maps of old workings are not available a similar mishap may take place at any time in future. Moreover the question of subsidence has created a permanent threat in the entire Raniganj coal belt. A seminar organised by Coal India in 1982 gave a clear warning of subsidence causing flooding of the new working of coal mines but the ECL management was simply callous to these matters of serious nature.

The Judicial Enquiry may take longer time and it is necessary that Coal India should immediately consider the question of subsidence in right earnest so that urgent steps can be taken to tackle the question of subsidence in an expeditious manner. Since an estimated 75 million tons of coal is still lying below the Raniganj city the question assumes serious importance.

The Mahabir Colliery Mishap has further highlighted the total inadequacy of the Rescue Organisation in Coal industry. Since the Coal Mines Rescue Organisation has been taken over by Coal India recently not much has been done to streamline the Organisation with the result that the rescue work has been considerably delayed.

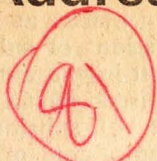
The dewatering of the flooded mine could not be started even after 12 hours had passed since the accident. The drilling of hole to rescue the trapped miners started 40 hours after the mishap. Other rescue equipment had to be brought from a distant place which also consumed considerable period of time. Despite sincerity of the employees involved in rescue work non-availability of necessary equipment in the nearby place has created difficulties in rescue work. The CIL does not even have trained divers to go under water in such an eventuality. It is necessary that CIL should take immediate steps to develop suitable rescue organisation to meet any eventuality that may occur in future.

The CITU affiliated union Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India, Raniganj has severe criticism of the working of internal safety organisation in Mahabir Colliery and other collieries in the region. The Pit Safety Committees are on paper only and workers' suggestions for improvement of Safety are being callously ignored by the management. It is necessary to strengthen the organisation so that safety is given due priority in the coal mines. By and large the workers have no faith in the working of the Internal Safety Organisation in coal industry since the violation of safety rules is rampant in the coal mines in India. The CITU had to give a call for Raniganj Bandh on 14th November only to highlight the strong resentment revailing among the workers on this issue. It is ridiculous to characterise this strike call as politically motivated.

We demand that the CIL management should convene a special session of the Joint Bipartite Committee of Coal Industry (JBCCI) to consider the question of safety in coal mines so that the matter could be discussed at length and safe working conditions are introduced in Indian Coal mines.

# Address to the Federation of All India Transport Workers

B.T. Ranadive



[We are publishing here under the address made by Comrade BTR on the occasion of the Third Conference of the All India Road Transport Workers Federation held at Palghat on September 26-28th, 1989.

— Editor.]

Comrades,

ON behalf of the CITU I convey my greetings for the valuable work which the Road Transport Workers Federation affiliated to the CITU has been doing to defend the interests and the cause of the workers. Meeting here in Kerala I convey my best wishes and warm greetings to the fighting working class of Kerala which has rich traditions of militant struggles, suffering and sacrifice of life for the cause of the working class, people's democracy and socialism. Today, it is called upon to defend the democratic gains enshrined in the establishment of left and democratic ministry against which the Congress-(I) and the communal forces, the RSS, the Muslim League and others are waging an unprincipled anti-democratic agitation. I am confident the entire working class of Kerala with its high political consciousness will continue to battle against these reactionary forces and succeed in defeating their conspiracies and strengthening Left and Democratic Ministry.

The working class of India is passing through unprecedentedly hard conditions, unimagined sufferings and distress. The full effects of the capitalist path adopted by the Congress (I) Government are now before our eyes and we are its victims. More than 1,60,000 concerns are sick. The number of registered unemployed exceeds three crores. More than double of that number unemployed exists in rural areas. This is the balance-sheet of 40 years of capitalist rule, and there is no way out. Every year the number of unemployed must increase. Every year the number of those living below poverty line must increase though the government is statistically proving that it is decreasing; even then it has to admit that at least 37 crores of people are living below the poverty line. A grand achievement of the Congress (I) rule and its capitalist road its virtual monopoly of power for forty years. Only people with an unfathomable sense of callousness can continue to take pride and its rule.

That are the prospects. In 1985, the number of registered unemployed was three crores and the jobs available during the year were less than half a million. How long will it take to absorb the unemployed and new entrants under these conditions? Half a century or a century? Again it was stated in the Parliament that at the end of 1988 the total number

of registered unemployed exceeded three crores. But the number of job available in 1987 — and 1988 did not exceed three lakhs. Every successful Five Year Plan of the Congress-I Government produces a huge crop of unemployed leading to destitution and misery. The Eight Plan is no exception. Besides, new jobs promised by the Planning Commission are often illusory. They are restricted to self-employment or employment in rural industries already overcrowded, with a few jobs in modern organised industry. In fact organised private industry has been showing a declining employment since 1982. This is logical since a large number of industries are either going sick or being closed under the impact of the economic situation.

But this is not the only reason. Simultaneously there is a big drive to increase the competitive capacity of Indian industry by a process of modernisation which renders large number of workers redundant. There is also computer drive which reduces drastically the employment potential in service industries. The measures taken under the Central Government's policy of no new recruitment and increasing workload have also contributed to the present situation.

Behind all this lies the economic policy of the Rajiv Government with its imports liberalisation and invitation to foreign capital to increase the competitive capacity of the Indian industry on the world market. As a result a number of Indian concerns have closed. Indian drug industry has been badly affected.

Comrades,

A concerted struggle against unemployment and the policies engendering it is necessary, a struggle to overhaul the basic policies pursued by the Govt. The DYFI in Kerala and elsewhere and the CITU unions have initiated the struggle to protect the unemployed. But much more united and concerted action of all unions, youth and other organisations is necessary to create a dent in official policies. The immediate demand for statutory unemployment relief is to be accompanied by the right to work to be enshrined in the Constitution as a fundamental right. In these days when the bourgeois press the world over is shouting about the failure of socialism it is necessary to remember that the right to work obtained only under the Constitution of socialist countries. No democratic constitution of any country even of the biggest capitalist countries admits this basic right of the working class.

Comrades,

It is in these conditions of worsening economic

situation in the country and the attacks against working class jobs and standard of living that we have to carry on our struggle and defend our interests. This demands all inclusive unity of the Road Transport Workers, larger and larger mass following of our unions and the capacity to unite with others and carry on the militant and sacrificing tradition of the CITU. Above, all, Comrades, everything depends on our initiative and independent activity to rouse the workers to lead them courageously and secure every benefit possible through struggle, pressure and negotiations. A great responsibility rests on all of you, leaders of the organisation, who are now setting on the course to organise a powerful all India organisation of the Road Transport Workers.

Comrades,

You are aware that absolute chaos prevails in this industry in relation to the conditions of the employed workers taken the country as a whole. It is a growing industry and India's road transport needs are increasing every day. There are thousands of villages in rural area where accessible motor roads do not exist, and yet our conditions can be compared to those industries which are dilapidated, sick and have no chance of growth. Caught between private and state employers, between big and small employers there is no standardisation of wage, no security of service, no permanency of jobs, no protection of labour laws, but only harassment at the hands of the police. No legal norms in fact exist, and privatisation leads to over work and reduction of jobs. The workers demand is, stop to privatisation and for nationalisation of the entire industry so that conditions of work, pay, job, union recognition and application of labour laws are established. It is the practice now not to give a letter of appointment to the worker on joining duty and to keep him hanging for months. This should be immediately stopped. Apart from this it is necessary to amend the Motor Vehicles and Transport Act to meet the difficulties and demands of the workers and above all to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act in consultation with the workers. It is absolutely essential to standardise the wages in the industry on the basis of "equal pay for equal work". Things will be easier for the workers and industry if relief is secured from the heavy taxation on petroleum products, diesel and other goods essential for running the industry.

Comrades,

The demands mentioned above are part of the charter of 30 demands framed by you recently and a grim battle has to be carried for securing them. Our demand regarding reduction of taxes will help in reducing transport charges for the common people and be a source of relief to them.

Comrades,

This task is difficult because we have to meet the authorities in a number of states along with private

employers whose role seems to be increasing every day under the Congress (I) Government policies. A number of Congress (I) State Governments are preparing to transfer road transport to private hands under the plea of constant losses. This policy must be resisted and defeated. The industry can be run with profit if the authorities are prepared to seek workers' participation in running it. The workers do not want to be silent spectators, in a concern run with public money. They want to produce the best results for people's money. But the authorities will not treat the workers as equal in running the industries. The CITU calls for workers' participation on the basis of equal status.

Comrades,

The task spread all over India requires effective solid unity and organisation skill. I am confident that you all will succeed in achieving this difficult task. At your Bhubaneswar convention you passed resolution supporting the demand of the lorry transport workers. The memorandum of the union pointed out that the Lorry Transport system was monopolised by the private businessmen and was often utilised for smuggling and black-marketing. Besides there was continuous victimisation, punishment and transfer of workers. The workers therefore demand nationalisation of the Lorry Transport business, stopping issuance of receipts prior to the presentation of articles, unified transport charges commensurate with the weight of articles and the distance to be covered. Practice of the same company functioning in different names to be stopped. Guarantee for protection of service conditions of workers in case of change of ownership, standardisation of service conditions, bi-partite committees to settle labour issues and application of ESI and Provident Fund to workers should be ensured.

Comrades, we should reiterate our support for these demands.

Comrades,

At the Bhubaneswar Session you passed a special resolution on Tripura on the repression and atrocities faced by our road transport workers under authorisation Congress(I) rule. Since then the situation has not changed, but has actually worsened. During the recent Bandh more than 11 people were killed and more than thousand and half were arrested in Agartala itself. The anti-social gangs continue their rampage against the people of Tripura and against our workers. The people of Tripura and the workers constitute the vanguard of fight against authoritarianism of the Congress(I) and facing the worst outrages with revolutionary zeal to fight the oppressive regime of Rajiv Gandhi. The regime has now been internationally branded as colluding with murderers to dispose of political opponents as suppressors of all trade unions. On a complaint made by the CITU to the ILO Committee against the misdeeds of the Tripura Government, Committee made queries and has arrived at conclusions which virtually indict the Government for

illegal deeds and violation of procedures. As regard to the complaint about the forcible occupation of a CITU union office by the Congress(I) storm troopers ILO Committee has asked the Government to provide further information to the manner in which this specific case of a capture of office belonging to CITU affiliate was attended to as per law. The Committee observes: "The Committee regrets the absence of a climate in the state of Tripura conducive to the development and maintenance of a genuinely free and independent trade union." The Committee further suggests that the Government's collusion with the anti-socials and noted its refusal to take legal actions against those who attack the government's opponents. The Committee further asked the Government to provide information as to the outcome of the investigations into the murders of Gopal Ghosh and Nripendra Rudra Pal including details of the outcome of any relevant court proceedings which may have been instituted in consequence of these investigations."

Comrades,

The gang rape and assaults in Tripura stand in bizarre contrast to Rajiv Gandhi's new promise of transferring power to the people through the Panchayati Raj Bill. For 30 per cent reservation for women promised under the Bill they have to accept gang rape with no punishment to the offenders. The Panchayati Raj Bill provides 30 per cent of Panchayat's expenditure should be spent for benefit of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. But in Tripura the tribals are being deprived of land and other rights secured by them under the Left Front Government.

Comrades,

We all should express our great admiration for the fighting spirit of our Tripura comrades, and with one voice condemn the heinous atrocities practised under the Congress(I) Ministry.

Comrades,

On behalf of you, I send our warm greetings to the fighting comrades in Punjab whose representatives are here. They are fighting the extremist disruptors of national unity despite terrorist attacks. Long is the list of martyrs that have earned glory in this fight against imperialist encouraged secessionist disruption in Punjab.

The name of these martyrs will remain in our memory and the story of the courage of their families, the courage with which they bore their losses and continue to be active in the fight should be told and re-told all over India.

We honour the memory of martyrs from other organisations who fearlessly faced the bullets of the Khalistani assassins.

Comrades,

The great success of the 30th August Bandh was an expression of national discontent and anger against policies of the Rajiv Government with its corruption scandal, its contempt for democracy, its authoritarian functioning, its incompetence to defend national unity against secessionist and communal forces and its anti-national anti-people economic policies which heap misery and destitution on the people and in the bargain endanger the independence and self-reliance of our economy. No wonder, encouraged by our economic helplessness the US imperialists are demanding a right to overcome our economy calling for opening of their invasion in all spheres of our economic activity under the threat of action against USA's 301 Super laws.

I congratulate our working class, all our CITU unions for their grand success in registering their participation and protest through a gigantic nationwide strike action. It is no doubt a matter of regret that all sections of workers and employees did not join the strike. The AIBEA, organisation of Bank employees did the biggest disservice to the common cause by refusing to go on strike. The Central Government employees in many states were intimidated into taking shelter in the office on the night previous to the Bandh day. Some well-paid public sector workers also did not participate. But yet vast sections all over the country participated putting the stamp of the working class on the national protest. This was perhaps the biggest political action of the working class in recent times showing growing awareness in discharging its political responsibility to the country, the people, the democratic movement and the struggle for socialism. There is no doubt that if working class continues to sharpen its consciousness in this way, the struggle of Indian people will undergo a swift and qualitative change.

It is quite clear that the Bandh whose manifestation was to be in the cities and towns would have remained ineffective without the direct participation of the working class. The call was given by several opposition parties and it was endorsed by the leading trade union centres, CITU, HMS, AITUC, UTUC and other constituents of the National Campaign Committee. You will note however that the BMS, one of the constituents of the NCC and dominated by the RSS refused to sign the joint call for resignation of the Rajiv Gandhi. It is the same RSS that organises clashes and conspiracies against the LDF Government in Kerala to render service to the Rajiv Government. The INTUC of course took a forthright stand to dissociate itself from the Bandh. All this shows that much broader and wider unity is still required to bring the entire weight of the working class into action without which a new correlation of political forces more favourable to the democratic movement cannot be brought about.

Comrades

The 30th August Bandh expressed the demand of

the people to remove the Rajiv Government from power in the coming elections. The battle has to be carried forward in the coming months. The statement of Left parties calling for the Bandh and the demands put forward, constitute the only correct basis to carry forward the struggle against the Rajiv Government and safeguard the interest of the people and Indian democracy and unity. While urging the pressing demands of the masses including land reforms and calling for Rajiv's resignation, the statement calls for the isolation of communal and divisive forces so that unity of the country is protected and its independence is strengthened. Many opposition parties do not realise that you cannot advance the cause of Indian unity and democracy by opportunistically aligning with the reactionary organisations like the RSS, the BJP, the Muslim League and others. But the working class movement with its slogan of "workers of the world unite," which unites all on the basis of class interest irrespective of caste, religion and creed cannot forget its duty to fight these forces when they are dividing the country on the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi issue or raising the secessionist slogan of Khalistan which suits the interests of US imperialism to divide the country. The working class and the trade union movement must throw their weight decisively in favour of the demands raised by the Left parties.

Comrades,

Some people concentrate only on the corruption scandal of the Rajiv Gandhi Govt. These are serious enough no doubt especially when they are connected with defence security. But the incompetence and failure to keep the country together, the utter failure in Punjab to deal with the secessionist challenge, the failure in UP to take decisive steps to defuse the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi issue and the refusal of the ruling party to throw its mass weight against this challenge constitute the gravest crime against the country. The working class must be seized of this fact and array its forces accordingly to meet the danger and defeat the divisive forces.

In this great battle between the forces of authoritarianism and the forces of Indian democracy in the coming elections, battle between Congress(I) and the secular opposition and left parties, the Left Front Governments of Kerala and West Bengal play an important and crucial role. They have shown how to defend democracy, national unity and common man's interests. Despite heavy limitations of the bourgeois-landlord constitutions, they have distinguished themselves by their refusal to use anti-people laws enacted by the Congress(I) Governments and have protected the democratic rights of the people. They have lent their weight to the defence of the legitimate and urgent demands of the working class, peasantry and the working people as a whole. They have thrown the weight of the administration to defend national unity and fight anti-national forces. Because they constitute the advance outposts of the democratic struggle, the Congress (I) and the Central Government concentrate all their fire and slanders against them. The

Rajiv Government discriminate against them and of late has reduced the food quota to these states to create economic difficulties and incite the people against them. In Kerala the Rajiv Government arbitrarily reduced the food quota allotted to the state forcing high prices on people and disturbing the public distribution system. When a complaint was lodged against this arbitrary reduction Rajiv had to effrontery to say that Kerala should not come with a "begging bowl" to the centre. This was nothing but a repudiation of the national responsibility of the Centre to ensure proper distribution of country's food resources among all the states.

Of late both in West Bengal and Kerala Congress (I) campaign against two Governments have reached a new crescendo. Slandorous charges of CPI(M) indulging in violence, murder, loot are made and a demand is raised for the dismissal of the two Governments. Clashes have been organised resulting in violence and the cry is raised that the law and order has broken down. In these clashes large number of CPI (M) cadres are also killed. During the Bandh four CPI(M) cadres were killed in clashes with the Congress(I) and Muslim League and in the recent month nearly 11 CPI(M) cadres have lost their lives. But the Congress(I) and its allies continue to charge CPI(M) with violence. The entire working class must be ready to combat this offensive, frustrate the Congress(I) game to incite public opinion against the ministry. It must also warn against any adventurous step on the part of the Central Government.

Comrades,

The coming months, will be months of continuous struggle and unity for the democratic forces to fight the elections and oust the Rajiv Government. Our unions and working class must play its part in this great struggle to save democracy, national unity and integration.

Comrades,

Let me finally refer to the recent developments in the international situation. In the final analysis our struggle for emancipation and socialism depends on how strong the world movement and how we have succeeded in cornering world imperialism. Recent developments connected with China shows that imperialism is very active in helping counter-revolutionary forces to defeat socialism whenever opportunity offers itself to the imperialist countries. The so-called student struggle in China was nothing but an attempt to organise counter-revolution and change the socialist system and restore capitalism. The imperialist support of it shows notwithstanding tall talk of moderation of contradictions between imperialism and socialism, imperialism will never miss the opportunity to undermine the socialist system. Secondly, another important event was comrade Gorbachev's visit to China announcing the first step of normalisation of relationship between the two great socialist countries which stood apart in estrangement and ill-feeling for the 30 years. The CITU ardently hopes that this initial normalisation within the framework of peaceful co-existence and non-interference will soon flower into earlier fraternal

relations based on proletarian internationalism which secured mighty victories for socialism taking away one-third of the world to socialist camp.

Comrades,

All over the country the working class and people of all countries are lending their full support to the efforts of the Soviet Union to maintain peace, fight against the danger of nuclear war and struggle for elimination of all nuclear weapons. But the hard fact is that the US imperialists instead of responding to the various moves made by the Soviet Union in furtherance of the cause of peace and elimination of nuclear weapons are attempting to build a huge nuclear arsenal for the purpose of space war. This is the hard reality which cannot be wished away by the fanciful pictures of imperialist desire for peace and detente. The working class and the world must

be fully warned against this. They should not be entrapped in any illusion and should persevere in the struggle for peace understanding that it is a part of the inevitable class struggle against imperialism and its policies. Any idea that the successful struggle for peace can be based on rejection of class struggle is a fallacious conception.

And finally, comrades, all of us should send warm greetings and congratulations to the Government of People's China and the Communist Party of China for their success in defeating the attempt of counter-revolution and keeping the socialist system in tact. Any failure here would have met throwing the world movement decades back. We all hope that the Government of People's China and the Communist Party will continue to bring further successes to the system in China leading to the growing solution of the problem of the transitional period.

## Com. La Passionaria

THE Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the passing away of Com. Dolores Ibaruri, popularly known as La Passionaria on November 12 at Madrid. Born in a miner's family in Gallatra, Spain in December, 1895, Com. Passionaria became a legendary name in the Spanish Civil War and international working class and communist movement. She became an activist organising the working class movement, particularly the mining workers and joined the Spanish Socialist Party in 1917. With the triumph of the October revolution, she got attracted towards Marxism-Leninism and joined the Communist Party of Spain in 1920. By dint of her indefatigable qualities she carried forward the working class movement and led several strikes in Spain. She was jailed and tortured. Abject poverty led to the death of her only child. But nothing could deter her from spreading the communist movement in the country. She was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1930. After the abolition of monarchy in Spain in 1930 she became the most dynamic leader of the women's movement in the country. She attended the first International Congress of Women held at Paris in 1934 against war and fascism. In 1935 she attended the famous 7th Congress of the Communist International at Moscow, where Com. Georgi Dimitrov placed his famous thesis on United Front against fascism. Coming back home, she worked untiringly to form the Popular Front to fight the fascism unleashed by General Franco. Her indomitable qualities of leadership was revealed during the civil war, when she acquired the popular name, La Passionaria from her call, "No Pasaran" (They Shall Not Pass). The formation of the Popular Front with the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Republican Party and her writings and speeches had electrifying effect not only in Spain, but in the whole of Europe and led to

the formation of the International Brigade to fight fascism. She became the General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1942. After the defeat of the Republican Army however, she had to leave Spain and live in Moscow in exile. She returned to Spain in 1977 after the death of Franco and again plunged herself in organising the Communist movement, the peasant movement and the trade unions despite her advancing age.

The life and unflinching struggle of Com. La Passionaria will serve as a beacon light to the working class and the people, fighting for democracy, peace and socialism throughout the world with the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

### AIDWA Sends Telegramme

The following telegramme was sent by Vimal Ranadive, Vice President of AIDWA to the Communist Party of Spain on the death of Com. La Passionaria:

Communist Party of Spain, Madrid

Deeply grieved at the death of Dolores Ibaruri La Passionaria, a great revolutionary, communist and fighter for women's rights. Her life will stand as unfailing inspiration for the millions of oppressed women the world over, to rise like her and fight for emancipation and freedom, without fear, with confidence in ultimate victory.

### France

#### More Women Unemployed

In a recently published report, the French national statistics office (INSEE) points out that the average unemployment level for women is 30 per cent higher than that for men. Women in outlying regions—the Mediterranean region, the Atlantic coast and the northeast—are worst affected. The study shows that the highest proportion of women in the labour force—44.5 per cent, is in the Ille-de-France region (around Paris) while in the north west (Lower Normandy) the figure is 43 per cent.

# Second International Miners Congress

M. K. Pandhe

**T**HE Second Congress of the International Miner's Organisation held at Cairo (Egypt) from October 29 to November 2 was the largest ever held Congress of the miners in the world. It was attended by 112 delegates belonging to 50 National Organisations from 46 countries and 10 International Organisations representing over 6 million miners from all the continents.

The IMO formed in 1985 at its inaugural Congress in Paris, brought together constituents of WFTU and the ICFTU as well as several organisations not affiliated to either of the organisations. The National Union of Miners in U.K. after the historic miners strike during 1984-85 played an important role in bringing about this unity.

Fouad Darahem, President, Egyptian General Trade Union of Mining and Quarrying Workers welcoming the delegates appreciated that the Congress was being held in a developing country.

Arthur Scargill, President, IMO in his Presidential Address characterised the IMO as "not only the largest mining and energy union in the world, but is over twice the size of the two former divided miner's internationals: the Miners Trade Union International (WFTU) and the Miners International Federation (ICFTU)". Scargill paid glowing tributes to the British coal miners' strike and strongly condemned the Thatcher Government for her attempts to suppress the strike with all available weapons in the armory of the Tory Government. He thanked the miners all over the world for the timely help given to the British Coal miners during the great strike.

Underlining the crisis in mining industries in capitalist countries Scargill pointed out, "Among the capitalist countries, we have seen near total destruction of mining in Belgium, a savage cut back in France, the mining industry of Britain reduced — in terms of out-put, producing pits and workforce — by two thirds. In the United States mines have been closing at an alarming rate, and the workforce there is down by about two-thirds compared with ten years ago."

Criticising the role of Multi-National Corporations, who have been using new technology to subjugate the miners, the IMO President observed, "Just as today they are using the Black mine workers of South Africa, whose working conditions slavish, and child labour in Colombia, as weapons to force down coal price in Western Europe, they will use the new technology of Western Europe to force down wages of the workers of Africa and Latin America."

Emphasising the need to fight for the preservation of world peace and environment Scargill stressed,

"out task, as miners and trade unionists is to connect our particular struggle with all other struggles and forces seeking to create a safe world fit for our children and all the generations to come."

Alain Simon, General Secretary IMO in his Report to the Congress noted that the crisis in capitalist system deteriorated during the last 4 years. The spokesmen of the capitalists started saying that mining was a sunset industry and had no future due to "narrowing" of market. This has resulted in growing unemployment. "The countries of the OECD have thirty million unemployed," Simon continued. "In the majority of European countries, salary increase to the tune of 20 to 25 per cent compensate the loss in purchasing power that occurred over a few years."

Regarding the developing countries he said, "...one can hardly refer any more to the checking of the development process, but rather of its reversal. Looting of their resources, in general, and mining resources in particular, is on the increase." Quoting from UN statistics, the General Secretary IMO said, "Seven hundred and eighty million people suffer from malnutrition, while forty million, more than half of whom are children, die every year. Eleven million nurslings die before they are one year old. One hundred and twenty million have no access to school. Eight hundred million persons are illiterate. Two thousand million lack water. One and a half billion are totally deprived of medical care. Three hundred million are unemployed." He held Multinational Corporations solely responsible for the state of affairs. The mining workers in developing countries cannot ignore these hard realities of life.

Condemning the role played by the World Bank and the IMF, Simon pointed out, "It is the IMF that imposes on all indebted countries on pretence of rationalising, all the privatisations austerity, authoritative action and calling in question of rights that have been gained."

He highlighted the importance of the problem of ecology and environment and advocated a worldwide programme to preserve nature. He appreciated the remarkable work done by the IMO and stressed the need for further strengthening of the activities of the organisation in all the continents.

About 50 speakers who spoke in the debate narrated their experiences in improving the working and living conditions of the miners. The speakers from capitalist countries emphasised the threat to the jobs of miners and the attacks on T.U. and democratic rights of miners. The speakers spoke on problems of safety and environment and the struggle against Multinational Corporations. They suggest-

ed improvement in co-ordinating the activities of the miners all over the world so that miners' interests could be effectively protected. Prominent among those who spoke were John Maitland (Australia), Mikhael Srebrey (USSR), Peter Heathfield (Britain), Rudolf Barbrick (GDR), Vladimir Polednik (Czechoslovakia), Jhon Antinao (Chile), Marcel Golding (South Africa), Anthea Billy (Namibia), Mohamed Skaik (Palestine), Rafael Aguilar (Nicaragua), Dinh Thuna (Vietnam) and Alyson Kennedy (USA).

M.K. Pandhe, President All India Coal Workers Federation, observed that despite huge reserves of minerals in India mining industry has not been properly developed. He criticised the high prices charged by Multinational Corporations for the mining equipment and spares which added to the cost of production. India is forced to export good quality of minerals at cheap prices due to the terms directed by advanced capitalist countries. He criticised the Government of India for using new technology to hit the miners' interests with the result that unemployment is growing. Several cases of selection of wrong technology had affected the development of mining industry adding to the frittering away of national resources.

He explained the shocking working and living conditions of the miners in India and how accidents are growing due to non-observation of safety rules. He narrated how the coal workers organised three nationwide strikes since the foundation of IMO on pressing demands of the coal miners. The contribution of Rs one crore for the South African peoples' struggle against Apartheid by the coal miners was an inspiring example of fraternal solidarity. He also pointed out the struggle conducted by the miners in India against the anti-working class Industrial Relations Bill.

In conclusion Pandhe emphasised the need for further international actions by the mine workers to protect their working and living conditions and to preserve world peace by defeating all the machinations of imperialist powers.

The Congress adopted resolutions on struggle against Multinational Corporations in mining, on withdrawal of US military bases in Philippines, supporting the liberation struggle of the people of Palestine, on strengthening of the struggle for disarmament and world peace, on solution of Afghanistan problem within the frame work of Geneva agreement and on the question of Cyprus.

John Maitland announced the IMO proposals for co-ordination in South East Asian and Pacific Region.

The Congress re-elected Arthur Scargill as President, Mikhail Srebny and John Maitland as Vice Presidents, Alain Simon as General Secretary, Valery Chestakov and Radko Stantexhev as Secretaries.

It also elected 14 member Executive Bureau and 19 member Executive Committee. It also elected 6 sub-committees on various aspects of IMO activities.

In his concluding remarks IMO President Scargill called upon the IMO constituents to carry forward the struggle against capitalist exploitation in mining industry in a more determined manner.

## United Strike of Airlines Engineers

THE serious disturbance of Indian Airlines flight since 15th November caused a great deal of inconvenience to several thousands of passengers in India. This was due to the adamant attitude of IA management which resulted in the strike of over 750 Maintenance Engineers who were demanding parity of pay scales and other benefits at par with Air India Maintenance Engineers. The engineers were also protesting against inadequate training facilities available in Air India Training Centre at Hyderabad for for the AB 320 flights.

The Indian Airlines management instead of accepting the reasonable demands of the Maintenance Engineers preferred to operate the flight with only 150 engineers and drastically changed the flight schedules resulting in a loss of millions of rupees per day. About 60 flights were cancelled by Indian Airlines every day.

Seeing the unity of the Maintenance Engineers the Indian Airlines managements resorted to vindictive action against leading activities of All India Aircraft Engineers Association. It suspended 22 engineers while 18 more engineers who were on probations were reverted to their junior positions. The management further threatened to retire the engineers who crossed the age of 55 years.

The IA management had been trying to restrict the trade union rights of these engineers on the plea that they were not workmen. Attempts are reported to have been made to constitute a Wage Board for all the Civil Aviation employees in India. However, despite these vindictive measures of the management the Maintenance Engineers have been unitedly carrying forward their struggle unitedly. The dispute is pending before the office of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) but no much progress has been made so far.

The CITU has supported the striking Maintenance Engineers and urged upon the Indian Airlines management to settle the longstanding issues through negotiations with the representatives of All India Aircraft Engineers Association.

# CITU Welcomes COSATU Delegation

A four-man delegation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the pioneer federation of the South African Trade Unions visited India for about three weeks in October. The formation of the COSATU in 1985 was a significant development of the trade union struggle in South Africa, as it brought both the black and white unions on the common platform to fight the apartheid white minority regime. The membership of the COSATU crossed over one million within four years of its formation. It gave a big boost to the struggle of the African National Congress for dismantling apartheid and creation of a free, non-racial and democratic State of South Africa based on its Freedom Charter.

Since its formation, the COSATU have been very keen to develop fraternal relation with the CITU and the Indian Trade Union movement. This was their third visit to India. The last time they came was in 1987, when a delegation attended the 5th Conference of the CITU in Bombay. This time they attended the 63rd Annual Convention of the All India Railwaymen's Federation held at Calcutta from October 16-18 and wanted some free time with the CITU at Tamilnadu, W. Bengal and Delhi.

The delegation consisted of Thomas Hlatshwayo, Linda Lindelihle Mngadi, Abraham Stephen Mthembu and Bhekizezwe Zabulon Nagidi. They were accompanied by John Fischer of Commonwealth Trade Union Council, which sponsored their tour.

The delegation first visited Tamilnadu from October 9-12 and then came down to Calcutta on October 13. In both the states, the State Committees of the CITU accorded big ovations to the delegates and organised workers meetings, meetings of working women and took them to several factories including public sector units. On 16th October they attended the Conference of the AIRF at Calcutta.

In their last leg of the Indian tour the delegation came to Delhi and visited the Central office of the CITU on October 25. They were accompanied by Com. Musa Moolla, the Chief Representative of the African National Congress in India and Com. Impechle, who will be taking over charge from Com. Moolla as the Chief Representative shortly.

They were received in the CITU office by Comrades Vimal Ranadive, Jibon Roy and P K Ganguly, Secretaries. The delegation exchanged views and informations about the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. A meeting with the leaders and activists of the Co-ordination Committee of Working Women was held thereafter. Among those who were present in the meeting were besides Vimal Ranadive, Nina Rao, Kishori, Pramila Pandhe, Kalindi Deshpande, Shamkali, Asha, Kanchan, etc.

A workers' meeting was held in the evening which was attended by about 300 workers representing both the public and private sectors. The Parcham

Group rendered a few revolutionary songs on the South African struggle. The meeting was presided over by Vimal Ranadive. Jibon Roy introduced the delegates to the audience. Welcoming the delegates, P.K. Ganguly, extended unstinted support of the CITU to the valiant struggle of the South African people against the apartheid regime. He commended the formation of the COSATU uniting the black and white unions which immensely contributed to the advance of the uncompromising struggle against the hated apartheid regime under the leadership of the ANC by mobilising millions of workers from all sections. He denounced the imperialist powers like Britain and America who were giving open support to the racist regime. It was because of the pressure of the relentless struggle that the regime was forced to release Walter Sisulu and seven other political leaders, and give permission to the ANC to hold its mass rally on October 29 after 30 years. He reiterated the CITU's demand for total dismantling of apartheid, release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners and full and mandatory sanctions against the regime.

Speaking on the occasion, Com. Thomas Hlatshwayo, the leader of the COSATU delegation, Com. Impechle and Com. Musa Moolla gave vivid descriptions of the barbarous practice and torture being perpetrated by the racist regime. People and even children were being shot down like dogs. The recent pronouncements by the new President F.W. De Clark were all aimed at sham reforms which the people have rejected. The detestable structure and framework of apartheid remains. The Bantustans and all other apartheid laws remain. The emergency remains, the ban on the ANC, the South African Communist Party and the United Democratic Front remains, and Nelson Mandela and hundreds of other political prisoners still remain in jails for the last 26 years. They said that the regime would have collapsed long ago but for the support received from the imperialist countries. But the pressure of the struggle was isolating the apartheid Government and its imperialist supporters. Com. Moolla gave the example of isolation of Margaret Thatcher in the CHOGM meeting. They extended their heartfelt thanks to the CITU for its total support to the struggle and asserted that the struggle will continue till the apartheid structure is uprooted in its entirety and a free, non-racial democratic South Africa is born.

John Fisher of CTUC assured of all efforts to continue sponsoring of such delegation in future, which they are doing in all the Commonwealth countries. Com. Nina Rao gave a running translation the Hindi of all the speeches.

On behalf of the CITU, Vimal Ranadive presented a memento to the COSATU and a cheque of Rs 12,445/- to the ANC as token of CITU's support. The meeting ended with two revolutionary songs rendered by the COSATU delegates and deafening slogans.

# International Literacy Year (1990)

## An Appeal to Workers' Organisations by the UNESCO in Collaboration with the ILO

IN December 1987 the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 1990 as International Literacy Year and invited UNESCO to assume the role of lead organization in its preparation and observance. Responsibility for the international year proclaimed in the United Nations system is incumbent on all the international institutions, and the International Labour Organisation, collaborating with UNESCO in this field, wishes to stress the importance of the right to education, recognized as a fundamental right by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The right to education in the main challenge in our contemporary society, at a moment when illiteracy, which is a violation of this right, continue to marginalize an important section of mankind and excludes a human resources potential, necessary to the progress of societies, from participating in the work of development and sharing its benefits. This marginalization is all the more frustrating, indeed revolting, in that inequality of access to knowledge goes hand-in-hand with inequality of access to well-being, and the advances made by science and technology and the resultant social and economic improvements have only widened the gap separating the privileged and the underprivileged. The ethical concern that inspires literacy affects the very dignity of man; it fits together with the demand to make full use of all the human resources that could contribute to economic, social and cultural development.

To enable an individual or a social group to read and write is to give them the means of expression and the basic instruments necessary for their participation in decisions concerning their living conditions and their future. From this point of view, literacy is an essential pre-condition for the effective exercise of most of the rights proclaimed by the Universal Declaration.

In particular, there is a close connection between guaranteeing the right to work and promoting the effective exercise of the right to education. For without a minimum of instruction and culture there can be no improvements in the living conditions of workers in cities and rural areas, nor changes in apprenticeship conditions. Without the elementary freedom which consists in being able to read and write — and of which almost 900 million adults are deprived, there can be no active participation of workers either in the production of goods or in the management of community affairs.

To guarantee the freedom to choose the representatives of the citizens and the workers, while the laws in some countries still make a distinction between the literate and the illiterate, and where millions of men and women cannot exercise their right to vote with a full understanding of the realities involved because they can neither read nor write,

makes no sense. The fact of being literate does not automatically mean an increased participation in political and trade union institutions, but it must give individuals the means of this participation. Of course, it is possible for illiterates to take part in political and trade union activities within their community and/or work place, or any other organisation that represents them; but it is increasingly difficult for them to hold positions of responsibility and, beyond the local level, their participation in these institutions is virtually impossible.

Literacy by itself does not create a just and fully egalitarian society; however it plays an important role in establishing and maintaining the mechanisms of participation and is the key instrument of all social changes. Literacy, like education in general, is a political act having its roots in socio-economic reality. In all societies the right to work and the free choice of an occupation are becoming increasingly dependent on the ability to read and write. It is a platitude to say that those jobs which require the least qualifications, offer the fewest chances of promotion, and which are the most hazardous as regards physical and moral health, are restricted to those who cannot read or write. When economic activity declines, the least educated elements in a population are the first to suffer from recession and unemployment. A minimum ability to read and write is necessary, and will become increasingly so, in order to find employment and enter the labour market. This is all the more true in the present difficult economic situation.

However, especially in current situation, the acquisition of literacy does not automatically guarantee access to employment. It is nonetheless true that illiteracy seriously impedes the integration, or reintegration, of young people seeking employment or of unemployed workers, especially at the present time when technological changes imply continual occupational reconversions. Evolution in the technological field, moreover, requires that everyone should possess solid basic skills and knowledge and be able to adapt them to new situations. A sound literacy, supplemented by functional post literacy training, adapted specifically to each situation, should enable everyone to face the enormous changes brought about by rapid scientific and technological developments and the changes that affect employment structures as well as living and working conditions.

The observance of International Literacy Year is an occasion for all workers' organizations to lend their support to the struggle against the scourge of illiteracy, unacceptable to any democratic society worthy of the name. It presents an opportunity for them to mobilize their resources so that mankind will be able to face the 21st century without the shame of knowing that there are still men and women living in ignorance and poverty. It is a duty of justice, of solidarity, of human progress.

# Penetration of Transnational Corporations into Indian Economy

*(We are publishing hereunder in abridged form of an article from the World Trade Union Movement of September, 1989 —Ed)*

**T**HE role of transnational corporations in the Indian economy has assumed alarming proportions in recent years. This is because of an increase in the amount of foreign financial and technological collaboration. The total number of such collaboration agreements signed in the seventies was about 200. In the last two years alone the number approved has jumped to 1,779.

Historically, transnational corporations in independent India represent a continuation of the foreign investment in colonial times, but using new forms. At the time of independence, foreign business investment in India amounted to Rs 3,204 millions of which 72 per cent was British and only about six per cent US. The main areas of investment were manufacturing, mining, utilities, transport, trading, finance and plantation. Since it achieved independence, India has been among the ten countries which account for more than 50 per cent of the total direct investment by TNCs in the developing countries. The major source has of course been the USA, with the FRG and Japan catching up fast in recent years.

Between 1948 and 1979, the total nominal sum of foreign investment in India increased eight fold, 73 per cent in companies controlled by foreign capital and 26.5 per cent in foreign subsidiaries. TNCs have emerged as an important factor in determining the position of foreign capital in India.

This process has been facilitated by private capital in India becoming the champions of TNCs, pleading for joint ventures. The World Bank further opened up the Indian economy to TNCs through tied concessional loans. Bilateral government to government concessional loans too helped. Most of the major TNCs with annual turnovers more than India's central budget are operating in India. They include such names as the notorious ITT which was involved in the overthrow of the Allende Government in Chile, Philips, Hoechst, BASF, Bayer, Nestle, Unilever, ICI, British American Tobacco, Hitachi, Union Carbide, Goodyear Tyre and Rubber, General Electric, Siemen, Westinghouse, Mitsubishi to name a few. And now Shell is back, along with British Petroleum and Chevron-Texaco — all notorious for their oil supply to the racist regime in South Africa. For a long time, India has imposed restrictions on foreign financial investment. The policy has now changed. Liberalisation has led to a situation in which a foreign investor does not have to seek an Indian collaborator to invest in India. After making their initial investment they can sell shares to Indians to keep the foreign share within the normal limit of 40 per cent. Naturally, equity participation is on the increase.

TNC operations in India are taking a wide variety of forms. In the sixties, they managed to convert

India's import substitution programme into what might be called 'export substitution'. They substituted their exports of a certain range of products to India by starting subsidiaries for their local manufacture, adapting themselves to India's policy of import substitution.

These industries required low investment, medium and in some cases high-level technology, and ensured high profits. Apart from consumer products, including durables, the other areas that opened up were intermediate goods (mainly chemicals) and some basic capital goods, particularly in the electrical industry. TNCs for instance, continue to be a major factor in the tea, tobacco and drugs and pharmaceutical industries.

Taking advantage of the policy of export promotion of the government, TNCs are encouraging specialisation in certain components for export for assembly in third world countries. This form of collaboration is also applicable to the Indian partner undertaking certain stages of production, processing semi-processed goods imported from the TNCs or producing semi-processed goods for export to markets determined by the TNCs.

Such a pattern of collaboration has many advantages for the TNCs concerned, intensive use of unskilled, cheap labour, a limited production cycle, minimal technology transfer, and perpetuation of dependence through threats of sudden transfer of locally set up facilities involving sudden unemployment and loss of even limited foreign exchange from exports.

TNCs in India are making full use of the facilities offered by the export processing zones, which provide for many tax and duty concessions to encourage transfer of technology and exports. These zones have become production bases for TNCs for trade with the East European countries.

The import content of the goods exported is fairly high. This has to be paid for in foreign exchange, while the return from exports is in rupees. The TNCs thus have the advantage of earning from their exports to the export processing zones in India, of cheap labour for manufacturing the finished product, lower production costs because of various concessions and, above all, the expertise of Indian exporters in dealing with the East European markets. As far as exports from the export processing zones are concerned, they usually come up against protectionism in the countries of origin of the TNCs. The level of tariff protection increases with the degree of processing of the product concerned. Thus the export processing zones earn only the minimum of foreign exchange from exports.

The operations of the TNCs thus have a negative effect on the balance of payments position of India. This is because imports are higher than exports as the TNCs encourage increase in the consumption of products with a high import content. Furthermore intra-company trade and

transfer prices aggravate the balance of payments problem.

A recent study by the Reserve Bank of India reveals that between 1982-83 and 1984-85, the foreign exchange outflow of 208 foreign controlled rupee companies was much more than their export earnings.

It is also significant that, despite a marginal decline in operating profits and a higher effective tax there was a rise in the remittances made by these companies. Remittances by TNCs from India include not only dividends and profits but also fees for technical services rendered, royalties, payments to foreign technical and managerial staff and so on.

To take the US TNCs in India alone, their remittances increased from a mere Rs 191 millions 1974-75 to Rs 2,290 millions 1984-85. Between 1985-86 and 1986-87, remittances of foreign collaborators rose from Rs 6,971 millions to Rs 8,135 millions. In this context it is interesting to note that a relatively small share of TNC investment originates in the home countries. This ensures management control and no loss in profits for the TNCs concerned.

At the same time, the foreign investor successfully competes with national enterprises for the limited local capital resources. In this manner, the TNCs are directing the pattern of investment with regard to both products and markets. Actually, with a higher capital base the quantum of profits repatriated has gone up.

The Indian experience shows that even minority share-holding can ensure control by TNCs, particularly when the shares are widely distributed with no other individual or group holding a substantial number. Thus, the official measure of a foreign company in India, based on the percentage of shares held by the foreign partner in relation to Indians, without relation to the linkages of the company concerned with other TNCs, underestimates the real impact of TNCs in the Indian economy. Thus Lintas, a branch of Unilever, and Lipton, which has been taken over by Unilever, are considered separate companies. A similar distinction is made between ITC, part of British American Tobacco, and Vazir Sultan; India Foils and Y.I. Group, GEC and Marconi International, Siemens-Philips and Polydor, and so on.

Thus the mere number of companies and the relative shareholdings of the TNCs do not provide a real idea of the magnitude of their operations and their influence on the Indian economy. A correct picture of even the actual investment involved is not often available, as part of the equity is in the form of technology and even some intangible assets. What is more, association with Indian partners ensures easier access to Indian decision making areas.

This is evident today from the increasing influence of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, which has always been the official union of foreign business houses operating in India.

Coming to the key question of technology transfer, there are two aspects to this question. First is the matter of effective demand and, secondly, the type of technology transferred and the conditions attach-

ed to the transfer. The demand for technology is dependent on the consumption pattern of the dominant classes. In the case of India, it has so far been decided by the civil and military bureaucracy, the professional and political elite and the capitalist class with their basic demand for consumption goods. This has suited the interests of the TNCs as well.

Secondly, in the more substantial areas of economic development, the technologies available have been designed to meet the needs of the advanced countries. They are usually labour-saving and for goods required by average-income groups in these countries. In a labour surplus economy and with income levels of vast masses below the average of the advanced countries, neither the technology nor the goods are often such as to meet our needs. Thus what has emerged is an enclave type of development. Studies conducted in India reveal that the imported technical services and capital goods from the TNCs only augment the capacity of the technology importing firm.

In only 50 per cent of the cases has, the acquired know-how or the product, processes, methods and operating skills been adequate for manufacturing new or improved products without having to resort to further imports.

There has been no overall flow of technological knowledge through collaborations with TNCs as, in two-thirds of the cases, know-how or the knowledge of implementing technological change has not been part of the collaboration agreement.

Given India's level of development, its massive market and the market crisis that has emerged in the Latin American countries and even to some extent in the so called newly industrialised countries of Asia, the TNCs are very much interested in the Indian market.

Japan, the FRG and the US are competing. The current policies are also favourable to TNCs, and India provides a more lucrative market than many small and more pliable countries put together. The export drive makes it possible to build large capacities, reduce the cost of production and secure higher profits for the TNCs by competing more effectively both in the home markets of the TNCs and elsewhere.

But India also has the advantage of its growing economic and technological cooperation with the USSR. The first task is to identify our priorities in the national interest. We must next identify the resources already available in the country. Then we must identify technologies that have to be imported and the most suitable source, TNCs should really be the last option. Technology imports, while liberated from procedural bottlenecks, cannot be left to the whims of the private sector. It must be under state control.

Transnational corporations are not invincible. They do not have to determine the configuration of science and technology in India, with its developed and diversified industrial base and science and technology pool and skills. It is necessary to bridge the gap that has developed between national R&D, national science and technology and national industry. The organised working class movement must play a part

in establishing the organic link between these components of national development.

In the struggle against the domination of the economy by the TNCs, the established trade unions will have to bridge the gap between themselves and professional organisations and class organisations of the rural poor and the unorganised urban labour to help the fusion of the scientific and technological revolution in India and far reaching social transformation. It is within such a perspective that the Indian working class can work jointly with other components of the Indian economy.

### Who is Investing in India ?

Out of 853 foreign collaborations approved in 1987, financial collaboration accounted for 242; the respective figures in 1988 were 926 and 282. Transfer of technology was involved in 487 cases and transfer of drawings and designs in 158 cases. The areas covered were industrial machinery, chemicals, fertilisers, ceramics, industrial instruments and machine tools.

Collaboration on machine tools almost doubled in one year. Between 1987 and 1988, total foreign investment also doubled from Rs 1,070 millions to Rs 2,380 millions.

The USA has emerged as the major investor, with its contribution rising from Rs 290 millions 1987 to Rs 960 millions in 1988. During the same period, investment from the FRG rose from Rs 95.6 millions to Rs 309 millions and from Japan from Rs 69 millions to Rs 160 millions.

## Stop All Apartheid Executions

THE South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) has called upon the people throughout South Africa to commemorate November 6, 1989 — the 25th Anniversary of the execution of Vuyisile Mini, the SACTU executive, a poet and a song writer, as a day of solidarity with trade unionists and workers facing repression.

Mini, together with two other prominent ANC members, Wilson Khayinga and Zinakile Mkhaba was convicted of sabotage and complicity in the death of a police informer.

Mini, who joined the ANC at the age of 17, became a full time organiser of dock workers in 1955. He played a key role in the affiliation of the PE Stevedoring and Dock Workers' Union to SACTU. He was one of the 156 people arrested in the marathon

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1956 prison trial. After the trial collapsed, Mini helped to form the General Workers' Union in PE. He was also involved in a protracted bus boycott in the area.

Mini, Khayinga and Mkhaba are remembered for their spirit of militancy and dedication to the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

Since September 6, 1989, when De Klerk came to power, he has served 24 notices of execution of political and trade union activists. Twelve hangings have already been carried out.

The past 25 years have witnessed thousands of hangings. Pretoria has one of the highest execution rates in the world. Death Row has become a death factory with special gallows constructed to hang seven people simultaneously. Among the hundreds currently awaiting execution are over 70 political activists, including the soldiers of Umkhonto We Sizwe.

## America's Health Care Crisis

THE International Centre for Trade Union Rights reports that America's working people and their families are facing a terrible health care crisis. The effects of this crisis can be seen in the two great labour struggles taking place in New York City. Since August 4th, 60,000 union members at NYNEX have been on strike against the profitable company's demand that they pay up to \$ 1,500 a year to maintain their health care coverage. Since June, 30,47,000 hospital workers have been struggling to win a decent contract at New York voluntary hospitals. Their jobs may be very different, but Local 1199 members and CWA and IBEW members are joined by a common issue—they are on the front lines of Corporate America's attempt to solve the health care crisis by slashing workers' living standards.

Hospital workers are told that hospitals in crisis cannot afford to increase workers' wages. Telephone workers are told that sky-rocketing health care costs mean they must now pay thousands of dollars in order to guarantee their families' health. It is two sides of the same coin, and the money is going into the pockets of insurance companies, doctors, medical equipment manufacturers and for-profit health care institutions. We reject phony solutions to the health care crisis. Hospital workers and telephone workers, along with all of America's working people, need a real solution to the health care crisis. A solution that guarantees health care for every American, and will provide genuine cost containment.

### Who are the Uninsured in the USA?

(From Labour Research Association's  
Economic Notes)

There are 37 million people in the US without any form of health insurance. Of the total, 10.8 million are full-time workers, 7.6 million are part-timers, and 12.2 million are children under age 18. More than a third of the uninsured live below the poverty line, and 65% live below twice the

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# Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Democratic People's Republic of Korea

THE Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea already clarified at home and abroad its stand to create nuclear free zone on the Korean peninsula through the statement dated June 23, 1986 and the statement of Foreign Ministry dated July 13, 1987.

However, instead of responding to our peace loving proposal the United States is further stepping up nuclear war preparations while further increasing nuclear armed forces allegedly to protect South Korea from the fictitious "threat of southward invasion".

As a result, today, South Korea has turned into one of the comprehensive nuclear offensive bases full of various nuclear weapons, nuclear means of delivery, nuclear base and depot and into a nuclear war source threatening peace in Asia and the rest of the world.

The US not only turned South Korea into the biggest nuclear forward base in the Far East but also conducts frequently large-size military exercises in a bid to provoke a nuclear war in Korea.

It is quite imaginable that if war is ignited on the Korean peninsula, it will be easily spread into a global nuclear war and bring a catastrophic nuclear disaster not only to our people but also to the entire human beings.

We do not want a thermo-nuclear war to be ignited with the Korean peninsula as a fuse.

It is the invariable stand of our Republic to ease tension on the Korean peninsula and secure peace in Korea and Asia and the rest of the world through dialogue and negotiation.

In light of the acute situation created on the Korean peninsula, the Government of the D.P.R. of Korea considers it necessary to immediately hold consultations among parties concerned to discuss the issue of establishing a nuclear free zone on the Korean Peninsula and take a practical measure to safely guarantee its position.

Firstly, the question of turning the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-free zone is the issue to be discussed and solved between the north and the south. But since the US nuclear weapons are deployed in South Korea, tripartite talks between the DPRK and the US and South Korea should be held to discuss and solve the question of withdrawing the nuclear weapons from South Korea.

We propose to hold such consultative talks in Geneva or any other mutually agreeable place within this year.

Secondly, if the tripartite talks reaches an agreement on the withdrawal of the US nuclear weapons, the north and the south of Korea should hold talks to adopt a joint declaration on turning the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-free zone and discuss and

settle the question of demanding the nuclear powers to give legal guarantee.

The north-south joint declaration should involve the question of declaring the Korean peninsula, 12 miles of territorial waters and air as a nuclear-free zone, the question of refraining from test, production, storage and introduction of nuclear weapons by the north and south and the question of banning the deployment of foreign nuclear weapons, entrance and exist and passage of foreign nuclear vessels and aircrafts carrying nuclear weapons and the matters related to mutual information and the order on verification of the progress of the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from South Korea and the implementation of the commitment by the north and south.

The north-south talks can be divided into the expert level talks for drafting a joint declaration and guarantee document and the talks of authority representatives for their official adoption.

The United States has no ground to deploy massive nuclear weapons in South Korea and turn it a nuclear base to confront with us, non-nuclear state.

Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is the task which brooks no further delay because it is the matter to remove the cause of nuclear war in the world.

If the Korean Peninsula is turned into a nuclear free zone, the people in this region will be free from the danger of nuclear war and make substantial contribution of peace in Korean peninsula and the rest of the world.

Pyongyang, DPR Korea  
November 9, 1989

(Contd. from page 23)

poverty line. Most uninsured workers are employed in service industries—retail trade, business services, entertainment and recreation, and personal and related services. Two-thirds or more of workers in these industries have no health coverage on the job, and these industries are among the fastest growing in the nation, projected to account for 44 per cent of the 21 million new jobs to be created by the year 2000.

More than two thirds of workers (excluding the self-employed) without health benefits work in small business (less than 100 employees), and of these, 53 per cent work in firms with fewer than 25 employees. At the other end, nearly one-quarter work for employers with more than 500 employees, and 18 per cent are in business that employ more than 1000. Fewer than one-quarter of part-time workers have health insurance from their employers.