



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

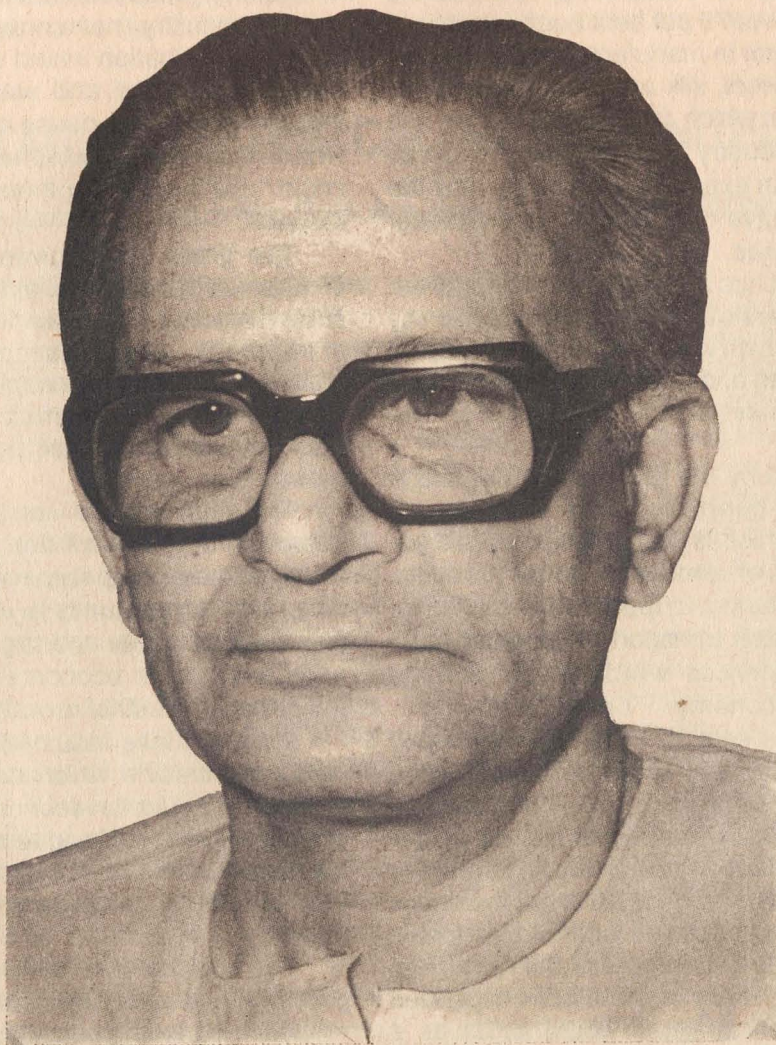
COM. SUNIL MAITRA

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses profound sorrow at the sudden demise of Com. Sunil Maitra, Member, Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) and a leader of working class movement on 18th September morning at Calcutta due to massive heart attack. He was 69.

Com. Sunil Maitra was a Student leader in the then All India Students Federation and joined freedom struggle as young student. For his active participation in the Quit India movement he was imprisoned for over one year.

He joined the trade union movement in 1946 as an employee in the Hid-suthan Insurane Company and soon

became a leader of the insurance employees. He played a key role in mobilising the insurance employees all over India and in the formation of the All India Insurance Employees Association, which he served as the Joint Secretary till 1983. He was also the President of the All India Peerless Employees Union. With his versatile qualities as an organiser,



speaker and a prolific writer with deep understanding of the working class problems and developing united struggles of the working class, he became a frontline leader of the working class movement in the country.

With his long association with the working class movement and rich contributions to the strategies and tactics in uniting the trade unions with a class outlook to face the ever new offensives unleashed by the employers in the capitalist system, he endeared himself with all sections of the working people, irrespective of ideological diversities. He was elected to the Lok Sabha in

1980 with thumping majority from a working class area in Calcutta. He did a yoman's job as the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

As a communist he steadfastly adhered to the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism and fought determinedly against both right and left deviations,

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Opening of New Floodgates for Multinationals

Proposal by the Ministry of Industry to open the floodgates of Indian economy for the multinational corporations will hit hard India's struggle for self-reliance and lead to strengthening the grip of the multinationals on larger sector of Indian economy.

Notwithstanding the commitment in the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) by the UF Government that multinational companies would not be encouraged in the consumer sector the proposal of the Industry Ministry allows 75 per cent equity participation in consumer sector in manufacture of food products, cotton textile, wool, silk and man-made fibers and textile products which is seriously affect the indigenous textile industry. The advance made by Indian textile sector in exports will be hit hard by the multinationals who have new technology and better competitive advantages.

The Government has allowed iron ore, metal ore and non-metallic minerals for majority participation by foreign companies which will come to India to exploit our rich mineral wealth and earn profits out of it. It will throw out of our market India's public and private sector mines.

The list prepared by the Government for liberal concessions include basic chemicals and chemical products (paints, varnishes, etc), rubber, plastic petroleum and coke-oven products, metal products, machinery manufacturing, supporting services inland transport and water transport, renting and leasing and business services which covers a large spectrum of Indian economy.

In many of these sectors India has developed sizeable production capacity which can be expanded if the Central Government encourages domestic industries. However, policy framework makes it clear that the entry of multinationals in India will be at the cost of domestic industry. Some Indian big business houses who agree to cooperate with multinationals as junior partners may get a share of their loot from the high profits they earn in India but indigenous development of these industries would suffer as a result of these proposals.

What is shocking is then even the field like market research, health and medical services, research and development services would be liberally opened up for multinationals putting Indian institutions in the field in the background.

Further concessions are offered by the Central Government for multinationals in oil and gas field services, drilling shafting and reclamation of mines, manufacture of iron ore pellets, pig iron, sponge iron and steel, products of re-rolling mills, cold rolling mills and use drawing mills. This mill spell doom on the steel industries in India including the mini-steel plants who are already facing large scale closures.

Opening wider the electrical generation and transmission industry, non-conventional energy generation and distribution inland water transport, pipeline transport, storage and warehousing services will further damage the cause of these industrial sector where India has established some capacity which could have been strengthened to make the country self reliance.

The green signal given to foreign construction companies to operate in almost every sector of construction activity in India will jeopardise the interests of the public sector construction companies who are fighting hard to get jobs within India. The multinationals will further make them sick and may force some of them to become junior partners of multinational construction giants.

The multinational companies who are in dire search for markets will find the concessions offered to them to have majority participation in India industry as a golden opportunity to enter Indian market in an aggressive manner and capture on check post after another in Indian economy so that development of Indigenous industrial growth is thwarted.

Most of these industries are importing component from outside which does not lead to any job creation in the Indian economy. The jobs they create in India are minimal but due to their operation in India, the displacement of jobs by Indian companies due to their inability to compete in the market of their own country.

The Ministry of Industry Murasoli Maran has repeatedly announced his intention to make India more attractive to foreign capital. The proposals clearly reflects this intention which is clearly serving the interests of the World Bank and the IMF. The Finance Minister P Chidambaram who is in favour of these concessions has his own contribution in evolving.

The multinational companies with minority participation in some undertakings could influence the

working of the unit more than the Indian counterpart because they were in possession of technology and financial resources with majority participation and 75 per cent participation they will have complete say over the working of the industrial units where they would be investing.

It would also facilitate take over of Industrial units in India by these multinational companies and make them subsidiaries of foreign giants. The Government will have no control over them, it neither considers it necessary to have any control over them.

This is a dangerous portent for future of India's economic development and the trade union movement in India has to view them seriously. It is therefore most important task before the TU movement to

oppose and resist these concessions which alone will lead to proper protection to national interests.

The programme observed by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions on 27th September by holding demonstrations all over India against the economic policies pursued by Deve Gowda Government, is only a beginning of this struggle.

The TU movement must educate the workers so that they are made aware of the dangerous consequences of these proposed measures by the UF Government. If multinationals are allowed to get away with these concessions they would be pressurising the Government of India for more concessions. The thirst of profits and superprofits of multinational corporations do not have any limit under a globalised economy.

CITU SECRETARIAT MEETING CALLED FOR UNITED MOVEMENT

Against Economic Policies and Communal Forces.

The Secretariat of CITU met on 7-8 September 1996 at New Delhi and called upon the working class to unitedly fight for self-reliance and basic interests of the working class and common people in the face of continuation of the Cong(I) Economic Policies of liberalization by the UF Govt. contrary to the expectation of the people.

The Secretariat note with concern that situation has worsened so far as the standard of living of the working class and common people is concerned. Continuous price hike could not be contained, rather it got aggravated by administered price rise of petroleum products.

E. Balanandan President CITU presided over the meeting which was attended by 25 members of the Secretariat. For revival of Sick Units, no concrete action has been taken. Rather the UF Govt., which is committed to take positive steps for revival of Sick Units are contemplating amendment of SICA in the same line with recommendation of Omkar Goswami Committee, designed to make BIFR a fast-track mechanism for liquidation.

The meeting resolutely opposed the appointment of Disinvestment Commission to sell PSU shares despite all out opposition by the entire TU movement.

Govt. has not yet demonstrated any departure from old policies towards employment generation, in the background of widespread unemployment, on the other hand minimum wages all over the country has been showing a consistent downward trend in

real terms.

Although committed as per the Common Minimum Programme for strengthening the public distribution system, the UF Govt.'s budgetary allocation for PDS does not show any rise in real terms. For rural development as well, the budgetary allocation is mainly helping the rural rich.

The CITU Secretariat denounced the Govt. pension scheme imposed on the workers by legislation in the current session of parliament, as it was nothing but a design on loot of workers' hardearned savings. Unfortunately this was supported by a section of major trade union leadership of the country despite all out opposition of workers at grassroot level. Secretariat endorsed the joint programme of movement against the retrograde scheme, decided by the All India Convention against Govt. pension scheme held on 25th August 1996 at New Delhi and calls upon workers in general to make them a total success.

CITU Secretariat also called upon the working class to make the 'All India Demands Day' of 27th September 1996 called by the Sponsoring Committee a total success to protest against the pursuation of same economic policy of liberalization by the UF Govt. and prepare for wider action programme.

The Secretariat has further called upon all the state committees and affiliated unions to prepare for struggle for a definite change in the economic policy of the Government towards self-reliance, and

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Statewide Protest Day Against the New Pension Scheme

Rallies and demonstrations were held in various parts of the Tamilnadu on 26th August, protesting against the anti-worker provisions of the New PF Scheme.

CITU, AICCTU, UTUC(LS), and independent unions and workers from various sectors joined the protest actions in the state.

In Madras, protest demonstrations were held in various industrial centre. In Ambathur industrial estate, more than one thousand workers participated. P N Unint, A G Kasinathan (CITU), Kumarasami (AICCTU) Jawahar (UTUC-LS) and others addressed the workers.

In Thiruvottiyur (North Madras Industrial belt) demonstrators were addressed by Arun (CITU) Seeman (AICCTU) Sivakumar (UTUC-LS) and others.

In South Madras area, demonstrations were held in Guindy Industrial Estate, Madras Export Processing Zone and Perungudi Industrial Estate. In the first two centres demonstrators were addressed by leaders of CITU, AICCTU, UTUC(LS) and TNMSRA (FMRAI). In Perugudi, the demonstration was organised by CITU.

Workers wearing badges demanding amendments to pension scheme, organised gate-meetings in factories and State Transport Depots in the morning.

CITU organised a massive rally in Tirupur, in connection with the Coimbatore district Conference. More than 5000 workers including large number of women participated in the procession and public meeting. Amendments to Pension Scheme was one of the major demands raised in the rally. Speakers including R Umanath, T K Rangarajan and A K Padmanabhan addressed the meeting on various issues including the Pension Scheme.

In Madurai, CITU TNMSRA and other organisations participated in a procession and demonstration.

Demonstrations and meetings were organised in various parts of the State. Gate meetings were held in many factories. Thousands of handbills explaining the demands were distributed. In many centres, badge-wearing was also organised.

ASSAM

Gate meeting at Digboi Refinery on 26th August

At the call of CITU the Mineral Oil Workers Union CITU, Digboi organised a gate meeting on 26th August at Digboi Refinery Main gate to protest against the PF Pension Bill, which has been passed in the Parliament recently. Large number of workers, both organised and unorganised attended the meeting. Com.N Chutia, President of the union spoke before the gathering and strongly criticised the scheme and the role of INTUC, AITUC, BMS, HMS in this regard. He analysed the anti-workmen clauses of the scheme. He said, CITU is the only union who was against the Pension Scheme since its introduction. Though the local recognised union was against the scheme but they did not protest it because of their affiliation with INTUC. Com.Chutia appealed the workers to come out and stand with CITU. The meeting also demanded CBI enquiry on the present accounts scam at AoD of IOC where more than 50 lakh money has been involved.

Pension Scheme Decried

In response to the all India call given by five central trade unions and some industrial federations to observe August 26 as Protest Day against the adoption of Pension Bill in the Parliament depriving workers and employees of Pension as third retirement benefit, a public meeting was held at Guwahati on 26th August under the auspices of Anti-Pension Scheme Joint Platform. The meeting demanded pension as third retirement benefit in addition to gratuity and provident fund.

The meeting which was attended by more than five hundred workers and employees coming from different parts of the city, was conducted by a presidium consisting of Deben Bhattacharyya (CITU) and Bimal Nandi (UTUC-LS). The meeting was addressed among others by Amal Ghosh Dastidar of CITU, Prafulla Sarma of CRU(NER), Girish Medhi, Assam Tribune Employees Union, Prabhat Barman of ASEB Supply Workers Union, M Bhattacharyya of HFC Workers Union and Lalit Bharali of Assam Carbon Workers and Employees Union. The speakers vehemently criticised the United Front Govt at the Centre for pursuing the policy of Narasimha Rao Govt

particularly in respect of pensin scheme and called upon workers and employees to build up a strong and united movement.

Work Report of Visakhapatnam Distric ton Pension Scheme on 26-8-96

The protest day was observed on 26.8.96 demanding basic amendments in Pension Scheme. This was observed in all the industries covering this scheme, i.e. Visakha Steel Plant, Hindustan Shipyard, BHP&V, Coromandel Fertilizers, Visakha Dairy, Hindustan Policymers etc. Dharnas were conducted in front of all these industries with hundreds of workers in every industry. Besides this a dharna was conducted at District collectorate by Medical Representatives, Peerless and Best & Crompton employees. In all these dharnas about one thousand workers attended without attending for their duties.

In all the above industries gate meetings also organised. In Visakhapatnam Steel Plant 6000 workers participated in the gate meeting held in the evening. Besides, CITU, TNTUC and Steel Congress leaders also participated and demanded basic changes in the Scheme. At Hindustan Shipyard about 400 workers participated at the gate meeting conducted in the early hours by CITU, TNTUC and a fraction of INTUC.

At Coromondal Fertilizers Ltd, its Employees Union, the only registered and recognised union, conducted a gate meeting besides dharna. All the employees of CFL attended the meeting. Gate meetings were conducted at all the other industries also. Only at Hindustan Zinc Ltd the gate meeting was cancelled due to heavy rain.

The employees of various industries responded well to the All India Protest Day Call. Cutting across their trade union affiliations. CITU District Committee wrote an open letter to AITUC to participate in the struggle. later the same letter was printed and distributed to the employees of all the industries. A booklet was also printed by Steel Plant Employees Union (CITU) against the false propaganda made by AITUC in Steel Plant and other industries. CITU District Committee issued two pamphlets and one pamphlet was issued separately in each industry by its unions. Total pamphlets were issued about 40,000 and one booklet of 3000 copies which was sold as hot cake with a price of Re 1 each.

The national call given by CITU and other trade unions was well responded in Visakhapatnam District, AP.

Agitation launched by FCI Employees Against New Pension Scheme

Calcutta, with a view to implement new pension

shceme instead of giving third benefit to employees the then government of India had pronounced ordinance and now the present government has turned the ordinance into Bill through parliament followed by making it to rule in order to impose upon the employees. The said new pension schmee imposed by the Government of India is nothing but a conspiracy towards looting of earned money of the employees. Under the leadership of the Food Corporation of India alongwith employees of all India undertakings the employees of FCI have also acted protest day through agitation on 26th August 1996.

An agitational programme under the leadership of FCI employees union has been observed in all FCI offices and Depots of West Bengal as well Calcutta. In all these meetings the leaders Shri Gangadhar Chatterjee, Rabin Banerjee, Shyamal Das, Subrata Chatterjee, Shyamal Basu, B K Dey and Ashok Sarkar have delivered speeches.

It is to mention here that recently a suit has been filed to the Honourable High Court by the said union against the new pension scheme.

CITU SUPPORTS UNITED ALL INDIA COAL STRIKE ON 7TH OCTOBER

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement to the Press:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expressed its firm solidarity with the 7 lakh coal miners who are going on one day strike on 7th October 1996 at the joint call of INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS to press the demand for removal of ceiling on bonus for coal miners and payment of bonus to workers before the Poojas.

The Central Government has agreed to remove the ceiling on Productivity Linked Bonus for the Port and Dock workers as well as railway workers. However, the same concession is denied to the coal mine workers. The struggle of the coal workers against this discriminatory treatment is fully justified and the CITU hopes the Government of India will concede this legitimate demand as soon as possible.

Prior to the recent amendment to the Payment of Bonus Act enhancing the ceiling on Bonus, the coal miners were getting bonus above the Act. As a result of the stand of the Coal India management even this existing facility is being withdrawn. This has naturally evoked strong reaction among the coal workers.

The CITU appeals to the coal workers to preserve their unity till they achieve their demand.

CITU Criticise Union Budget Demands

POST BUDGET DISCUSSION WITH FINANCE MINISTER

Contrary to the claim by Finance Ministry that trade unions had welcomed the budget proposals in the Post-budget discussion with Trade Unions called by Finance Minister on 27-8-96, alongwith other trade unions Dr. M.K. Pandhe General Secretary CITU, expressed strong apposition to the steps taken by Govt in the matter of disinvestment of shares of PSUs which he termed as 'frittering away' of public assets through virtual dismantling of public sector network in the country. He also decried the formation of disinvestment commission.

Referring to the various adverse impact of the policy of liberalization being pursued since last five years, of which the budget of 1996 is a mere continuity Pandhe demanded a through review of the policy.

The other important issue which figured in the discussion was the issue of revival of Sick PSUs and the role of Government on the same vis-a-vis the functioning of BIFR under SICA. Pandhe pointed out that in many cases even after approval of revival package by BIFR, the Govt is refusing to provide funds or even help for procuring capital from Bank and FIs for implementing the revival scheme. Pandhe further demanded that Govt must discuss in detail with the trade unions the issue of amendment of SICA before finalisation and the whole exercise should be oriented towards revival of the sick industries and not closing down or winding up. At the same time, Budget should provide for more funds for revamping the sick PSUs most of which can be nursed back to health.

Pandhe urged raising of the exemption limit of Income Tax payment and enhancement of the ceiling of eligibility and payment of Bonus. He insisted for enhancing the ceiling of gratuity payment to Rs.2.5 lakhs as done in case of Central Govt. employees.

The concessions granted to the Multinational Companies through unjustified reduction in customs duty while imposing larger burdens on indigenous industries, and also undue concessions granted to rural rich in the name of rural development, depriving the rural poor have also been criticised by CITU.

CITU was represented in the meeting by M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary and S. Dev Roye, Secretary.



Finance Minister Assures Revival of IDPL and NTC Mills

A delegation of the CITU led by E Balanandan, MP, President and Ajoy Mukherjee, MP met the Finance Minister, Sri P Chidambaram on 4th September. The delegation consisted of P. K Ganguly, Secretary CITU; and Narasimha Reddy, A Srinivas Reddy, B Narasimhalu (IDPL-Hyderabad); ML Thapial, Surendra Singh (IDPL-Rishikesh); Sudhir Kumar (FMRAI) and M Chandraiya (INTUC).

The delegation urged upon the Finance Minister to release an amount of Rs 26 crores for the revival of the Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd, as asked by the Ministry of Chemicals. This was the immediate necessity as working capital as discussed in the BIFR.

Regarding the National Textile Corporation (NTC), the delegation brought to the notice of the Finance Minister that the BIFR had asked the Government to write off the loans of the four NTC-subsidaries of W.Bengal, UP, MP and Gujarat, otherwise the four subsidaries may be closed down, which will affect 55 thousand workers in the 53 mills of these four subsidaries. The delegation pointed out that the loans should be written off before 8th October, when the final meeting of the BIFR would be held. The delegation further pointed out that the above steps regarding IDPL and NTC were urgent in view of the commitment of the UF Government to revive the sick public sector units as per its Common Minimum Programme.

The Finance Minister discussed the issues in details and assured that he would do the needful in the above matters.

The delegation also pointed out that the reduction of excise duty from the mini-cigarettes (less than 60 mm length) from Rs 120/- to Rs 60/- had helped the monopoly cigarette manufacturers to capture about 30 per cent of the Beedi market. The small increase of 25 per cent given in the current budget had not produced the desired result. The Beedi workers were getting only 3-4 days of work in a week. The delegation demanded increase in the excise duty to at least the earlier position. The Finance Minister assured to look into the problem in the next budget in February.



ISSUES BEFORE FORTHCOMING ILC

□ M K Pandhe

The Thirty Second Session of the Indian Labour Conference has been fixed on 24th and 25th October 1996 at New Delhi. The Standing Labour Committee which met in New Delhi on 13th September has already discussed some issues that are likely to be brought before the ILC for final decision.

SLOW PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Standing Labour Committee meeting highlighted extremely slow progress in implementing the decisions of the ILC and the SLC. On the question of social clause through the last ILC agreed to oppose linkage of social clause with international trade it also emphasised the need for taking expeditious steps to increasingly implement the ILO Standards in India. However the Government of India did not even call a meeting of ILO Convention Committee for the last one year which was supposed to meet at least twice an year. The decision regarding the Maximum weight convention which provides that no worker should be asked to carry more than 50 kg weight. Despite decision in the committee Government of India failed to implement the convention. The CITU strongly criticised the casual approach of the Central Government in the matter and demanded immediate action in the matter.

Similar was the case on the question of child labour. Despite announcement of the decision of the Central Government that by 2000AD the child labour in hazardous industries would be abolished no worthwhile progress appears to have been made. Only giving full page advertisement in newspapers and visual publicity on TV the child labour cannot be abolished. According to Government's own calculation the number of children working in hazardous industries was estimated to be 20 lakhs but so the progress is that the Government has only sanctioned 16 projects covering 1.5 lakhs children through various NGO. The CITU pointed out that many NGOs are making money with these projects without doing any progress. If such affairs continue the child labour in hazardous industries would continue even after 2000 AD.

The situation regarding the bonded labour was equally bad. Much progress is shown on paper but in practice the system of bonded labour continue unabated. Some state governments have also failed to give factual reports.

The Labour Secretary stated that the government would pursue the matter and implement the decisions of the previous meetings.

NO AGENDA OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

Government of India proposing to modernise the Employment Exchange and vocational training schemes. The Employment Exchanges are proposed to be called as Employment Promotion Centres and they were also supposed to modal agencies for self employment promotion schemes. The CITU pointed out that these centres could not be called employment promotion centres because they would not create any jobs. When the total jobs in the country are reducing and placements by the Employment Exchanges had been reducing drastically all over India. Mere computerisation of data would not alter the situation basically.

Regarding vocational training the CITU strongly criticised the quality of education and pointed out how even after education workers did not get jobs. Mere training without any job creation is meaningless, the CITU pointed out.

The CITU emphasised the need for massive programme of employment generation, which would give gainful employment on a permanent basis. The data of job creation every year are based on mere estimates and are not based on ground realities, CITU noted.

More than 50 per cent of the unemployed registered in the Employment Exchanges are educated unemployed who are finding it difficult to get jobs despite technical qualifications. The same is the case of redeployment and retraining. It has been found that despite retraining the workers do not get redeployed. This only defeats the purpose of retraining. The CITU demanded a complete review of the problem before it is brought before the next session of the ILC.

NO SERIOUS APPROACH ON SECRET BALLOT

The Standing Labour Committee which was supposed to fix the agenda of the Indian Labour Conference gave less importance to the question of determining the representative character of union through secret ballot. As a matter of fact it was kept as last item on the agenda while the question of modernising employment exchanges was given the top priority.

The note prepared by the Labour Ministry tried to

use dilatory tactics by making an attempt to link secret ballot with Code of Discipline. The Ministry also tried to raise the question whether it should be done by mere executive order or it should be given statutory shape.

Though the point was a part of the Common Minimum Programme and the Government could have issued executive order without referring to a committee. The Labour Ministry should have known that this issue had been discussed on several tripartite fora and except INTUC all the central trade unions have supported secret ballot. The previous Govt was giving veto power to INTUC to decide the issue. The United Front Government should have taken a forthright stand on this issue.

The Standing Committee while deliberating the issue repeated the same arguments mentioned in the past. However while concluding the Labour Secretary did not give a categorical assurance on the question. There is no purpose in bringing the same issue before the next session of the Indian Labour Conference since the same arguments will be repeated in that meeting. The CITU is of the view that the Central Government should immediately issue an order and the ILC can only deliberate on the modalities of introducing secret ballot. In the next session of Parliament a Bill should be brought so that the concept of secret ballot for union recognition can be given a legal shape and its should be made applicable all over the country. Any attempt to delay the matter in the name of arriving at a consensus will only be a reflection of lack of political will on the part of the Central Government. After all, the UF Government brought Pension Scheme despite opposition of some trade unions including CITU. However the same Government is prevaricating in the face of opposition by the INTUC.

MINIMUM WAGES FOR UNORGANISED SECTOR

The floor minimum wages for the vast multitude of the unorganised sector is also an agenda for the Indian Labour Conference and SLC reviewed the issue at some length. According to data supplied by the Government even in State like Maharashtra in certain industry the wage is as low as Rs 8 per day. Though it varies from state to state and industry to industry by and large the wages are much below the official poverty line figures. They are not linked with price index in several states. In some states where the TU movement is weak, even the statutory minimum wages are not paid to the workers. The condition is particularly very bad in the rural areas.

Despite repeated statements by the official

spokesmen that the Floor Minimum Wages should be above the poverty line has not yet been implemented. Naturally, the question of need based minimum wages is a far cry for the unorganised workers.

The CITU pointed out in the meeting that the poverty line fixed by the Planning Commission takes into account only the calory content of nutrition and does not include all elementary requirements of a workers family. This aspect should be taken into consideration while fixing the minimum wages for the unorganised sector. The CITU also demanded automatic adjustment of DA with index and periodic review of the floor level minimum wages.

The employers representatives talked about linking wages with productivity even without giving workers minimum needs of human existence. They also advocated flexibility which practice defeats the very purpose of the fixation of minimum wages. A ridiculous argument that more wages means less employment was also trotted by some employers representatives.

The 32nd ILC must concrete proposals to enhance the floor level of the minimum wages above the poverty line and ensure their full implementation. It must take steps to ensure that the employers are not allowed to challenge the minimum wage notification in courts and and obtain stay orders against these notifications. Trade unions should unitedly assert effectively so that opposition by the employers are squarely met in the debate which alone prevail upon the central government to enforce appropriate minimum wages by suitably amending the Act. It is also necessary to enforce compulsory improvement for the employers violating the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act. The penalty provisions in the legislation have no deterrent effect against the offending employers.

A minimum wage legislation providing floor level minimum wages above the poverty line will also go in a big way in the national effort of reducing the number of people below the poverty line.

CASUAL THINKING ON WORKERS PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT

Material presented in the Standing Labour Committee on the question of workers participation in management again underline the casual approach of the UF Government. The Labour Ministry merely circulated a copy of the 1990 Bill and the amendments moved by some MPs in Rajya Sabha. It has not examined the amendments and given the opinion of the Ministry on these amendments. What was most surprising on the subject was the proposals given by

several trade unions was not circulated in the meeting by the Government along with its comments on these suggestions for improvement.

The note of the Labour Minister emphasised the need for modifying the Bill in the context of the new liberalisation policies of the Central Government. The TU movement cannot accept this position. No Bill on workers participation in management will lead to any material changes in the system of management unless the participatory bodies are given sufficient powers to deal with the issues confronting these committees.

Narasimha Rao Government in its 5 years tenure did not bother to pursue the Bill or discuss its content in any tripartite forum. It was only on the eve of last General elections the Government of India announced its intention to introduce Bill on workers' participation in Management but did not take any serious step in the matter. On the contrary in the name of liberalisation the Congress Government wanted to water down even the provisions proposed by the V P Singh Government.

The employers organisation have been campaigning against the very concept of workers' participation in management on the plea that it would reduce the competitive advantages of the industries. In the name of flexibility they wanted to have more powers in running the industry.

Since the United Front in its common minimum programme has committed to introduce workers' participation in management its government is duty-bound to implement it with vigour. However the attitude of bureaucracy is clearly indicative of delaying the issue on this or the other plea.

If the UF Government hopes to evolve a common understanding in the ILC, it is not likely to emerge. Employers have already indicated that it should be limited only to the public sector undertakings and private sector should be left alone. This may prove to be counterproductive. The INTUC may oppose secret ballot to determine the representatives on the participative forum under these circumstances unless the UF government take a firm stand on this issue the ILC will not emerge with definite conclusions in favour of positive legislation.

NO CHANGE IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS POLICY

The material presented in the SLC on Industrial Relations only repeats the proposals mooted by the Congress government. Though it claims that it is based on Ramanujam Committee Recommendations it goes beyond its unanimous recommenda-

tions and puts forward proposals mooted by Narasimha Rao Government. It brings the proposal for the Industrial Relations Commission which was opposed by several trade unions. The Labour Ministry seeks to bring exit policy through the backdoor by making the closure of the unit easier for the employers. The proposal seeks to form negotiation councils with equal representatives from employers and workers but the representation will be decided by secret ballot only "if the need arises". Otherwise it would be by nomination by the union recognised by the management?

The Labour Ministry proposals seek to improve further restrictions on workers' right to strike. It proposes to abolish the concept of constitution of Court of Enquiry in a matter connected with industrial dispute on the plea that it was not used in the past. Though it talks of giving more compensation in case of retrenchment, lay off and closure it seeks to make it easier for the employer to resort to these measures.

Thus most of the proposals by the Labour Ministry before the SLC are retrograde and anti-working class in character. The SLC did not discuss these issues and it was decided to have a separate discussion by the Labour Minister with the trade unions, employers and the State Governments before the proposals are brought before the ILC.

Thus the entire deliberations of the SLC makes it clear that the UF Government has not evolved any new Labour policy different than the Congress government. The bureaucracy of the Labour Ministry is making frantic bid to continue the same labour policy which has failed to improve the industrial relations scene in the country. Hence it is necessary that the new Labour Minister applies his mind to these issues and takes a firm stand on some of the commitments given in the CMP to the working class.

The agenda of the ILC must include the question of removal of the ceilings in the Payment of Bonus Act, enhancing the ceilings in the Payment of Gratuity Act to make it at par with the Gratuity for the Central Government employees. The ILC also should discuss the question of contract workers who are facing acute exploitation at the hands of unscrupulous contractors.

Unless the UF Government comes forward with definite proposal and takes a firm stand in the light of its commitment the next session of ILC is likely to degenerate into a debating society without giving any concrete guidelines to evolve a proper labour policy in the country. □

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

	June '96		July, '96		Linking factor for Old Base		June '96		July, '96		Linking factor for Old Base
All India	333	339	4.93	Rourkela	303	306	3.59				
Gudur	339	342	4.33	Amritsar	292	304	5.19				
Guntur	330	330	5.60	Ludhiana	296	301	—				
Hyderabad	307	319	5.23	Ajmer	328	340	5.01				
Visakhapatnam	321	322	—	Jaipur	319	326	5.17				
Warrangal	319	328	—	Coimbatore	336	337	5.35				
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	305	311	4.05	Coonoor	350	359	4.80				
Guwahati	341	345	—	Madras	364	367	5.05				
Labac-Silchar	293	299	3.96	Madurai	348	353	5.27				
Rangapara-Tezpur	317	324	4.29	Salem	360	364	—				
Jamshedpur	317	324	4.68	Tiruchirapally	363	368	—				
Jharia	284	291	4.63	Agra	315	319	—				
Kodarma	284	297	5.43	Ghaziabad	317	318	—				
Monghyr	305	320	5.29	Kanpur	326	336	4.69				
Noamundi	301	311	4.58	Saharanpur	304	311	5.06				
Ranchi-Hatia	316	323	—	Varanasi	343	356	5.12				
Ahmedabad	338	339	4.78	Asansol	307	316	4.77				
Baroda	334	341	—	Calcutta	339	349	4.74				
Bhavanagar	346	359	4.99	Darjeeling	291	295	4.55				
Rajkot	340	341	—	Durgapur	341	356	—				
Surat	359	365	—	Haldia	351	365	—				
Faridabad	319	331	—	Howrah	342	351	4.12				
Yamunanagar	308	314	5.53	Jalpaiguri	298	305	4.16				
Srinagar	318	330	5.47	Raniganj	296	300	4.40				
Bangalore	327	334	5.66	Chandigarh	306	313	—				
Belgaum	353	355	—	Delhi	341	347	4.97				
Hubli-Dharwar	339	342	—	Pondicherry	383	391	—				
Mercara	339	348	—								
Alwaye	354	355	5.19	<u>Additional series of Labour Bureau</u>							
Mundakayam	362	368	—	Kothagudem	333	363	3.25				
Quilon	366	365	—	Himachal Pradesh	306	317	3.75				
Trivandrum	386	390	—	Bhilwara	323	338	3.20				
Bhalaghat	324	330	5.24	Chindwara	334	350	2.59				
Bhilai	302	304	3.49	Tripura	319	322	4.37				
Bhopal	345	354	5.46	Goa	365	380	3.40				
Indore	345	354	5.18								
Jabalpur	338	347	6.41								
Mumbai	366	364	5.12								
Nagpur	339	346	4.99								
Nasik	357	358	—								
Pune	359	361	—								
Solapur	354	359	5.03								
Barbil	328	335	5.00								

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,

IMPORT, UREA SCAM AND SICK FERTILISER UNITS

Dipankar Mukherjee

There are scams all over, and the Rs 133 crores urea scam about the National Fertiliser Ltd made really a shameful exposure. We are importing fertilizers worth crores of rupees, while our fertilizer units are lying under-utilised or unutilised. This is a much bigger scam with added dimension. The issue is revival of six public sector fertilizer units vis-a-vis imports. The figures of import of urea during the last five years, are sensationally revealing. In 1991-92, we imported 3.9 lakh tonnes of urea. In 1992-93, we imported 18 lakh tonnes of urea. In 1993-94 we imported 27 lakh tonnes of urea. In 1994-95 we imported 28.70 lakh tonnes of urea. And in 1995-96, we imported 37 lakh tonnes of urea.

In the first year of the five year period the import figure was 4 lakh tonnes. From 4 lakh tonnes, it has gone upto 37 lakh tonnes in the fifth year.

In financial terms growth of urea import is more sensational. In 1992-93, it started from Rs 764 crores, that is, 18 lakh tonnes of urea. In 1995-96, it ended with roughly Rs 2,700 crores.

Against this meteoric rise of import from abroad in the country, the two public sector fertilizer companies, namely, the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation of India and the Fertilizer Corporation of India have become sick. Very shortly we are going to add another public sector fertilizer unit to this list, that is, the National Fertilizer Ltd. Another company is going to be added to the sick list. If one goes through the Annual Report of the NFL, the scam-tainted corporation, it was the biggest profit earning company during the year 1995-96. Before taxation, they earned a profit of Rs 220 crore. This company is going to become sick. In June it had to stop its operation. They are having the working capital problem. Its operation, its expansion at Vijaypur have been stalled because of this problem. Someone has done something wrong and the whole company is passing through this crisis and shouldering the burden of somebody's crime. Some officials of NFL have created the scam in urea-import-deal and the whole company is suffering for that.

In the last fifteen years this is the story. And same

is the story of the last two years. During all these years govt of India while importing urea from abroad in huge amount on the one hand, went on dribbling with the aspect of revival of sick fertiliser companies. It is like the dribbling in the game of foot-ball with the sick public sector companies. The Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation has four units in Durgapur, Barauini, Namrup and Haldia. The Fertilizer Corporation of India has four units, in Sindri, Ramagundam, Talcher and Gorakpur. Out of these eight units, unfortunately, seven are located in the eastern zone.

These are all sick. These are to be revived. These units are sick because of the aging of the plants, old designs and other problems. They were designed in 60s or 70s, about 20 years back! Normally, a fertilizer plant requires upgradation of technology and expansion. In most of these cases they require renovation, upgradation of technology and input of some capital. And as such, nothing has been done during last decade.

In April, 1995, last year, there was a Cabinet decision. A decision was taken in principle by the Cabinet that this was intimated to the whole country that there was a proposal to revive these units at a cost of Rs 2200 crores. If these units were revived with Rs 2200 crores, country would have got 23 lakh tonnes of urea. That decision still remains unimplemented. Nothing has started. Why? Because, they say, there is no fund. Here is a country which could import urea worth Rs 2700 crores, in one year, but could not decide where from Rs 2200 crores would come so that these units could be revived and could produce 23 lakh tonnes of urea!

It is not today's story. I have with me all the records. I know what reply is going to come. I have got the latest letter from the Minister in September 1996. I do not find any change. It is only a repetition of same dribbling. They are more or less tuned to this. In the case of the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation units in Durgapur, Baruani and Namrup in west Bengal, Bihar and Assam, there was a proposal. Experts, foreign experts, were appointed M/s Halder Topsoe, Italy. They had submitted a report. Foreign exchange was

paid for consultancy. They submitted a report in April, 1988. The revival proposal for these units would have cost Rs 468 crores, which could guarantee 10 lakh tonnes of production. They had guaranteed 9.90 lakh tonnes of production, if the renovation worth Rs 460 crores was done. What has happened to that proposal? No one knows. After that, there is another report on the Haldia plant by M/s Toyo, Japan, and M/s Udhe, West Germany. They got Rs 2 crores as consultancy fee. They have given a proposal for Rs 500 crores which would give you four lakh tonnes of fertilizer nutrients. This was in 1988 or 1989. After that in 1992, these two companies were referred to the BIFR. After 1992, all have been raising questions. Only one reply has been coming for years.

The reply was: "This has been referred to BIFR. The BIFR will decide the future of these companies." And at the same time import of urea is going on increasing. But it is not the BIFR which is sitting over it for four years. So, another drama is going on for four years. What has been happening in BIFR for four years. The BIFR proceeding of all the eight units reveals the same story. The case goes to the BIFR. BIFR says "What is your proposal?" Govt says "Give us some time. Give us some time." It went on from 1992 to 1995. So, when the proposal came in 1995, the Cabinet had decided to revamp these units. IT was a Cabinet decision. And who were present there? A group of ministers had approved it. Who were there in the group of Ministers? Mr Pranab Mukherjee, Dr Manmohan Singh and Mr P Chidambaram, all stalwarts. After it has been agreed, from that time onwards, the only point which is being talked about is that funds are not available. It has been approved by the cabinet. Wherefrom will the funds come? One source of funding is the financial institutions. The other source of funding is the public sector profit making fertiliser units like KRIBHCO, IFFCO and NFL also. So, investible surplus from these companies was to be invested. But they could not invest the investible surplus even within this country. Or they were not allowed to do so to revive the sick PSUs in fertilizer. But they were allowed go abroad for investing their surplus. So the surplus from other public sector fertilizer units or finance from public sector financial institutions were not made available by the govt to revive public sector sick units although Cabinet okayed the revival proposal. Now dribbling by govt got a new dimension. Recently the Ministry of Fertilizer has sent its latest reply in respect of the revival of these companies. Within these two years, the revival cost must have increased. But what ex-

actly govt is trying to do? What is the planning of the government to cut down imports by reviving these units? Now, the exercise which is going on, relates to discussion with the FIsóICICI and so on. They have again appointed another consultation to examine the revival scheme once agreed to by Cabinet in 1995. Who are the experts in the ICICI and the IDBI who know more about the financial aspects than the experts like Dr Manmohan Singh and P Chidambaram? Should it be construed that this approval was given without assessing the revival possibility of the company by the Cabinet, and the group of ministers consisting of same Manmohan Singh, Chidambaram, etc. What is being examined now by the ICICI? Does it mean that the revival scheme was not viable? Does it mean that the Cabinet had given the approval without assessing the viability of the scheme? Is there a super Cabinet who is going to review a revival scheme which was already approved by the government? The second question is, when the symptoms are known, the treatment is known, when so many foreign experts have gone into this question, what are we waiting for? The new government must answer whether this point has been discussed in the Cabinet or not. After the cabinet decision in 1995, regarding the revival scheme the same Cabinet decision is now being reviewed by the financial institutions? Does this position have any propriety? The third question is: "Is the govt at all interested and committed to the revival of these fertilizer plants?" If they are committed revival process must start immediately. If not, govt must come out openly instead of dribbling and if Govt is not committed to their revival, they must answer how they are going to tackle the tremendous regional imbalance which have been created in the fertilizer scenario.

The greatest injustice has been done to the eastern zone. There are several units. But at present there is not a single big fertilizer company in operating in the eastern zone. What alternatives do govt have to match these imbalances? It is not in the interest of the eastern zone only. If the fertilizers are to come from the Western zone and the northern zone to the eastern zone, 35 per cent of transportation is done through trucks. Precious diesel is being wasted on this. How long can we have imports? What is the import perception for the next three four years? Our ports will not be able to handle this much of imports of fertilizers. All these questions need an honest reply.

But it is known what reply is going to come. It will be like this: "These things have been given, that thing

has been studied by this, another committee has been appointed, another committee will look into it" This dribbling has been going on for the last ten years in these units, but it is expected of an honest govt that the new government will once for all stop this dribbling game and score the goal.

Revival cannot be delayed. What is time-frame? When are govt going to declare a zero debt? This question was raised in the parliament last year. One explanation or the other was given. There is no sense in referring to BIFR. That is enough, because BIFR said that govt had never given a scheme to the BIFR. BIFR also said, "We will be with you if you are really interested in reviving the sick units." These are all matter of records.

And the final question is: Are we going to include NFL also in this list of sick companies, another four units along with these eight units? What is the condition of the NFL? Is it going towards sickness? What are its operational problems? Is its expansion problem going on as it is? Let them come out with those problems. Let the people also know that somebody or some individual is responsible for the scam, not the company.

Why is this company having the problem of working capital? If the banks and the financial institutions are not giving the money, Govt must act on it. So many checkings are done by the IDBI and the ICICI when fund is required for reviving a sick public sector fertiliser unit. Where was the scrutiny when Rs 133 crores were given without any guarantee? Is it only regarding these public sector units that you are talking about all types of securities, whether they are viable or not? And are they so sure when they give the loans to private sector? Regarding the IDBI and ICICI, if the Finance Minister does not give the figures, figures are available on records.

How much outstanding arrears NPAS these banks are to recover from big borrowers whether they are 800 crores or 900 crores. Govt must explain how all the money was given by these institutions for what purpose that was given. So far, we cannot accept this IDBI or ICICI as a super boss who will decide the destiny of this country, so far as the fertilizer scenario is concerned, so far as the urea scenario is concerned. It is the government which has to take this decision and I don't believe that the two financial institutions which are under the control of this government or the companies which are under the control of the Ministry of Fertilisers, KRIBHCO IFFCO and all that, can have their own say, so far as the revival of sick fertiliser these companies in public sector is

concerned. This is a national issue. This has to be addressed nationally. This has to be addressed within the shortest possible time so that we don't have another scam or a series of scams. This scam must be the tip of the iceberg. there may be many other scams like this if we do not stop imports by increasing our indigenous production. Dribbling may continue, this govt also may like to dribble, but that will help the scams to grow, but not a KG of urea. And that position will definitely not be accepted by the people.

Indian Seamen get Holiday as Solidarity Day on 30th May, the CITU Foundation Day

During the negotiations at the National Maritime Board meeting where the wages and service conditions of Indian Seamen were concluded, the two national unions representing Seafarers' side Forward Seamen's Union of India (CITU) and National Union of Seafarers of India demanded an extra holiday for the Indian Seamen and got sanction for one more holiday at the NMB.

But quite surprisingly the authorities and NUSI colluded amongst themselves and declared the extra holiday on 6th November every year on the occasion of the birth day of Dr Leo Barness, the General Secretary of NUSI, ignoring the majority opinion of the Indian Seamen who wanted that holiday to be their solidarity day with the Indian working class.

Protesting against this unilateral announcement on the part of the NUSI, the Forward Seamen's Union of India started campaigning amongst the Indian seamen and organiser collective protests.

The authorities then held a separate discussion with the Forward Seamen's Union of India and concluded a separate understanding with FSUI that for Calcutta based seamen 6th Nov will not be enforced and then the choice was given to FSUI.

FSUI, considering the working class unity and the need for solidarity demanded that the extra holiday be named as solidarity day and that the holiday be declared on 30th May every year, the foundation day of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, whose principle slogan to the working class is Unite and Fight and achieved this demand. For Calcutta seamen 30th May and for Bombay Seamen 6th November will be the extra holidays.

It is important to note FSUI is the first trade union in India to have achieved such a demand. □

Workshop on Child Labour - Kerala State

N Padmalochanan

The Kerala State Committee of CITU organised the CITU-ILO State level workshop on Child Labour from 14th to 16th August 1996 at the BTR Memorial Building, Trivandrum. It was conducted as part of an All India Campaign against Child Labour by the CITU all India Centre.

A reception committee with Com.K Anirudhan Ex.MP as Chairman and Com.K O Habeeb, State Secretary of CITU as Secretary was formed for the successful conduct of the workshop.

The workshop was inaugurated by Com.Susheela Gopalan, Minister for Industries and Social Welfare and presided over by Com C Kannan. The minister, in his inaugural speech explained the need for the eradication of Child Labour from society. It is, however, not an easy task to be done within such a short period through workshops, seminars or some strong worded resolutions. She said the child labour is an evil so entangled in our society. She added that as minister for Social Welfare, her Govt would do its best to reduce the intensity of Child Labour and to regulate it though it is not as intense in Kerala as it is in other parts of India.

Com.M K Pandhe, Com.P K Ganguly, Com.Vimala Ranadive from the CITU Centre Mr M P Joseph representing ILO, Com.KN Raveendranathan, Com.K Padmanabhan and Com.N Padmalochanan, State Coordinator on Child Labour participated in the workshop. There were 48 delegates representing trade unions connected with Child Labour that is existing in our state.

Mr M P Joseph explained the resolutions passed by ILO on Child Labour and the nature of campaign being conducted in India with the help of various central trade unions especially CITU.

Com.M K Pandhe explained and elaborated the basic reasons for child labour. He said that poverty, illiteracy and large scale unemployment are the main causes of child labour. In a class society like ours, there is no proper and complete solution for the above mentioned social evils and thereby eradication of child labour is not possible. But through sustained campaign programmes, the intensity of child labour can be reduced. He called upon the CITU leaders to take up this challenge and do their best to reduce the menace of child labour.

Com.P K Ganguly explained the work done by

the CITU in respect of child labour. He stated that the NGO's in our country are squandering a sizeable part of the fund given by the Central Government and do very little on child labour. He claimed that trade unions are the most effective agents to reduce the child labour menace because the parents are mostly poor working people. Child labour is rampant in the unorganised sector mainly due to poverty. It is necessary to build up movement with the demands for poverty alleviation programme, employment generation, need based wages, free compulsory education to the working children, equal wages to them at par the adult labour, land reforms, etc to remove the cause of child labour.

Com.Vimala Ranadive said that the most suffering section is the girl child. Sexual abuse of girl child is on the increase in our country. She said that among domestic servants, a good majority are girls. Hence we must give special attention to their affairs.

Three papers were presented on child labour Com.N Padmalochanan, M K Sivadasan, Additional Labour Commissioner, Kerala State and Advocate K S Gopinathan Niar, Trivandrum Com.Padmalochanan highlighted the special reasons why child labour in Kerala is not as intense as in other states. According to him land reforms, high literacy, health care and the powerful left oriented working class movement, especially the role of Communist movement are the main reasons. The additional labour commissioner concentrated mainly on the legislative steps taken so far to reduce and regulate the child labour and its impact in effect. Advocate Gopinathan Nair gave a picture of the statistic regarding child labour in various states and various industries in our country.

On the 2nd day, five groups were formed to discuss the subject and in the evening session the group leaders spoke on the gist of their respective group discussions.

On the 3rd day in the summing up session, Com.M K Pandhe, P K Ganguly and Vimala Ranadive addressed the workshop. Com.Padmalochanan explained the future programmes.

The workshop adopted the following resolution:
"In order to review the status of the child labour in Kerala State and ensure them legal protection and social justice, we request that the Kerala State Government should have to constitute a "Commission on

Child Labour" as in the line of Women Commission."

The workshop further decided to conduct 15 district level workshops in the state and observe 30th September as demand day against child labour.

WORKSHOPS IN UTTAR PRADESH

UP State Committee of CITU organised the CITU-ILO state level workshop at Varanasi on August 30 and 31, 1996.

The workshop was presided over by Kamalapati Tripathi and inaugurated by P K Ganguly. The State paper of Child Labour was presented by Vijay Rawat, General Secretary of UP State CITU.

The workshop was greeted by Sri Prasad, President of UP State Agricultural Workers Union, Rathin Chowdhury, President of UPMSRA and Rathin Chakrabarty.

About 30 leading comrades representing various unorganised sector of industries in the state attended the workshop.

After general discussions, the workshop was divided into three groups. The groups discussed the various issues related to Child Labour. The group reports suggested to wage struggles demanding need based wages in the unorganised sector, check on price rise, employment to all members of the families who were compelled to put their children to work due to abject poverty, equal wages to the working children at par with the adult workers free schooling, etc.

Kamalapati Tripathi summed up the deliberations. The workshop decided to hold district level workshop after the forthcoming Assembly elections in UP, and observe 14th November as Demands Day against Child Labour.

WORKSHOP IN CARPET INDUSTRY

The workshop on Child Labour in Carpet Industry was held at Vadoi, the carpet making centre near Varanasi on 1st September. 30 comrades working in the carpet industry attended the workshop.

Kamalapati Tripathi presided over the workshop. Vijay Rawat inaugurated it and P K Ganguly explained the approach of the CITU on Child Labour.

Ten comrades participated in the discussions on guidelines points briefed by Vijay Rawat. The comrades focused on poverty, unemployment, price rise, lack of education, etc as the main causes of Child Labour. They demanded need based wages in the carpet industry, equal wages to the working children at par with the adults, land reforms, free schooling for the children, opening of special free schools at and

around Vadoi, Mirzapur, etc, where carpet manufacturing is concentrated. They suggested continuous struggles and village level campaign in pursuance of the demands so as to remove the causes of child labour and at the same time raise consciousness against the scourge. They also suggested a specific central law in carpet industry as in Beedi.

The workshop decided to observe 14th November as the Demands Day. Kamalapati Tripathi summed up the deliberations.

Coal Workers to Strike on 7th October

A joint meeting of the representatives of INTUC, AI-TUC, CITU, HMS & BMS was held on 14.9.96 at Dhanbad. They discussed the problems being faced by the Coal Industry and their workers.

A great concern was expressed that inspite of the fact that Durga Puja festival is very near, no solution has been found out for the payment of Annual Bonus for the year 1995-96. It was also a matter of great concern that the dispute about the Bonus for the year 1994-95 was also pending.

So, it was decided that one day token strike should be called on 7th October, 1996 to protest against the callous attitude of the management and to achieve the following demands:

1. Bonus for the year 1995-96 should be paid before Durga Puja
2. There should not be any eligibility ceiling for payment of Annual Bonus for the years 1994-95 and 1995-96.
3. Immediate payment of arrear wages/gratuity and other dues in terms of NCWA V to the retired employees and dependents of the deceased employees.

For this purpose strike notice will be served by all organisations by 23rd Sept 1996

Sd/- Shafiq Khan(AITUC) Sd/- S Dasgupta (INTUC)

Sd/- Kumar Arjun Singh Sd/- Jayant Poddar
(BMS) (HMS)

Sd/- Sunil Basu Roy
(CITU)

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CITU Statewide Rally Mobilises 10,000 Workers Against Sena-BJP Regime

Over 10,000 workers hailing from 17 districts in the state marched to Mantralaya in Mumbai on August 27 under the banner of the CITU Maharashtra State Committee to condemn the anti-working class policies and stinking extortion scandals of the Shiv Sena-BJP state government. One important demand connected with the Central Government which was highlighted by the rally was to recast the new pension scheme on a voluntary basis.

The other burning issues facing the working class of Maharashtra that were raised by this spirited demonstration were: Annulment of the BIR Act and recognition of unions by secret ballot, strict implementation of minimum wage in all industries, abolition of the contract system and permanent jobs to all contract workers, implementation of labour laws in the unorganised sector and in new industrial centres, an end to growing police intervention in working class struggles, opposition to arbitrary closure of factories under the guise of pollution, and withdrawal of the outdated provisions in the bonus and gratuity acts.

The main political demand that was taken up by this demonstration was an end to the Sena-BJP extortion raj with its brazen protection to corruption and criminalisation, and a thorough CBI inquiry into the shocking case of the death of Ramesh Kini, which has been attracting nationwide media coverage for over a month.

Yet another vital issue focused upon by the rally was the unbending opposition to the Enron power project at Dabhol. The writ petition on this issue that has been filed by the CITU is currently before the Bombay High Court and the hearings have gener-

ated widespread public interest and press publicity. Regardless of the eventual outcome, the petition has already thoroughly exposed the duplicity and hypocrisy of the Sena-BJP regime.

A large section of the CITU rally comprised unorganised workers from the new industrial centres of the State, and they included a big proportion of women workers. Workers from the semi-urban and rural areas also came in large numbers. The districts represented in the rally were Nasik, Pune, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara, Solapur, Aurangabad, Jalna, Beed, Nagpur, Wardha, Chandrapur, Amravati, Jalgaon, Raigad, Thane and Mumbai.

The public meeting at the end of the demonstration was presided over by CITU state president Prabhakar Sanzgiri and was addressed by CITU State General Secretary K L Bajaj, vice presidents Ahilya Rangnekar and K L Malabade, Secretary D L Karad and State Council member Amrut Meshram. If the State government failed to act on the demands Sanzgiri called for militant working class gharaos of government offices all over the state on November 7, a call which was enthusiastically welcomed by the rally.

This independent show of strength by CITU in Maharashtra created a good political impact. Considerable preparations had gone into making this rally a success, with CITU state office bearers K L Bajaj, Sayeed Ahmed, Vivek Monteiro, P M Vartak, P R Krishnan and others visiting several of the above districts to address working class conventions and meetings that were specially held by the CITU as a prelude to the rally.

TAMILNADU NEWS LETTER

Railway Workers' Demand Union Recognition through ballot

More than 2000 Railway men, from all over the South Zone marched to the General Manager's Office on August 20th demanding recognition of unions through secret ballot. This march, followed by dharna in front of the office was organised by Dakshina Railway Employees Union (DREU), an affiliate of CITU. The union had conducted zonal wide cam-

paigns on this demand, which has been accepted in CMP by the ruling united front. P V Ramadoss, General Secretary DREU led the Dharna. A Sundarajan, General Secretary of State Transport Employees Federation inaugurated the dharna. Basudev Acharya, MP addressed the workers and led a delegation to the General Manager. K Parasuraman,

MP(DMK) T K Rangarajan, A K Padmanabhan and others addressed the workers.

HOMAGE TO MARTYRS

CITU unions all over the state paid homage to Golden Rock martyrs on 5th September. This day was the 50th anniversary of the firing on Railway workers in 'Golden Rock'. Five Railway workers were killed in the firing on 5th September 1946. CITU State Committee had given a call for State wide observance of the day. Meetings were held in various parts of the state.

In Golden Rock, in the maidan of DREU office, a meeting was held, which was attended by large number of workers. Among those who addressed the meeting were N Sankarayya, CPI(M) State Secretary, Pappa Umanath State president of AIDWA and leaders of DREU and CITU. A procession was also organised.

DHARNA

More than six hundred young men and women, all Diploma holder from various parts of the State participated in a dharna in Madras on 29.8.96. This dharna was organised by the Central Organisation of Electricity Employees(COTEE) who had taken up the cause of these youngsters, who had undergone training in the State Electricity Board. On the basis of

an order by the Board, these trainees used to get priority in appointment in Regular vacancies. With an ulterior motive, the earlier state government had withdrawn that order. COTEE had taken up the issue to court, and the Division Bench of Madras High Court had directed the Board to uphold the earlier order. The then State government had preferred an appeal in Supreme Court and it is pending in court. After the General elections, a new government had come to power and it was expected that the new government will withdraw its appeal. Many requests were made for this. The dharna on 29th August was demanding withdrawal of the appeal and appointment in the existing vacancies. The dharna was led by S Pancharatnam, General Secretary of COTEE. A Bakiam, DYFI state president inaugurated the dharna. Among those who addressed the dharna were D Janakiraman, A K Padmanabhan and D Mani (CPIM) MLA.

DIST CONFERENCE:

CITU district conference have been held in 9 districts during August. Working women's conference were held in five districts. CITU state committee had decided to hold all these conferences by December 1996 and State conference is to be held in Madras from 6th to 8th March 1997.

Andhra Pradesh Newsletter

A meeting of the Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU was held in Hyderabad on the 6th of August 1996. The meeting was held mainly with the purpose of chalking out the future programme.

83 members and invitees attended the meeting. The highest attendance.

A short report of the activities in the preceding two months, was submitted by Com. B V Raghavulu, General Secretary. The following are some of the main events he dealt in this report.

The State government had imposed heavy burdens on the people to meet the budget deficit. Power tariff for agriculture was increased by 600%, irrigation rates were increased by about 500%, power supply rates to domestic services were raised by 50%, profession tax was hiked by 400%. The price of rice supplied through ration shops to white card holders was increased from Rs 2/- per kg to Rs 3.50 per kg and the quantity was slashed from 25 kg a month to 20 kg a month. Bus rates were increased. The hike in taxes encompassed all sections of the society but the

brunt of it fell on the common people, who were already burdened with the price rise. All the political parties, including the allies of the ruling Telugu Desam Party and their mass organisations protested by launching dharnas and rasta roko spontaneously.

In this background, the committee reviewed the activities to channelise the discontent among the working class in general and the unorganised workers in particular into organised struggles to protect their living conditions.

The previous meeting of the committee, after reviewing the activities among the unorganised workers decided to launch a membership campaign, to conduct agitation on the 6 main issues faced by the working class and to observe a Complaints Week. It was decided to highlight the main problems of the workers namely minimum wages, VDA, closures, lock outs, and lay offs, indifferent attitude of the labour officials and police intervention in labour disputes and privatisation.

The membership campaign launched between

1st to 10th of June was successful in almost all districts. As a result of this campaign about 21,000 new members were enrolled in the unions, in 20 districts. 112 new unions were registered. Visakhapatnam district topped the list by enrolling 6,000 new members, followed by Nellore 3000, Hyderabad 2,8000, Warangal 2,500 and Vijayawada 2,400.

The state centre has received annual returns for a membership of 1,51,000, for the year 1995. New membership in 1996 is 21,000 and enrolment is still going on.

3,30,000 pamphlets were printed in 17 districts on the six main demands.

The decision of the committee to conduct district level trade union classes for the activists identified in these programmes, was implemented in 21 districts. 4,342 members participated in these classes. In many districts, leadership classes were also conducted by selecting more committed workers from them.

The Anganwadi workers movement in the state was taking big strides. It has extended to all the 23 districts and to 185 projects out of the 192 projects in the State. The agitation against the recent state government's decision to handover the projects to non-Government's organisations created a big impact among the Anganwadi employees. About 10,000 women participated in the project level dharnas immediately after the news about the decision was known. In the next phase district level rallies were organised and 14,000 women participated in different districts. July 10th was observed as anti-privatisation day and about 25,000 women participated in mass hunger strikes at project head quarters. Anganwadi women gharaoed central and state ministers and MPs. Ultimately, the government had to back track and stop implementation of the GO.

To consolidate the union, the State Committee of the union decided to conduct classes for activists. In the first phase 3 days zonal classes were conducted in 5 zones, in which 500 Anganwadi employees participated. In the next phase, it was decided to conduct project level one day mass classes, in all the projects by the end of Sept. Till date project classes have been completed in about 45 projects. A total number of about 4,000 women attended these classes.

The State Committee reviewed the implementation on organisational aspects also. In the last committee it was decided that all the district committees should allot cadre in the working class centres of the district and also to look after the working women's

front. Out of the about 250 working class centres in the state, full time or part time cadre has been allotted for 115 centres. Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, West Godavari, Prakasm, Krishna, Vijayawada, Hyderabad and Anantapur districts have made good efforts in this regard. Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam Krishna, Chittoor, Anantapur, Kurnool Mahaboobnagar, districts have allotted women comrades to look after working women's front. In many other districts also responsibility was given to CITU district office bearers to look after Anganwadi front.

After reviewing the activities in the State, the committee decided to undertake the following tasks:

1. It was decided that CITU should conduct 4 days classes for CITU sympathisers among middle class employees at Tirupati.

2. A pamphlet should be published condemning the Central Government's attitude on the Pension issue, and also exposing the attitude of the other major central trade unions. Local rallies should be held on 26th of August.

3. A joint convention will be held on 14th August, at Hyderabad together with 4 other trade union, on the problems faced by the working class in the state.

4. It was decided that we should strive for an alliance with the AITUC affiliated employees union in the forthcoming elections in the state road transport corporation.

STATE LEVEL POLITICAL SCHOOL FOR MIDDLE CLASS EMPLOYEES

As per the decision of the State CITU Committee, a 4 day political school was conducted in tirupati for middle class employees who have participated in the campaign against pension scheme and on unorganised sector employees. The State Committee estimated that 400 employees would attend, but the demand from the districts reached a figure of 623. The State Committee had removed all restrictions and allowed all. All State leaders of organisations attended the school to guide their members. 54 NGOs also attended.

The following were the curriculum and the teachers:

Scientific understanding of Social progress - M V S Sharma; History of Indian TU Movement with particular reference to CITU - M V S Sharma; Middle class employees - TU movement - Sukomal Sen, Common minimum programme and CITU - W R Varadarajan; Political situation and Middle Class employees - B V Raghavulu.



Construction Workers' Movement

ASSAM

In accordance with the decision of the working committee of the Construction Workers Federation of India a two days trade union school was organised in Guwahati, Assam on 27 and 28 July, 1996. This TU class was organised jointly by Irrigation & PWD Muster Roll Workers Unions. In spite of severe flood situation 80 students (organisers) attended from 6 districts of Assam.

Debanjan Chakraborty, General Secretary, Construction Workers Federation of India took the class on (a) CITU Organisational document, (b) History of wage, DA & Bonus, (c) Present state of affairs in Construction Industry. Sarbeswar Das, Secretary, Assam State Committee of CITU, took the class on Labour legislation and its application. Two other CITU State Committee leaders took the class on Political economy and development of society.

The main feature of this TU class was some organiser comrades those who left INTUC and AGP led unions and joined CITU unions, they attended this TU classes.

MANIPUR

On 7th August 1996 at Imphal of Manipur, a discussion session was held between the National Buildings Construction Corporation Ltd and NBCC Workers Union (CITU) representatives. The topic of the discussion session was "Joint Effort to Complete The Work in All the Projects in North-Eastern Regions." After a threadbare day long discussion both the management and the union representatives agreed on certain points and agreement was signed by the Chief Project Manager, North-Eastern Region, two Project Managers of Manipur and Assam from the management side and Com. Rajdeo Goala, president, Com. Debanjan Chakraborty, Vice President, Com. Amal Kundu, Com. SS Rath, Com. Monomohan Das (Manipur) and Com. Nikunja Das of Assam.

At present secessionist forces are in commanding height in Manipur. Different underground organisations with letter to NBCC and other construction companies authority are demanding Rs 25,000 to Rs 5.00 lakhs as donation. It is a compulsion to pay the said amount. Otherwise the officers, employees are being beaten up and even killed by these terrorist groups. In spite of this work situation CITU workers, leaders are working there years together. CITU

union sought intervention of the Chief Minister of West Bengal and the Home Minister of Govt of India for change in the situation in Manipur for smooth development work.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

On 15th August 1996 at Nathpa Jakri Hydro Electric Power Project the 3rd Annual Conference of Continental Foundation Joint Venture Ekta Union (CITU) was held. Debanjan Chakraborty, G S CWFI inaugurated the conference.

Kashmir Singh Takur, General Secretary, HP State Committee of CITU and Natha Singh, Secretariat Member, Punjab State Committee of CITU greeted the conference.

Ravinder Kumar placed his General Secretary report of activities of the past year. Treasurer placed the audited accounts of the union. Six comrades participated in the discussion on the general Secretary report. The report and accounts was adopted by the conference. The conference elected 34 members working committee including Rajesh Kumar Sharma as president, Ravinder Kumar as General Secretary and Manoj Kumar as Treasurer unanimously.

On 16th and 17th August two trade union classes were organised. A Debanjan Chakraborty took the class on CITU organisation document and Kashmir Thakur on history of Indian working class.

On 16th.8.96 a deputation met the Joint Venture management and submitted a memorandum containing 7 point demands including withdrawal of dismissal orders of 06 leading comrades and suspension orders of 8 activists. Before submitting this memo 500 workers led a procession covering 6 km area assembled before the JU office and started dharna from 5 PM and continued till 8 PM. The dharna was also addressed by the union leaders and Kashmir Singh Thakur, Natha Singh and Debanjan Chakraborty.

The newly elected working committee met and decided to start phase wise movement from 19.8.96 which will be culminated in one day token strike in the entire project on 11.9.96 to realise the 7 point demands.

On 21st August in Chamba district of HP at Chamera Stage-I Project, "NHPC Workers and Staff Union (CITU) organised a good general body meeting at workers club Hall. Due to anti workers national

level wage agreement signed by INTUC, AITUC, BMS central leaders in NHPC, the workers of these unions in Chamera-I project left these unions and formed CITU union here. In the meeting decision was taken to launch united movement in the project to rectify the errors of national level wage agreement, Regularise all the work charge, NMR and Part time workers, curtailment of existing benefits done through wage agreement to be restored again, required investment to be made by the GOI for starting Chamera Stage-II work.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

On 19th, 20th August at Salal Hydro Electric Project, Reasi of J&K, 4th conference of Salal Project Workcharge Employees Union (CITU) was held at the union hall. Nanak Chand, presided over the conference. Debanjan Chakraborty inaugurated the conference.

Md Maqbool, convenor, J&K State Coordination Committee of CITU and Om Prakash, CITU leader greeted the conference.

Kapoor Singh, placed general secretary report and Kuldeep Kumar placed accounts. 10 comrades discussed on the reports. The report and accounts adopted with some additions and amendments.

From the conference a programme of joint struggle on the basis of two point demands)1) Regularise all workcharge workers in NHPC and Release required investment by the GOI for Salal Stage-II, Boglear, Sadakot, Dulhasti, Uri Hydro Electric Projects of J&K immediately, were unanimously

taken up.

The conference elected 25 members working committee which included Nanak Chand as president, Kapoor Singh and Jagdish Sharma as Jt general secretaries, Bhajan Singh as Working President and Kuldeep Kumar as Treasurer.

PUNJAB

On 22.8.96 at Shapurkandi, of Gurudashpur Dist of Punja, Thien Dam Workers Union (CITU) organised a TU class in heir own union hall. Eighty working members attended the class. Debanjan Chakraborty spoke on CITU organisation document and Chander Sekhar, General Secretary, Punjab State Committee of CITU, took class on History of Indian Working Class.

Under the able leadership of the Thien Dam Workers Union, struggles continued for last 2 years through procession, dharna, work to rule, strike mass meting village to village campaign took place on two point demandsóRegularise all the 13578 NMR workcharge workers of Thein Dam and Stop handing over of Shapurkhadi Barrage Work to South Korean MNC by the Punjab Govt.

The Punjab Govt recently agreed and decided and issued official order to regularise all the 13578 workers with the retrospective date of appointment of each worker and pension also after considering all his/her past service. This massive victory of the Punjab Construction workers enhanced the prestige of CITU in Punjab in other industrial sector.

Young workers know little about trade unions

(We are publishing hereunder a report, which appeared in Financial Times of 22.8.96. The report is quite relevant so far as Indian trade union movement and in particular, the CITU is concerned, as the CITU has been consistently emphasising on motivating and enrolling the young workers and the new entrants and on cadre building in a continuous manner—Ed)

Only 7 per cent of young workers in Britain's labour force aged between 16 and 24 now being to a trade union and a mere 36 per cent said they would join one if asked to do so, according to a survey carried out by Mori the Independent poll organisation for the Trade Union Congress.

"The overwhelming majority of young workers

know little about trade unions, said the TIC, in a report which has potentially serious implications for the future of the trade unions, which now cover less than a third of the total adult-employed workforce.

Some 42 per cent of young workers said they knew nothing at all about trade unions and a further 44 per cent not very much.

This contrasted with only one per cent who said they knew a great deal about trade unions and 12 per cent who knew a fair amount. Twenty one per cent claimed they never heard or received information about trade unions. While 30 per cent said they were informed about them through television, 18 per cent said they got such information from colleagues and from newspapers.

Just four per cent of young workers said they would turn to a trade union representative if they had a problem at work, with most looking to management and supervisors for assistance. Only 35 per cent of youngsters who were trade union members would look to their unions for support.

If unions are to reach young people they must start organising on an unprecedented scale in the service sector, among small firms, part-time and temporary jobs, said the TUC. "The problem is not that young people are hostile to unions. It is simply that many young people have never had the chance to find out, what unions can do for them."

The survey also found widespread contentment among young workers about their work, jobs. As many as some 72 per cent said they were either "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied." Only eight per cent said they were very dissatisfied about their current or most recent job and 11 per cent said they were "fairly dissatisfied." A total of 77 per cent of the sample also said that "generally speaking" they believed they were either "very fairly" or "quite fairly" treated by their employer.

The survey showed that young workers are not hostile to trade unions. Only 20 per cent of young workers said unions were "a thing of the past," but 49 per cent disagreed. Only 26 per cent of young workers said they were concerned about job insecurity.

CITU Secretariat Meeting—

[On Page 3]

strengthening of the domestic industrial set up which cannot be done just by pampering foreign capital, by reducing customs duty and offering more concessions to them. The reduction in customs duty on Newsprints, Chemicals, Steel and Coal will hit these industries, some of which are likely to face closure aggravating the unemployment situation in the country.

United struggle of working class also must assert itself to see that Govt is compelled to take concrete steps to follow a employment oriented industrial policy, containing price hike and public distribution system is further widened and strengthened.

For revival of sick units, CITU must take initiative to unite the working class and launch a widespread movement to compel the government to take positive steps for revival and not for liquidation and winding up. SICA must be amended to ensure bringing back sick units to health and not to kill them which Govt. must keep in mind.

The Secretariat while reviewing the overall situation pointed out at the danger of disruption by the communal and divisive forces in the unity of the people and integrity of the country and called upon the worker to fight back communal and divisive outfit with all seriousness. This struggle must not lose its thrust at any moment, in our struggle against the Economic policies.

The Secretariat also calls upon the working class to take note of increasing pressure of the imperialist forces on the country in recent CTBT exercise. While welcoming the firm step against CTBT floated by the imperialist power as taken by the UF Government, CITU urged upon the workers to protest against US imperialist machination manifested through CTBT and bombing of Iraq etc. in an organised manner.

The Secretariat also calls upon all its affiliates to take urgent steps to make the conference of the trade unions of the countries in Indian Oceanic region to be held at Calcutta on 17-22 February 1996 total success. The Conference, it expects, will build up greeter consolidation of the working class in the entire region against imperialist machination and against the onslaught of IMF/World Bank policies in an effective manner.

The General Council meeting of CITU will be held at Vishakaptanam (AP) from 17-20 November 1996.

Sunil Maitra

[From Front Page]

while uniting the working class against the ruling classes. He joined the Communist Party in 1952, and the CPI(M) in 1964. As a natural choice he was elected to its Central Committee in 1985 and in quick succession became a member of its Secretariat in 1988 and then a member of the Polit Bureau in 1992. Subsequently he became the Editor of the People's Democracy, the organ of the CPI(M) and also a member of the Editorial Board of the Marxist, the theoretical journal of the Party.

With the sad demise of Com. Sunil Maitra the working class have lost one of its formidable leaders. The CITU dips its red flag paying homage to Com. Sunil Maitra and sends its heartfelt condolences to his wife, Com. Nilima Maitra and other members of his family.

1996 WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST A-H BOMB DEMANDED COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

(A World Conference against Atom and Hydrogen Bombs was held in Hiroshima, Japan on 4th August, 1996. The frontline organisation of Japanese Working class ZENROREN took the main initiative to organise the international Conference on the occasion of 51st Anniversary of Atom Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. ZENROREN invited CITU in the said conference. Com. Dilip Mazumdar, Working Committee Member of CITU and Working President of Steel Workers' Federation of India, participated on behalf of CITU. Reproduced below excerpts from the Declaration adopted in the—1996 World Conference against A-H Bomb. - Editor)

HIROSHIMA DECLARATION

Assembled in the International Meeting of the 1996 World Conference, which met on the eve of the observance of the 51st Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days since the first atomic bombs were used in history, we, delegates from 19 countries and 5 international organizations, renewed our commitment to develop the movements everywhere in the world to steadily pave the road which will set the world free of nuclear weapons.... The mounting criticism against the fact that the governments of nuclear-weapons-states, after having attempted the perpetuation of their monopoly over nuclear weapons by indefinitely extending the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), dared to conduct nuclear tests on the pretext of reinforcing nuclear deterrence, swiftly developed into an opinion demanding the abolition of all nuclear weapons, going beyond the demand for a ban on nuclear testing. Simultaneously, the fiftieth anniversary year of the A-bombing saw many forms of action develop all around the world, including a campaign to make known the damage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused by the A-bombing, the project for recognizing the illegality of the use and threat of nuclear weapons, and the holding of an international symposium which brought together the voices of nuclear victims in the world and appealed for the need to eliminate nuclear weapons. Further, a new development was seen in the United States where former high officials both in the administration and the military, who had promoted the nuclear arms race, put forward a proposal,

holding that the abolition of nuclear weapons is the only way to ensure the security of the United States and prevent the danger of nuclear proliferation.

The nuclear weapons states governments, however, are still turning their back to the public opinion demanding a ban on the use of nuclear weapons, an all-out prohibition of nuclear tests, as well as for elimination of nuclear weapons.

The world is still loaded with nuclear weapons of the order of ten thousands bombs. While attempting to prevent the emergence of new nuclear weapons states, the nuclear weapons possessing countries are claiming that "nuclear deterrence" is essential to "self-defense" and their vital national interests, and that their permanent nuclear monopoly and the maintaining and reinforcement of their nuclear forces should be taken for granted. To claim that only the nuclear weapon states have the privilege to possess nuclear arsenals and are even entitled to use them to threaten, oppress and dominate the world is nothing but an expression of hegemonism.

In fact, the United States, the biggest nuclear power, is pursuing a dangerous strategy of maintaining a powerful nuclear deterrence on the pretext of "detering regional conflicts", "preventing nuclear proliferation" and "potential danger in the future", without ruling out the possible use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states. With this aggressive, hegemonism policy aimed at interfering and intervening into every conflict around the world the danger of threat and actual use of nuclear weapons has become ever more real.

The ongoing negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) have proved that the nuclear weapons states, under the pressure of the public opinion and movement demanding the cessation of nuclear tests, have been forced to admit the need to ban nuclear explosion tests. However, the U.S. has declared that it would resume tests despite the treaty obligation, when it deems necessary for its vital national interests. It continues to refuse to acknowledge the illegality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons.

Are we to allow the nuclear weapons states to keep the "permanent monopoly of nuclear weapons"?

the privilege of determining the future of the whole humankind and planet? Or are we to choose the way to put an end to the politics of domination and blackmail by nuclear weapons and to completely remove the danger of nuclear war, by achieving a nuclear weapon-free

world?Along with the demand for a total ban on all forms of nuclear tests whether with or without nuclear explosions, and on the use of nuclear weapons, we need to build up powerful public opinion and movement demanding complete prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons, and to surround and isolate the pro-nuclear forces.We extend our solidarity with the struggle of Okinawa, which is forced to host a concentration of huge U.S. military bases, and continues to face the danger of being made into a base for nuclear war, through the secret agreement allowing nuclear weapons to be brought into Okinawa.

The governments of Japan and the U.S. have virtually revised the Japan-U.S. military alliance by the recent Joint Declaration on Security. The U.S. military bases in Japan, placed in an exceptional situation in the world, will be maintained and reinforced into the 21st century; the scope of coverage of the Japan - U.S. Security Treaty will be extended from the Far East to Asia and the Pacific, and further to a global scale; This clearly shows that the U.S. government, which considers its war in Vietnam just, and the Japanese government, refusing to make self-critical review of its war of aggression, are trying to strengthen their military alliance in the name of the common values and together play an aggressive role.

Under these circumstances, there is a growing danger that Japan will be made a nuclear attack base. The recently revealed scenario according to which tactical nuclear weapons are to be deployed in Japan in the event of a "sanction" operation against North Korea, indicates that this danger is real. There is also a move to deploy nuclear arms in the Eastern European countries, as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expands its membership.....

The voices in support of the direction consistently set out by the World Conference against A and H Bombs based on the experiences of the A-bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the only way to sweep away the threat of nuclear weapons, that is, their total elimination, now form a major stream.....The World Conference against A&H Bombs has constantly upheld the tasks of preventing nuclear war, abolishing nuclear weapons and extending relief and

solidarity with the A-bomb victims, and pursued a path to besiege and isolate the pro-nuclear forces by the joint efforts of the world people beyond differences of thought, creed and nationality.....It is necessary to further press in this direction, and build up a powerful anti-nuclear public opinion and movement in each country, especially in the nuclear weapons states and their allies..... Centering on the demand for the conclusion of an International treaty for a total ban and elimination of nuclear weapons as well as a treaty to completely prohibit nuclear tests of all kinds, holding up on the tasks of banning the use of nuclear weapons and achieving compensation for nuclear victims, let us increase our criticism of and defeat nuclear weapon-backed hegemonism and policies of nuclear deterrence

(2) In solidarity with the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki A-bombing and nuclear testing around the world, let us work together to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons and a nuclear test ban, and for the compensation for their suffering....

3) In light of the fact that military alliances are not compatible with the demand for nuclear weapons abolition, we must intensify our efforts for the dissolution of military blocs and alliances, including NATO and Japan-U.S. military alliance; removal of foreign military bases and troops, refusal of port calls by nuclear-equipped warships and other ways of bringing nuclear weapons into other countries; opening up information and abandoning the "secret nuclear agreement", and the expansion and reinforcement of nuclear-free zones.

4) In solidarity with the struggle for the protection of sovereignty and the right to self-determination of peoples; for reduction of military spending and reallocation of resources to development; for liberation from hunger, poverty, unemployment, racial discrimination and social injustice; and for the preservation of the global environment, we must take a stand against the power politics centered on nuclear weapons and call on the people in these struggles to demand together a nuclear-free world. 5) The realities of the damages caused by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident which have been aggravated during these 10 years since the accident is another warning of the danger of atomic energy development which was always given priority to military purposes. Let us strengthen our solidarity with the struggle for the eradication of damages related to the nuclear fuel cycle and for the compensation of the victims of these damages.

[Cont'd On Page 24]

State Conference of MPMSRU

The 29th State Conference of Madhya Pradesh Medical and Sales Representatives' Union (MPMSRU) was held from 21 to 23 July, 1996 at Jabalpur. MPMSRU was born on 20th August 1995 in consequence of a bitter struggle against the anti-FMRI and disruptive forces in the state of Madhya Pradesh. During this period the field workers in MP under the banner of MPMSRU participated in four successful strikes including the history 7th July 1995 strike against victimisations and for minimum wage at the independent initiative of MPMSRU which was for the first time in MP. MPMSRU also organised a state level massive rally and convention at Bhopal on 15th October 1995 for minimum wages and against victimisation. During this period MPMSRU has settled more than 70 victimisation issues. As a result of which more and more field workers are joining MPMSRU. The membership of MPMSRU in 1995 was 1423. The conference decided to increase membership to 2500 by the next conference.

The conference was inaugurated by Com.P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU, Com.Yamuna Prasad Shastri, a freedom fighter, trade union and Kisan leader and ex-MP, was the chairman of the Reception Committee. The open session was also addressed by leaders from Insurance, Telecommunication, Kisan Sabha, Vehicle factory, Railways and from employees and workers' union of Bengal Immunity, East India and Day's medical. Com.D P Dubey, General Secretary, FMRAI also addressed the session.

The business session started on 22nd July with presidential address by Com.R N Ghosh, Com.S K Talukdar placed the General Secretary's report and Com.Sanjay Nirgun placed the Treasurer's report. 33 delegates participated in the discussion on the reports. Both the General Secretary's report and Treasurer's report were unanimously adopted. Ten resolutions were also unanimously adopted including the resolution against petroleum price increase and privatisation of insurance sector.

The conference was greeted by Com.J S Majumdar, vice president, FMRAI, Com.D P Dubey, General Secretary, FMRAI, Com.S V Prabhu Secretary, FMRAI and Com. Kamlakar Choudhary, vice president, FMRAI. In their deliberations, they high-

lighted about National and International situations, the new emerging situations in Drug Industry in the GATT regime and to confront the situation.

The conference unanimously elected Com.R N Ghosh as president and Com.S K Talukdar and Com.Sanjay Nirgun as General Secretary and Treasurer among 14 secretariat members and 24 working committee members. The conference also elected 57 general council members.

During the conference cultural programmes were performed by Jana Natya Manch of Raipur and Yuva Natya Manch of Jabalpur.

[From Page 23]

Humans can never coexist with nuclear weapons.....The living witnesses of the damages of nuclear weapons in the world are crying from the bottom of their hearts: STOP NUCLEAR TESTING! ELIMINATE NUCLEAR WEAPONS NOW! To enter the 21st century set free of nuclear weapons is a duty that we should assume for future generations. Joining hands, encouraging one another, let us win a great development in the public opinion and movement!

August 4, 1996
International Meeting
1996 World Conference against
A&H Bombs

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