



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITY

*Ramasrey
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*May Day Rally
In Lucknow*

Under the above heading, 'The Indian Express' a leading Indian news daily, not unfriendly to the ruling BJP coalition at the Centre, serialised the reckless expansion, huge cost over runs and delays and over and above diversion of funds by 14 private steel firms. 23rd to 26th March '99 when Public Financial Institutions like IDBI, IFCI and ICICCI were considering the bail-out packages to some of these private steel projects under political pressure from the big wigs in the BJP-led Government.

In spite of the above exposure IDBI went ahead and sanctioned a package for Rs. 1080 crore for six of the aforesaid 14 companies, followed by IFCI and ICICI. Thus an estimated amount of Rs. 5000 crores and odd is being doled out as an additional bonanza to these private corporate.

This steal deal or steel scam had brought to the fore open corporate war within the Vajpayee Government. In February '99 Mohan Guruswamy, Adviser to the Finance Minister, was sacked for favouring certain steel firms like ESSAR and for needling in the affairs of Financial Institutions (Economic Times, March 6 '99). Guruswami, in turn, alleged that Promod Mahajan, Information Minister, backed by the PMO, had influenced in extending similar favour to the Mittal Group. Out of the hullabaloo about the division of BJP Ministers in pro-Essar, Pro-Mittal, Pro-Reliance and other Corporate Groups, the following startling revelations emerged :

1. In the name of achieving all-round development in the Steel Industry, Financial Institutions (FIS) showed eagerness to help 14 private entrepreneurs and against an estimated investment of Rs. 24,000 crore, an amount of Rs. 17,000 crore was provided by the FIS as loan.

Interestingly, the Firms, which were favoured with such loan by the FIS, such as Ispat Industries, Ispat Metallic Industries Ltd., Usha Ispat Ltd., Jindal Vijaynagar Ltd., S.J.K. Steel Corpn. Ltd. & Essar Steel Ltd., were not having any experience and expertise for running such big steel plants in the country.

2. FIS, who had shown a positive approach towards private steel firms and did not hesitate to sanction a colossal amount of Rs. 17,000 crore as loan in their favour, have expressed reluctance to extend any financial assistance for

THE STEAL DEAL

DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE

modernisation and revival of public sector steel plants under SAIL. IISCO's is a glaring instance which, despite its high potentiality, is being allowed to limp for years together in absence of modernisation at an investment of nearly Rs. 2000 crore.

3. These Industrialists are quite aware of various unscrupulous ways and tactics of enjoying all sorts of relief's and concessions extended by the Govt. and in this case also, in the pretext of exporting the steel, they enjoyed heavy rebate on Import Duty while importing machinery and equipment's.

4. Project costs of all the aforesaid plants were camouflaged to show at a much higher side with the sole intention of either diverting the funds to other projects or siphoning off the exaggerated amount purely for personal gain.

5. None of these projects could be completed within the stipulated period, resulting in further increase of project cost, cost of production apart from more loss on export.

6. As one-third of the capital was siphoned off front by these entrepreneurs the loan amount as well as the fund invested by the promoters were exhausted much before the completion of the projects.

It is no wonder, therefore, these corporate groups would come to the rescue of the caretaker Government with a motivated campaign that budgetary policies of this Government must be followed without any change. The Indian corporate world for the first time in the post-independent India had the audacity to throw an ultimatum to the political parties that they should follow the economic agenda formulated by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) as a condition for getting any contribution/fund for the coming election. The corporate world is bent on making a martyr of Vajpayee, which should not surprised the Indian people as it is a quid-pro-quo position between BJP and the corporate world. The 'steel deal' confirms the same.

THE WORKING CLASS

CITU ORGAN

JUNE 1999

CITU
GENERAL COUNCIL

CALLS FOR
INTENSIFIED
FIGHT

AGAINST

COMMUNALISM
AND
ECONOMIC
POLICIES

(More reports in
July'99 Issue)

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ADVOCACY OF ORDINANCE RAJ REPREHENSIBLE!

The newly elected President of CII Rahul Bajaj is a man in a hurry. He would not even wait for the elections to be over. He urged the BJP Government (on 30 April, 1999), even at its present care taker tenure, to issue ordinances on eleven bills, including Insurance Regulatory Authority Bill, the Money Laundering and Foreign Exchange Management Bill, Companies Bill, Income Tax Bill, Sick Industrial Companies Bill, Securities Contract (Regulation) Bill, Essential Commodities Bill, Export/Import Bill, Technology Bank of India Bill and Commodity Boards and Industry Development Bill. He advocates an 'Ordinance Raj' by the BJP, which has already shown its penchant to indulge in any amount of constitutional improprieties. The CII had also "identified" 19 areas for reforms.

The likes of Rahul Bajaj had also indicated that corporate funding of political parties (the BJP, being the most favoured one of the big business) in the present context would be linked to meeting of their demands.

Rahul Bajaj excelled himself in a telecast more recently. He reiterated his stand that the Congress and BJP evolve a common economic agenda.... "There was hardly any difference between the economic policies pursued by BJP during its 13 month rule and those of the Congress." "Politically you may have differences on Ayodhya, Article 356 or Kashmir, but if you have a common economic agenda, the nation will progress even if governments come and go," he said. (*The Pioneer*, May 16, 1999)

The CII President ventured to assure the US-India Business Council in Washington that fiscal discipline, infrastructure development, financial sector reforms, labour issues and policy and privatisation would be critical components of the second phase of reforms (in India) and observed "Progress will be made, but slowly" (*The Hindu*, May 22, 1999).

The BJP Governance has been so pliant in meeting the demands of big business in the country, that is why its spokesmen gleefully articulate such stances. In the process, they seem to unwittingly admit that political turbulences no longer worry them.

The working people and the trade union movement cannot countenance this reprehensible prescription of the CII. Their attempt to push through their own agenda of reforms without even a semblance of Parliamentary approval deserves outright condemnation.

A THREAT TO SOVEREIGNTY OF NATIONS

E BALANANDAN

The devastating air attack by the US led NATO forces on Yugoslavia is going on since March 24, last. We must unequivocally denounce this barbaric action by the USA. This is the second instance of open barbarism demonstrated by the USA. The first was against Iraq, which was perpetrated by the USA under the banner of the United Nations and it is still continuing. But against Yugoslavia, the UN was unceremoniously brushed aside, and the NATO arrogated itself as the world gendarme under the gang leadership of the USA. The war against Yugoslavia represents a sharp turn in the entire international situation. The USA had planned the whole thing against Yugoslavia long ago, and the aim is its total dismemberment and imposition of the rule of US imperialism throughout the Balkans. It is necessary to understand the diabolical game of USA over Yugoslavia.

In 1991, fuelled by the imperialists, violent ethnic and religious nationalism dismantled the Yugoslav federation.

Throughout this period the USA and its allies particularly Germany consistently highlighted the atrocities committed by the Serbian community, because they were in the frontline of the anti-fascist struggle and were staunch anti-imperialists, while underplaying the violence perpetrated by the Croatian and Muslim chauvinists. The USA brushed aside the UN from its peace keeping role and made the most intensive bombing of the Bosnian Serb population. The so-called Dayton Agreement was imposed creating separate Croat-Muslim and Serb-Bosnian entities and induction of over 30,000 NATO "Peace Keeping Troops" into Bosnia-Herzegovina under the over all command of the US armed forces. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia now consists of only Serbia and Montenegro.

With the direct bombardment on Yugoslavia, the American game plan to complete its dismemberment has come to surface. The objective is now to detach the Kosovo province

of Serbia, which has got a majority of Albanians, taking advantage of their long standing conflict with the Serbs spearheaded by a secessionist force under the name of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The KLA is directly patronised by the US and financed by the extreme right wing forces in the European Union engaged in multi-billion dollar narcotic trade.

Like in Iraq, USA's objective in bombing Yugoslavia is to topple Slobodan Milosevic, who like Saddam Hussain refuses to accept US hegemony and surrenders the national sovereignty of the country.

Talks were held at Rambouillet near Paris in February between Yugoslavia and KLA and Chaired by America. and then again at Paris on 15th March. While President Slobodan Milosevic agreed for autonomy for Kosovo within the federal structure of Yugoslavia and an UN implementation force, America and KLA wanted a NATO force and independence of Kosovo from Yugoslavia. As Yugoslavia stated, it was a matter of defending their sovereignty and territorial integrity. But sovereignty of nations according to USA is no longer a sacrosanct principle. It is to be noted that fight whatever may be the odds.

The NATO after including Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic, is now the instrument for imperialist expansion into the Balkans to divide the areas under US hegemony. But the Serbian Republic headed by Slobodan Milosevic stands as an obstacle to this. Hence it is to be demolished. Inner contradictions have started growing within the NATO countries. Except its most loyal stooge Britain, other countries have contributed little to the NATO force.

America is now in a fix as to whether to launch ground force or not. This will cost enormous lives of American troops. The spectre of Vietnam war is haunting Bill Clinton.

While on one hand, its own allies are trying to distance themselves from the USA, Russia's opposition has become a serious concern for

Clinton despite huge sums being pumped into Russia through IMF.

The deliberate and foolish bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade has made the things worse for America. Militant agitations in China have boosted the mass struggles which have already been waged in different parts of the world. Big demonstrations have taken place all over Europe and in America too, leading to growing contradictions within the NATO countries and alienation of America from its allies. In Italy the Refoudnation Communists whose support is essential for the Government's survival have threatened to withdraw support if the government continues to participate in the attacks on Yugoslavia. Similarly in France there is growing discontent among the ranks of the Socialist Party, the major partner in the coalition. The other partner - the Communist Party has threatened to withdraw its three ministers from the coalition government. Even in Germany, where the Foreign Minister is from the Green Party, there is growing rumbling in the Party against the senior partner, the SDP. In Greece the Government has openly taken a stand against the attack. Iraq and Iran have openly condemned the bombing. President Nelson Mandela of South Africa has strongly condemned the NATO attack, as also the leaders of most of the Latin American and Central Asian countries. The Pope has also issued an impassioned plea to stop the bombing. Even Dalai Lama, as a rare happening sided with China. Eight Communist Parties of the Balkans from Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia have jointly condemned the attack and called upon the people of Balkans to intensify their anti-war struggle.

This is not the end of the story. We must go a bit deeper into the political and ideological aspect of the US led NATO policy, which is linked to the present process of liberalisation and globalisation. In the midst of the devastating attack against Yugoslavia, the NATO observed its 50th anniversary with a summit meeting at Washington on 23rd April after one month of bombardments. The meeting came out with a new dangerous doctrine. First, they openly declared that military measures can be taken outside the territory of the NATO members.

Secondly as stated by Bill Clinton in his address,

"We have reaffirmed our readiness to address regional and ethnic conflicts beyond the territory of NATO members."

Such official policy pronouncements are corollary to the drive for total economic domination through forums like the G-7, the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank) and the newly formed WTO. It was an official pronouncement of US led imperialism to militarily intervene anywhere in the world to meet its objective of world economic domination. The New World Order was thus officially explained. It is not only a danger to world peace, but a direct threat to the sovereignty of nations. It explicitly explains the withering of the Nation States, the process to which globalisation is already proceeding.

The second point as stated by Clinton himself, explains the other ideological propaganda of globalisation, that it is not the class, but "identity politics" that is relevant - identity based on community, race, religion and so on. Fragmented identities based on these are the only basis for political activities. It is this trend which fosters caste, communal and sectarian identities which benefit imperialism.

But it has to be borne in mind that only the organised working class can roll back the imperialist drive for war for domination. Their direct offensive is therefore against the organised working class to ideologically denude its class consciousness and channelise it into the so-called "identity politics" based on community, race, caste and religion. But the practical experience of the working class of the politics and ideology of globalisation acts as a deterrent to imperialist offensive. It is this experience which has sparked off world wide struggles against the NATO offensive to dismember Yugoslavia and tear apart its national sovereignty and its unity and integrity. It is a life or death struggle. We must take lessons from it. We must demand immediate halt to the war against Yugoslavia and disbandment of the NATO. The political solution can be arrived at only under the auspices of the UN giving autonomy to Kosovo within the framework of Yugoslavia and replacing the NATO force with an UN Peace Keeping force.

(Extract from address to the CITU General Council)

ECONOMY IN DECLINE, WORKERS IN MISERY

M K PANDHE

Since last one year the economic conditions marked a sharp deterioration in all fronts.

In the industry sector the growth rate fell sharply to 3.8% in 1998-99 compared to a 6.9% during previous year. Not only that, industry witnessed a continuous sliding down consecutively in all the quarters during 1998-99.

Despite tall talk on infrastructural development by the Finance Minister, the infrastructure performance during April-December 1998 declined sharply. As observed by their own "Economic Survey", the growth of infrastructure and core industries (Electricity generation, coal, steel, crude oil, refinery and cement) decelerated to 2% during April-December 1998 from 4.1% during the corresponding period in the previous year. Crude oil and steel have displayed absolute decline during the year.

In Agricultural front too, the decline is alarming despite successive good monsoons. The index of agricultural production has marked a growth of only 3.9% in 1998-99 after a sharp decline in absolute term of (-) 6% during the previous year. But despite this meager rise in 1998-99, the Agricultural Production index remained below 1996-97 level. Moreover the foodgrains production also has declined in absolute terms

to 195.3 million tonnes in 1998-99 from 199.4 million tonnes in 1996-97 signifying sharp decline in the percapita food-availability over the period.

WIDENING POVERTY

The slow down of the economy alongwith the phenomenon of continuously rising prices at a faster pace indicates the widening of the poverty among the mass of the people.

In the background of rising prices, the symptom of visible decline in the share of labour cost to total cost of production clearly reveals the trend of declining real wages of the workers and also decline in employment. A survey of 1000 top private industrial units revealed that during the period under review the share of labour in total cost of production, net sales & gross block marked a continuous decline during the entire liberalised regime. The same survey revealed that the growth rate of wage bill of the workers in private Corporate Sector has fallen from 19.7% in 1994 to 8.3% in 1998. Wage bill as percentage of total cost has fallen from 7.3% in 1994 to 6.8% in 1998, and as a proportion of net sales, it fell from 7.2% to 6.3%.

It is also notable that growth of net sales in the private corporate sectors under survey has sharply fallen from 33.1% in 1995 to 6.7% in 1998. The

dwindling share of labour cost as a proportion of net sales, in the background of sharp decline in the growth of net sales itself sharply exposes the fact that liberalisation has brought down both the earnings of the workers and the employment in both real & absolute terms.

Such all round decline in the economy actively nursed by the disastrous policy of Govt. of India have also seriously impacted upon the employment situation. Employment generation in the organised sector has actually marked a decline. The continuing recession has also severely affected the employment prospect in the unorganised sector as well owing to aggravation of situation of closure and sickness in the small scale and medium industries sector. Added to this is the increasing phenomenon of casualisation and contracterisation of regular jobs, which besides promoting the phenomenon of retrenchment without cost, has affected the quality of employment in a big way.

DISMAL PICTURE

The BJP Govt's dogged advocacy of liberalisation has been stated to be aimed at higher export growth and increase in foreign investment. With that objective extra liberal concessions were granted to

MNCs and Indian exporters. The recent change in Exim policy announced by the BJP govt has brought under OGL 894 items from the restricted list of imports and exporters have been granted additional incentives for zero duty imports. As a result imports are being made easier and cheaper on Indian soil and Indian domestic industries are facing threat of marginalisation from the Indian market itself.

On the other hand export performance is showing a sharp decline. During April-Sept 1998, export declined in dollar terms by 5% and during the rest of the fiscal year it could hardly recover to show a marginal growth of only 1.5 per cent in dollar terms. Despite the increase in the volume of export by more than 20%, India has to earn less and less in terms of return by sending more and more quantities abroad.

On the foreign investment front as well, the picture is utterly dismal. As observed by Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) the non-debt foreign investment has fallen by 75% during April-Sept 1998 compared to last year and during the rest of the fiscal year situation has not changed in the least.

On the whole a deep routed recession has been setting in on the Indian economy. Slow down in industrial activity, aggravation of industrial sickness and widespread closure, drastic cut in production in the basic industries like steel, coal, electricity, oil has been casting gloom in the national economy aggravating poverty, widening

unemployment, fanning inflationary spiral, and eroding the manufacturing base of the economy in a big way. But such a development also could not yet bring the protagonists of liberalisation into sense.

The Govt of India has been trying frantically to deregulate the labour market through drastic changes in the labour legislations. The Industrial Disputes Act is being sought to be amended to ensure liberty to employers to hire and fire at their sweet will and also to slash down the workers' right in a big way. Trade Union Act is being sought to be amended to put hurdle in formation of trade unions. Contract Labour Act is being sought to be overhauled to legitimise deployment of contract worker even in permanent perennial area of work. In the same direction all other labour related legislations are being sought to be overhauled to marginalise the workers and prune the rights of the workers. It is being shamelessly announced by the Govt that labour laws would be amended to suit the needs of globalisation and liberalisation which requires economising on labour cost. The 2nd National Labour Commission has been announced to be constituted for the same purpose only.

BUDGET BURDENS

In the background of severe recession, and contraction of domestic market, need of the hour was boosting of effective demand and expansion of domestic market through generation of employment and income by enhanced public

investment, control on import etc. But, the budget proposals moved on to the opposite direction. It has increased the load on common people by increasing indirect taxes on essential goods in the name of rationalisation, hiking the postal charges, railway freights (through Railway Budget) and raising the administered prices of PDS items just before the budget presentation besides drastically cutting down expenditure on rural development and social welfare heads.

All these measures, alongwith cut in import duties will lead to further contraction of domestic market aggravating the recessionary situation. Thus the noise being made by the Union Finance Minister regarding prospect of economic recovery and the end of recession appears to be a myth.

In totality, the overall decline and slow down in the economy has pushed the workers and common people in dire straits, barring the multinational companies whose profitability is showing an upswing. Thus the game plan of the World Bank and IMF to convert the manufacturing economy of the country into a marketing centre for foreign companies stands totally unfolded, in which the BJP led govt and other supporters of liberalisation have been working overtime as a facilitator. This is destined to take the economy and the country towards total disaster.

(Extract from the Report to CITU General Council)

ELECTIONS AND TASKS OF THE WORKING CLASS

The elections for the 13th Lok Sabha which are likely to be held in September, 1999, are very crucial for India's future. The elections are being held in an extremely complicated situation and the realignment of various political parties is yet to take place. The Congress and the BJP is trying to have more and more allies as far as possible. But dissensions are emerging in both the camps. The Third Front is yet to take a concrete shape, while people are in a confused state of mind. In U.P., serious dissidence in the BJP are likely to lead to an unpredictable situation, which may take serious turn in the forthcoming period. Though both the Congress and the BJP alliances are claiming that they will acquire clear majority support, it is very doubtful whether any single formation can get a clear-cut majority to form a Government at the Centre.

BLATANT MISUSE

The BJP, blatantly using the position of a caretaker government, is taking major political decisions which they are not supposed to take in the present situation. The sudden transfers of various civil servants, compulsory retirement of West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh Governors, the shameless use of electronic media for partisan ends, full page advertisements in newspapers spending crores of

rupees to boost the image of the BJP are some of the major steps the BJP government is taking to win the election at all costs. The MNCs and foreign powers are also doing their best to give moral and material support to the BJP's election campaign. While the BJP alliance is talking about a common manifesto, the VHP and other RSS outfits have started campaigning on Hindutva agenda to rouse chauvanism among the Hindu masses.

While the Indian economy is moving downwards and the government treasury is experiencing shortage of funds, the BJP is spending money to boost its image to win the elections taking advantage of the non-publication of the election schedule by the Election Commission. In some States, the Assembly elections are likely to be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls. The developments in different States are taking different shapes. The regional combinations may play an important role in the outcome of the elections.

STABILITY, OF WHAT?

Through the slogan of 'stability' both the Congress and BJP are advocating stability of the capitalist system. The economic policy of both these parties is the same - to surrender before the IMF and World Bank. Hence, strengthening of these parties in the elections will secure no relief

for the common people. On the contrary, the economic conditions will only further deteriorate.

The need to defeat the BJP is a task of paramount importance during this election campaign and the working class should play a very important role in defeating the BJP which has brought the country to ruin and disaster.

The CITU Secretariat has decided that all CITU Unions must campaign during the forthcoming period against the role played by the BJP government during the last 13 months. It is decided to publish a booklet explaining the role of the BJP government to educate the working class on the urgent need to defeat the reactionary policies of the BJP. The booklet will be ready by 15th of June. It should be translated into all regional languages so that a powerful campaign can be launched all over the country against the dangers facing our country and its economy.

We have also to educate the working class about the dangerous consequences of the economic policies advocated by the Congress Party and how the policies of this party are ruining the country besides helping the BJP at the national level.

The communal, castiest and regional propaganda is likely to play an important role in this election campaign in an atmosphere when the national

issues are sought to be relegated to the background. The CITU unions must campaign in this period against these retrograde trends in the national political situation. Since these trends are clearly visible within the working class itself, the tasks become much more important and every cadre of the CITU must be equipped with necessary materials to effectively propagate the view points of the CITU.

Unless the Left and the Democratic forces come together and form a third alternative before the country, the Congress and the BJP will try to impose on the country the virus of two party system and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has openly mentioned about the evolving of this two party system. The Congress leader, Sharad Pawar, has openly stated in the CII meeting that unless the Left forces are marginalised, the two party system cannot emerge in India. Though the BJP had forged a multi-party alliance bringing together a motley crowd of leaders and parties, it is only a cloak. Several times, during the past thirteen months, the Prime Minister and the leaders of Sangh Parivar had laid bare their intention to secure absolute

majority for the BJP so as to pursue their saffron agenda. Thus, in essence, both the BJP and Congress are vying with each other to reign in a two party system, seeking to elbow out the forces of a third alternative. Big business in India and the MNCs are also gleefully pitching for the two party system, because both the Congress and the BJP are fully protecting their class interests.

Since the time is short, we have to make our cadres very active without any delay and plunge in the election campaign in a big way. The BJP is trying to tell the people that because of the role of the opposition they could not perform better. They are propagating with the active support of the industry lobby that when the BJP government has brought the economy to rail of growth, the opposition has toppled the government and brought misery to country's economy. The reality is just opposite and during the 13 months BJP regime, the country's economy has been put on faster track of disaster and decline the details of which has already been given in an earlier chapter of the report. We have to expose the dismal performance and dangerous policies of the BJP in the last 13

months so that their propaganda can be blown up without any difficulty. Performance of the BJP Government from now till the elections also needs to be exposed to defeat the BJP and their dangerous Hindutva agenda they wanted to impose on the Indian society.

LEFT ALTERNATIVE

The working class must realise that there is a grand design to marginalise and eliminate the left forces, which alone have defended the working class, inside and outside Parliament and opposed the MNCs and big business friendly economic policies of both the Congress and the BJP.

The CITU must emphasise that only the left and secular-democratic forces can offer a pro-people alternative and strengthening of those forces alone can defeat the attempts of our class enemies to usurp the political space of the working class parties and usher in a two party system.

Hence in the forthcoming elections the CITU workers and our activists will have to play an important role in popularising the Left alternative so that the emergence of the third force with the Left as a bed rock can emerge in the country.

(From the Report to CITU General Council)

FDI INVESTMENT IN ASIA DECLINE

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows have declined by 7% in 1998-the first since mid eighties.

The decline of FDI approval in 1998 and during the first quarter of 1999 in a number of countries signals a further decline in FDI inflows into developing Asia this year. FDI flows into East South and South East Asia in 1998 where \$ 78 billion compared to \$ 84

billion in 1997, according to latest data available. But China, however continued to be single largest FDI receipt in the region. Inflows to India where \$ 3.4 billion 1998 a level similar to that of the previous year.

Mergers and acquisition (M&As) in Asia in 1998 increased by 28% in value over 1997.

ALARMING PICTURE OF ABSOLUTE ANARCHY

In the post liberalisation period, the issue of overhauling the labour legislations have come up both from employers and govt side again and again, the direction of which is to remove altogether whatever meagre protection the existing labour legislations offer to the workers. The status of the implementation of the existing labour laws even as per govt reports depicts an alarming picture of absolute anarchy. In most of the cases, justice sought by the workers, through the provisions of existing labour laws, is so much delayed, some times for 10 years or more, that it tantamounts to denial of justice. Minimum wage notifications are flagrantly violated by the employers, particularly in the unorganised sector. Only a microscopic part of such violations is generally reported as complaints to the concerned enforcement authority. Even then those complaints are not properly attended, despite the fact that the statutory minimum wages are below the poverty level wages in most of the cases. As per Annual Report of the Labour Ministry, in 12,340 cases of violation of wage laws reported in 1997, inspection was done and concrete action taken only in 3,270 cases.

ACTS VIOLATED

The provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, to which both the employers and the Govt became so much allergic, are also the

victims of worst violation and tardy enforcement. According to the Labour Ministry, during 1998, out of total 5,700 applications of dispute within the central sphere, 4698 cases remained pending at the end of the year. Out of total 8407 cases referred to Central Govt Industrial Tribunal in 1998, 7683 cases remained completely unattended during the whole year. And if cases pending with the labour departments of various States are taken into account, the numbers would reach an astronomical figure.

The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act is possibly the worst violated labour legislation in the country and the Govt of India is the worst offender. The number of contract workers in public sector steel industry is more than 80,000 and in the coal industry, more than few lakhs. In other PSUs in oil, engineering telecom and other sectors, number of contract workers is increasing every day, in permanent perennial areas of work. Recent judgments of Supreme Court awarding regularisation of contract workers all pertain to PSUs like Airlines, steel, oil and others. In all those cases the workers and their unions had to approach the High Courts and Supreme Court for justice. As per the same annual report of the Labour Ministry, during 1997, 70769 cases of irregularities as per contract labour Act have

been detected of which action has been taken and prosecution launched only in 3,330 cases.

In the social security areas also, the enforcement of existing legislation leave much to be desired. During 1998, out of the total arrears of Provident Fund collection of Rs 657.62 crore due to employers' default, only Rs 193 crore could be realised, despite there being provisions for recovery and penal measures. As per the annual report of EPFO, out of the reported cases of default numbering 75824 during 1998, 73188 cases remained pending at the end of the year. The Employees State Insurance Corporation is no exception. Out of Rs 381 crore of ESI contribution in default in 1998, only Rs 37.31 crore could be recovered by the ESIC.

On the other hand, taking advantage of the ambiguity in the legal provisions, and many times completely ignoring the laws of the land, the employers are carrying onslaught on the workers through lock out, lay off and closures. During the post liberalisation period in particular, such attacks are mounting everyday. Again, as noted by the labour ministry, from 1991 onwards, 21,789 workers were retrenched with the permission of the govt. During 1993 onwards, every year, 60,000 workers on the average have been laid off, 15000 workers

have been affected by closures, 3, 25,000 workers became victims of lock out and 110 lakh mandays have been lost due to lock out on the average. All these figures are annual average of the alarming happenings in the labour front during every year of the post liberalisation period. Again, all these figures pertain to the reported incidents; those unreported are many times more than the reported ones.

SLAVERY IN EPZs

The condition of the workers in various Export Processing Zones (EPZs) is horrifying, as the employers there have practically been granted total immunity from all labour legislations by the Govt., behind the barbed-wire protection of the customs department. Trade Unions are not allowed to operate in most of the EPZs and any effort to form trade union by EPZ workers is being tackled in a most harsh manner by the employer in connivance with the EPZ authorities. Such workers are just denied entry in the EPZ areas by the security guards at the instance of employers. Under pressure from the trade unions, the Labour Ministry had to conduct inspections in all the EPZs. The report of such inspection, despite much effort to suppress the real situation, indicates alarming lawlessness and prevalence of virtual slavery in the EPZs.

In the EPZ at Noida (UP) out of 48 factories inspected, 38 are not having any certified standing orders and 1148 workers out of

8000 workers of those inspected factories are not having their name on the rolls of the company. There had been 970 cases of payment below the statutory level that could be detected on the day of inspection itself.

In Chennai EPZ, some readymade garment industries were found indulging in gross irregularities in overtime payment to workers. Canteen facilities are not available in most of the factories.

In Kandla EPZ, the garment and plastic factories were not paying statutory minimum wages to workers and most of the factories are not having certified standing orders.

In EPZ, Mumbai, out of 12 factories inspected, six establishments were paying wages much less than the statutory minimum and all the establishments except 3 units were found to be violating Industrial Establishment (Standing Orders) Act.

The reality is that, in the absence of trade unions, ninety percent of the cases of violation of labour laws in EPZ are not reported at all and the superficial inspection carried out by the Govt could uncover only a negligible part of it.

But yet, whatever has been revealed even by such superficial inspection confirms the anarchic situation prevailing in EPZs. On top of that, only to legitimise such anarchy in labour matters, the ministers of the BJP led Govt. at the centre have been making statements that "Usual labour laws would not be applicable to the EPZs to be

renamed as Free Trade Zones".

FAR REACHING MOVES

The employers and the Govt are seeking far-reaching amendments to the labour laws, which, in the main, relate to:

* Contract Act, to do away with provisions for abolition, thus perpetuating and enlarging deployment of contract labour;

* Change the definition of "industry" to exclude the entire gamut of service sector, banks, electricity and water supply, etc;

* Do away with the obligation to give notice of change in service conditions, to resort to any change at their sweet will;

* Curtail the scope for seeking grievance redressal through labour courts or tribunals on matters relating to compensatory allowance, hours of work, leave, holidays, etc;

* Change wage related legislations to introduce productivity linkage;

* Impose restrictions on payment of bonus; and

* Discontinue the practice of statutory notification of minimum wages by State Govts.

If these changes are allowed to be carried out, slave like conditions will be imposed on the working class.

Therefore, the working class is in for bigger onslaught on their rights and living conditions in the days ahead. The trade union movement in its entirety must close rank and fight back the naive conspiracy to enslave the working class.

REPULSE ATTACK ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

SWADESH DEV ROYE

The World Bank and multinational companies have identified the apex level bipartite fora in public sector enterprises as the source of resistance against privatisation. Thus to eliminate these barriers, the Bank has been prescribing steps aimed at dismantling these apex fora.

According to a World Bank Policy Research Report (October 1995) "workers and managers in SOEs (State Owned Enterprises) stand to lose the most from reform through lay offs or wage cuts, and therefore frequently the most vocal and best organised opponents of reforms." So the prescription of the Bank to "offset resistance through a combination of compensation by offering fired workers severance payment, distributing shares to the public or to workers in powerful unions and compulsion by limiting strike and curbing trade union power."

PRESCRIPTION FOR ATTACK

The prescription for naked attack on the collective bargaining right of the PSU workers has come in yet another document of the World Bank titled - Jobs, Poverty and Working Conditions in South Asia (August, 1995). "Reduce the role of central government in the labour market...This can be achieved in two ways. First privatisation of state enterprises would automatically reduce government's wage setting role. Second, for enterprises that remain in the public domain, wage determination needs to be decentralised. This implies greater autonomy for enterprise managers, within a hard budget constraint, and extensive use of decentralised collective bargaining. For this strategy to succeed, government will need to impose hard budget constraint on public sector enterprise management." It may be worth mentioning that in their bid to weaken the multi-unit large PSUs through disintegration, the World Bank is insisting on splitting off the large size public sector enterprise and horizontal unbundling of other activities.

In the light of the above prescription of the World Bank, if we analyse the steps taken by the

successive governments in withdrawing budgetary support to PSUs, so-called autonomy granted to the management in the name of 'Navratnas - Miniratnas', restrictions imposed on wage negotiations and such other measures, it is not difficult to understand where from the input is coming. These steps are, according to the World Bank, to prepare the country for massive privatisation and demolition of public sector.

It may be recalled that while notifying the wage policy for the 5th round of wage negotiations in public sector enterprises, the DPE circular No.1 (3)/86-DPE (WC) dated 12.4.93 said that negotiations can be held by the management at individual enterprise or unit level.

It is amazing to note that at a time when the globalisation prescription of the Fund-Bank is being chanted as 'Gurumantra', the same 'Gurus' are asking us to decentralise (read localise) our wage negotiation system. The contradictory approach is nakedly exposed in the observation of the former Director General of ILO Michael Hansenne, "The ever-growing presence of multinational enterprises means that satisfactory results from collective negotiations at the national level are increasingly difficult to obtain." The need of the hour is to expand the jurisdiction of centralised collective bargaining, beyond the boundary of a single nation state to cover the entire business jurisdiction of the respective multinational companies spread over several nation states. It is ridiculous that when the anti-public sector forces are consolidating themselves through mergers and acquisition world wide, these international agents are pressurising the labour to get decentralised and shun consolidation.

NEW OFFENSIVES

The employers have launched new offensive against wage negotiations with the motive to place the burdens of stagnant market economy on the shoulders of the workers. They have come out with anti-labour interpretation of pay. The paper titled "Performance-related and skill-based pay",

written by the Deputy Director, Bureau for Employers' Activities, ILO, Geneva (1998) noted : "We now pay workers not for output produced, nor even for labour input provided, but simply for time spent on the job".

The achievements of working class movement in successfully implementing the factors or criteria like cost of living, job evaluation, service seniority coupled with bargaining capacity of the trade unions as the guiding principles for wage revision are sought to be negated. This is to be replaced with "Performance" as the major or for that matter the sole criteria. They observed: " many employers are now seeking to sustain their competitiveness through pay increases which are more related to performance as a way of absorbing increased labour costs" (ibid.).

The performance-related, 'flexible' pay system is imposed on the workers by the employers mainly to achieve "automatic pay reduction" in the face of stagnation in market. "In these circumstances a major concern for employers will be to negotiate pay system which :

- * achieve a strategic business objective
- * are flexible in that their variable component could absorb downturns in business and reduce labour costs
- * are capable of reducing the incidence of redundancies in times of recession ... through the flexible component of pay
- * are cable to reward good performance without increasing labour costs" (ibid.).

Decentralised wage negotiations are pressed for by the employers with the ulterior motive to attack the bargaining capacity of and power to oppose the new offensive by the trade unions. It is noted : " The movement towards decentralisation of collective bargaining has been the result of the need to address efficiency and performance issues at the enterprise level (ibid.).

What is alarming is that the employers are not content with enterprise level negotiations only. They are out to do away with the role of trade unions in negotiations and switch over to direct negotiations with individual workers. The example of New Zealand has been cited to say : "The fundamental shift of industrial relations to the enterprise level and the individualisation of the employment relationship in New Zealand has

provided ample scope for performance-related pay. Therefore, it is increasingly recognised that performance and skills criteria need to be injected into pay determination ; that it cannot be achieved through centralised or macro-level pay determination, and that changes have to be negotiated at the enterprise level" (ibid.)

PRODUCTIVITY - T U PERSPECTIVE

With the motive to malign the public sector workers often an allegation is hurled that the level of productivity in this sector is very poor in our country. In an attempt to substantiate the allegation, comparison is often drawn on the level achievement in productivity performance among the workers in different countries of the world. However, the hard reality, which is not highlighted consciously is that the workers in the developed countries are placed in a much better position compared to those in developing countries, in the matter of per capita capital investment and availability of superior technology.

What has been noted in one report of the World Bank itself is revealing and a fitting reply to the anti-worker, anti-public sector forces: The average South Asian workers uses only \$2.513 of capital compared with a developing country average of \$13.000 and industrial country average \$1,50,000. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that productivity is relatively low in the region. Increasing the stock of physical capital per worker is essential for raising productivity." Why the so called level of productivity in our country is not comparable with that of the highly industrialised countries require no further elaboration.

Contrary to the motivated campaign, the trade unions are not opposed to genuine productivity movement. However, we have reservation to the obsolete approach that higher productivity is better attained by imposing excessive work load on the workers and also by labour shedding. It is worth nothing what has been observed by G K Suri, former Director General of National Productivity Council, New Delhi and Head of Research and Planning Division of APO, Tokyo:

" old concept created scepticism and apprehension among the trade unions and let them to believe that productivity was management's another gimmick to exploit

(Cont. on page 15) —

GLOBALISATION OR ECONOMIC SUBJUGATION?

W R VARADA RAJAN

The serious recession looming large in the world economic situation is sliding from bad to worse. Growth rates had steeply fallen and unemployment rates have gone up in almost all parts of the globe, including the developing countries. This is what the UNCTAD Report 1998 points out:

"Growth in developing countries in 1998 is expected to be half of that of 1997, falling to less than 2.5% (of GDP). Growth in the developing world, excluding China, will fall much below that of the developed world...Developing countries are trapped in a corner. To lessen the risk of contagion, many emerging markets have introduced pre-emptive monetary and fiscal restrictions....In doing so, they have choked domestic demand and lowered growth prospects still further."

Total unemployment in the advanced capitalist countries according to grossly understated official figures is now over 35 millions!

The World Development Report had noted that the low and middle income countries had reported decline in the growth of GDP for 1990-97 period to a meagre 2.8%, from a 4.3% growth in the eighties.

The Trade and Development Report - 1997 had warned of a potential backlash of a globalised world. The UNCTAD Report - 1998 had observed: "When a colossal global market failure and measures taken to bail out creditors are paid for at the expense of the living standards of ordinary people and of the stability and development in the debtor developing countries concerned, who is to say that justice have been served?"

NAKED LIES

This is the state of affairs, as assessed by international bodies. The era of liberalisation and globalisation under the aegis of the World Bank and the IMF, administered by way of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), in different recipes for various countries, has been in operation for nearly two decades now. The high-profile super-economists of WB-IMF and their

apologists in the third world hailed the SAP prescriptions as one that would transform the world into unimaginable prosperity and showers affluence on the poorer countries. Two decades of experience has shown those prophecies to be naked lies.

Disparities between the rich and poor countries, and between the rich and the poor in individual countries, have only widened. The percentage of population living below poverty line had increased all over the world at a rate faster than the rate of growth of population. Even in the "paradise of the rich" - the USA, having the highest average income in the whole world, 17% of its people live below the poverty line. Of the total world income of 23 billion dollars in 1997, 18 billions were earned by just 20% of the world population. The rest nearly 80% of the world population had to share among themselves the balance of 5 billion dollars.

It is the richest one-fifth of the world population that consumes 45% of all meat and fish, 58% of total energy, 74% of all telephone lines and 84% of all paper production. The richest countries of Europe, USA and Japan control 75 to 80% share of the world trade. Of the remaining 20-25% of the world trade shared by the developing countries, the MNCs operating in these countries corner a substantial part thereof. With the increasing trend of mergers, amalgamations and take-overs, the Trans-National Corporations are consolidating their grip over the economies of the third world countries in a big way. Till 1997-98, an estimated 75% of all the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows have gone in for this merger-take over operations. Even in India 70% of the total FDI flows have been pumped in for take over of Indian companies by MNCs.

SPECULATIVE PROFITEERING

The speculative profiteering characteristic of the FDI flows - cross border flights of international finance capital - had aptly been described by **Wayne Ellwood** in the following words:

"Currency traders and corporate bond dealers hold

the upper hand. High speed computer technology combined with billions of dollars in free floating currencies has created an integrated but anarchic global financial market. Finance Ministers from Delhi to Canberra tremble as Wall Street bond rating agencies announce their verdicts. Twenty five year old kids at keyboards control the fate of nations. Governments ratchet up interest rates which simultaneously attracts speculators and discourages productive investment. And social programmes are cut to please money-managers in Tokyo, London and New York, who have a constitutional apathy to budget deficits." (Multinationals and the Subversion of Sovereignty).

Another author, **Joel Kurtzman** in his book "The Death of Money" observed: "Most of the \$800 billion that is traded...goes for very short term speculative investments - from a few hours to a few days to a maximum of few weeks. That money is mostly involved in nothing more than making money. It goes for options trading, stock speculation and trade in interest rates. It goes for short term financial arbitrage transactions where an investor buys a product such as bonds or currencies on one exchange in the hopes of selling it at a profit on another exchange, sometimes simultaneously by using electronics." That was in 1993. Now the world daily monetary transactions account for 3 trillion dollars, of which hardly 2% relate to trade and services i.e., on real economy. The rest 98% creates neither wealth nor

(Cont. from page 13)

employees. Productivity should be understood in a more comprehensive way including such aspects as capital productivity, R&D productivity, productivity of management, etc. Productivity enhancement could not, therefore, be achieved by merely coercing workers to produce more." For promoting genuine productivity movement and ensuring support of the trade unions, it is necessary to introduce democratic scheme for participation of workers at all levels of management, and of course address the issues raised by Suri.

Ever since the liberalisation era, public sector units in different industries are constantly under multi-

employment in the society, but can create turbulence for national economies.

This was envisioned by **Com.Lenin**, the greatest teacher of the working class, as far back as in 1916. He said: "The development of capitalism has arrived at a stage when, although commodity production still 'reigns' and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the bulk of the profits go to the 'geniuses' of financial manipulation. At the basis of these manipulations and swindles lies socialised production; but the immense progress of mankind, which achieved this socialisation, goes to benefit...the speculators." (**Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism**).

ECONOMIC HEGEMONY

The neo-liberal globalisation sponsored by the WB-IMF-WTO regime, has thus become an instrument for establishing the economic hegemony of the imperialist countries over the developing countries, and in effect recolonise them. This economic subjugation of the third world supplements the process of establishing political and military hegemony by the world imperialism led by the USA. The uni-polar world situation in the post-Soviet Union dispensation is deftly utilised to achieve this goal. And hence we must remember what has been ordained for the working class, in the same historic work by **Lenin**: "The reply of the proletariat to the economic policy of finance capital, to imperialism, cannot be free trade but socialism."

dimensional attack., The bipartite fora of PSUs must come out of the confines of bargaining economic issues only. At the same time the tendency to limit within the boundary of the individual public sector industries must also be overcome. The character and content of the attack must be understood in true letter and spirit.

Therefore, we should guard against bordering on extreme responses to the attack. Viewing defence of collective bargaining as defending 'economism' is one extreme. Devoting entirely to bargaining economic demands to utter neglect of defending public sector is the other extreme. The trade union movement must defend both - public sector and collective bargaining - by building 'popular united mass movement at national level.

(M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU attended the 15th World Congress on Occupational Safety and Health in his capacity as Vice-President of the National Safety Council. Here is a report by him - Editor)

XV WORLD CONGRESS ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

The 15th World Congress on Occupational Safety and Health was held in Sao Paulo (Brazil), 12-17 April, 1999. It was jointly convened by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Social Security Association (ISSA) and was attended by over 2,000 delegates from more than 60 countries all over the world.

The Congress focussed the attention of the world on the serious situation prevailing in our industrial undertakings which require immediate attention of all those who value human life and health.

At the outset, an ILO Report presented to the Congress revealed that 250 million (25 crore) labour accidents take place every year all over the world, taking a toll of 1.1 million (11 lakh) workers in these accidents. It works out that every day 685,000 accidents take place in the globe which further means 475 accidents per minute or 9 accidents per second. The number of workers getting injured in these accidents every year runs into millions, the major injuries alone cover 3.5 million workers. **Tukka Takala**, Chief of ILO Safety and Health Programme, while speaking in the inaugural session noted: "However, it is impossible to establish a value for human lives, statistics from *indenisation* indicate that nearly 4% of the world GDP are spent on occupational diseases cost in several ways as absenteeism at work, health treatment, disabilities and payment for insurances." He noted the ILO Report which indicated that value spent on labour injuries and occupational diseases is larger than the GDP from Africa, Arabian States and South Asia and even higher than all official help to the developing countries.

The data presented in the Congress clearly underlined how new health hazards have come into the industrial undertakings with the advent of new technologies without taking necessary protective measures for the workers. The death toll in the industrial accidents every year is almost

comparable with the loss of life during any major war fought on this earth. As some speakers in the Congress pointed out, the actual loss of life was much more than presented in the Congress, since many countries in the World have no adequate mechanism to record all the accidents.

TOXIC HAZARDS

Use of toxic substances in agriculture has posed several health hazards in the rural areas in developing countries. As noted by the ILO, 20 per cent of the toxic substances in the world are used in agriculture in the developing countries. The total quantity of these substances per year is about 2,500 tonnes and are responsible for 70 per cent of the intoxication cases in the workforce exposed to these products.

The WHO data presented in the Congress pointed out some alarming trends. Every year, three million accident cases and occupational diseases occur in the rural areas in the world causing 2,20,000 deaths and 7,50,000 chronic intoxication cases. All this data assumes serious proportion when one looks at the fact that taking the world as a whole, 50 per cent of the total workforce works in agriculture.

In a paper on Health and Safety in Latin America, it was pointed out that 5 million accidents per year take place in the region, of which 90,000 are fatal. These numbers only reckon the registered accidents. Many victims in these accidents are children, women and retired people. At least one in each five children work and women constitute 80 per cent of the labour market, working till 80 hours per week in a double working day. Women earn lower payments in comparison with men.

In Latin America 51.6 per cent of the labour force is in the unorganised sector. The study noted that workers earn 20 to 40 per cent less than minimum amount of money necessary to buy food for a family in a month.

With such shocking working and living conditions, there is no wonder that health and safety goes to the background in these countries.

MINING AND CONSTRUCTION

In a special session on mining industry, the speakers highlighted the deplorable conditions prevailing in mines in different parts of the world. The deadly disease of **Pnumoconiosis** in coal mining industry was specially mentioned for the loss of several lives. Preventive measures to protect the health of workers are just nominal when the disease reaches an acute stage there is no cure.

Early detection is extremely important and mere x-ray of the chest does not necessarily detect the disease. More rigorous checks are necessary and research in that direction should be given more prominence.

Dust control measures are expensive and many mines do not take necessary precaution in this regard. The condition is much worse in underground mines where more attention is necessary.

In several parts of the world, environmental damage caused by the open cast mines is not properly rectified which is affecting the ecology of the region.

The conditions are particularly bad in the third world countries where value of a human life is very less. A paper from Brazil stated, "Brazilian conditions in mining sector are in the border of immorality and indecency." The paper also noted that there is a low level of professional consciousness between entrepreneurs and workers.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The session on construction industry also underlined the need to save the lives of a large number of our workforce. Despite growing construction activity, the safety measures are below standard. With high rise buildings coming up in large numbers, the risk of fall from height and workers getting hurt from falling construction materials, have been more frequent. The dust generated in construction activity has been responsible for several health hazards.

SYMOBLIC TU PARTICIPATION

The participation of TU representatives in the conference was just symbolic. Less than 50 TU representatives attended the congress. Such minimal participation could not reflect the utter neglect of health and safety in the industrial undertakings all over the world. Very few speeches were made by trade unions highlighting the real state of affairs in several industries.

As a result of globalisation, the employers are trying to reduce the cost of production in the name of becoming competitive in the global market. Health and safety have naturally gone to the background. Workers and their family members have been the victims of these policies. The curtailment of social security benefits in many advanced capitalist countries have affected the health and safety of workers. Their post-retirement life has witnessed deterioration in many respects.

HIDING THE REALITY

Some papers presented by representatives of some of the multinational companies and the Governments were only focussing on the brighter side of the picture. This was an attempt to hide the reality of the dangerous situation prevailing in all corners of the world. The trade union movement should take a serious note of this aspect. Through active participation they should pose real issues faced by the working class in the matter of health and safety and expose the false claims of the spokesmen of big business houses that they are doing their best in tackling the problems of health and safety. There is a need to criticist the governments for not paying proper attention to these vital issues concerning the working and living conditions in our industrial undertakings.

Several speakers belong to MNCs and Government went out of the way to stress the need for globalisation which has actually created new problems for health and safety of the workers. With increasing participation of trade union representatives, such measures can be countered effectively and need for appropriate safety measures can be emphasised.

From India 11 delegates participated in the Congress. On behalf of the National Safety Council, CITU, INTUC, BMS, AITUC and HMS representatives participated in the Congress.

T N: WELFARE SCHEME FOR UNORGANISED WORKERS

Under the Tamil Nadu Manual Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Work) Act, 1982, the Government of Tamilnadu, has come out with a scheme, viz, "Tamil Nadu Manual Workers' Social Security and Welfare Scheme, 1999."

The objects of the Scheme are (i) Group Personal Accident Relief, (ii) Maternity Benefit and (iii) Terminal Benefits.

The Scheme provides for these benefits to the workers of the following 54 unorganised industries by constituting a single Welfare Board.

Employment in connection with loading, unloading, stacking packing, carrying, weighing, measuring or such other manual work including work preparatory or incidental to such operations:

a) in any market or shop or depot or factory or warehouse or godown or any other establishment;

b) in docks not being employment of a dock-worker within the meaning of Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1948

c) in Railway Yards and goods sheds of manual workers who are not employed by Railway authorities;

d) in any market under the control of Market Committees.

Employment in connection with loading of goods into public transport vehicles or unloading of goods therefrom and any other

operation incidental or connected thereto.

Employment in connection with loading, unloading and carrying of foodgrains into godowns, sorting and cleaning of foodgrains, filling foodgrains in bags, stitching of such bags and such other work incidental and connected thereto.

Employment in salt pans, fishing industry, boat making, timber industry, coir industry, tanneries, and leather manufactory, automobile workshops, appalam manufactory, bleaching and dyeing, bullock cart driving, bricks and tiles manufactory, construction of pandals, cooking food, coconut peeling, collection of forest produce, catering establishments, cashewnut industry, driving autorickshaws and taxis, distribution of LPG cylinders, driving cycle rickshaws, engineering works, fire and match works, folding textile goods, footwear and leather goods manufactory, gunny industry, gold and silver articles manufactory, handlooms and handloom, silk weaving, incense sticks manufactory, laundries and washing clothes, neera-tapping, nib making, flour mills, oil mills, dhall mills and rice mills, printing press, powerloom industry, private security service, plastic industries, pottery works, rag picking, hair dressing and beauty parlour, street vending, sago industry, synthetic gem, cutting, sericulture, shops and

establishments tailoring, tree climbing, tin containers manufactory, vessels manufactory, wood working units, domestic servants and cycle repairing.

Any manual worker, who has completed the age of 18 years but not completed 60 years; is eligible to register his name with the Board to become a member of the Scheme. The fee for registration is Rs 20. Application for registration shall accompany a certificate of employment issued by the President or the General Secretary of a registered trade union of the employment concerned. Every manual worker registered under the Scheme shall pay a monthly contribution of Rs 20/-.

Every employer operating any motor transport for carrying passengers or goods by roads, shall be liable to pay, in addition to the tax payable by him under the Tamil Nadu Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1974, a sum at such rate not exceeding one per cent of the tax payable by him under the said Act, as may be fixed by government by notification.

Other employers shall be liable to pay, within such time as may be prescribed, to the Board, every month a sum at such rate not exceeding 3 per cent of the wages payable by them to such manual workers, as may be fixed by the Govt by notification.

The Govt may from time to time,

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make grants to the Board on such terms and conditions as the Govt may in each case, determine as contribution to the Fund under the Scheme.

DETAILS OF BENEFITS

Group personal accident relief: All registered manual workers who have contributed at least for a period of 12 months and meet with accident subsequently, are eligible for relief. The risk covered by the Scheme and the amount of

compensation payable will be one lakh rupees.

Maternity benefit: A cash grant of Rs 500 for miscarriage and a cash grant of Rs 1,000 for delivery of a child will be paid upto 2 children.

Terminal benefits: The amount outstanding to the credit of a member by way of contributions paid by him shall be refunded to him with compound interest at the rate of 12% per annum calculated annually and an additional 25% of

the contribution remitted by member as gratuity will be paid as terminal benefits.

By putting pressure on the Govt. of Tamil Nadu, the Scheme can be modified to include other benefits like pension, ESI, creche, marriage/education assistance etc. Construction and stone quarry workers are already enjoying many benefits under a separate welfare scheme.

(Report from S Singaravelu)

WB: UNIQUE SCHEME TO HELP WORKERS

The West Bengal Government has taken up a scheme in 1998 for financial assistance of Rs 500 per month to the workers of industrial units which are under lock-out or closure or suspension of work, etc, for a period of one year on that date. The workers will be eligible to this benefit only upto the age of 58 years. A brief note on the functioning of the scheme is being given here.

1. The scheme for "Financial Assistance to the Workers in

Locked-out industrial units" in West Bengal was introduced by the Government of West Bengal for one year w.e.f. 1.4.98 and implemented by the Labour Directorate, West Bengal.

ii) 190 eligible units have been identified.

iii) About 31,500 applications have been received by Labour Directorate, out of which about 27,600 applications have been admitted.

iv) About Rs 16.45 crores has been

released for payment as financial assistance through 212 branches all over West Bengal of SBI, UBI, UCO Bank, CBI, Allahabad Bank and Howrah Gramin Bank.

v) The scheme has been extended for another year i.e. April, 1999-March, 2000 covering industrial units under lock out for more than one year on 31.3.99.

This is a unique scheme by any State Government to extend financial assistance to workers who are rendered unemployed due to lock-out, closure etc.

CITU LEADERS MURDERED IN ASSAM TEAGARDEN

Once again the CITU leaders and activists and Tea Garden workers' had to face brutal onslaught of the employer-gangster nexus in the same Mornoi Tea Estate of Kokrajhar district in Assam. Com.Sita Marandi, the leader of the Namoni Asam Cha Mazdoor Sangh of CITU and member of the Assam

State CITU alongwith comrade Tamling Guria and Com.Fa Guria, all women workers of the infamous Mornoi Tea Estate were gunned down by the gangsters on 16th May, 1999, evening on their way to the garden. The murderers are alleged to have been deployed by the tea garden management and local INTUC nexus, who have

been opposing the CITU activities in the entire Kokrajhar area for the last few years.

Since September 1996, five CITU leaders and activists, four of whom are working women have been brutally killed in the same Mornoi Tea Estate. In September 1996, Com.Sararika Soren was killed by the management hired

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goondas and her dead body was hung in a tree by the assailants, in order to terrorise the common workers. In March 1999, Com. Anabrita Boral was murdered in the same place and within three months again three more CITU leaders had to succumb to the cruel bullets of the management goons.

During last few years, a kind of annihilation campaign was going on against the CITU workers and activists in the Mornoi Tea Estate which was earlier dominated by local mafias under the garb of INTUC union. To cow down the rising struggle of tea garden workers under the leadership of

CITU, the management-INTUC nexus have been carrying on murderous attack on CITU workers, predominantly working women. But till date not a single culprit was arrested by the police despite repeated demands, which clearly exposed the hobnobbing of local law and order authority with the Tea-Garden management and criminal negligence of the State Govt.

CITU Secretariat has condemned such brutal killings of tea garden workers and also the criminal indifference by the State Administration to arrest the culprits. In a telegram to Chief Minister of Assam, the CITU

General Secretary, M K Pandhe, demanded immediate action against the murderer-management nexus. In a separate letter to Chief Minister of Assam E Balanandan, MP President, CITU expressed strong indignation over the callous negligence of the State Govt in the matter.

On 20th May, all over Assam protest day was observed by the workers against this ghastly murder. CITU state committees all over the country also conveyed their protest against the inaction of the Assam State Govt to contain the murder-spree against tea garden workers, through telegrammes to Chief Minister.

KERALA: CASHEW WORKERS' STRUGGLE

The Left-led Government of Kerala had revised the minimum wages for the cashew workers, effective from 1.1.1999. The workers had achieved 60% increase over the previous rates. But a large section of employers refused to implement the revised wages and they also obtained a stay from the High Court. But the

Kerala Govt owned Kerala State Development Corporation and the CAPEX (a cooperative sector unit) implemented the revision in their 45 factories. In all 30,000 workers were immediately benefited by this. The CITU led a struggle against the employers who refused to implement the revised wages. Finally the High

Court also gave clearance to the revised notification. Throughout the States the cashew workers have now forced the employers to pay the revised wages. This struggle has immensely increased the prestige of CITU among cashew workers.

(Report from N Padmalochanan)

AP: LEAF-PLATE MAKING WOMEN REVOLT

The leaf-plate making women of Kothakota village of Visakhapatnam District in AP, raised a banner of revolt during the Mahila Janmabhoomi programme held recently.

In Kothakota village, thousands of women and children, aged 6 to 60 years, are engaged in leaf-plate

making as a home based industry. It is their main source of income. They will start work early in the morning and continue till the market starts in the evening. Even the school going children do the work after school hours.

For 12 to 13 hours of work they get Rs 7.50 per day; some times

they return home, with unsold leaf-plates and empty pockets.

The business people will come to the market in the evening for buying. They have no fixed timings and continue buying till their target is met. The women are facing abuses and harassment from the buyers. As it is a home

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based industry, the government is not taking any step to fix a remunerative price for making the leaf-plates.

Moreover, the village heads are collecting one rupee per every bundle of 150 leaf plates as village tax. The sellers of leaf-plates need not pay the tax as per the Panchayat Act. Surprisingly, the village heads are collecting this tax from the women of their own village and not from outside buyers. Nearly Rs 8 lakh are collected every year.

The district committee of CITU, WWCC, AIDWA, held group meetings and distributed pamphlets against this illegal tax collection. They contacted the Ambedkar Associations, youth associations, Mahila Mandal and educated them. As a result, the nodal officers of Mahila Janmabhoomi were compelled to arrange a joint meeting on 10.5.99. Nearly 500 women workers gathered in front of the Panchayat Office and demanded stoppage of tax collection. At last, the

authorities agreed to order stoppage of the collection. It is a major victory for the women workers against an age old custom.

It is the collective efforts of the organisations and has created confidence among the women workers. It will influence the other working women working in ancillary works. The agitation was led by G S Rajeswara Rao, Venkunaidu (CITU) M Dhanalaxmi, Mani (WWCC), Anuradha (AIDWA).

(Report from D Sarada)

ROURKELA: WORKERS' OPPOSE SALE OF PSU ASSETS

Thousands of steel workers demonstrated at the Rourkela Railway Station on May 7, 1999 and did not allow the representatives of M/s Mekinsey, a foreign consultant appointed by SAIL, to detrain at Rourkela.

M/s Mekinsey has been appointed by SAIL, at the instance of Govt of India, to prepare a blueprint of cost-cutting measures for the crisis-ridden public sector steel industry. The crisis in Indian steel industry emanates out of faulty economic policy of liberalisation leading to widespread recession in the economy and indiscriminate dumping of imported steel in Indian steel producers. But, the foreign consultant M/s Mekinsey has proposed selling out of captive power plants with the SAIL, hiving off Alloy Steel Plant, Salem Steel Plant, IISCO and

many more departments in other steel plants, reduction of at least 75,000 workforce by VRS etc, route and closing down of some departmental stockyards. In other words the foreign consultant company relied upon by the BJP Govt, has proposed in the name of solving of the present crisis, such disastrous measures by way of gradual self-liquidation of the steel industry.

Steel workers are determined to oppose such measures. The workers of the Rourkela Steel Plant, under the leadership of CITU, earlier blocked the entry of a prospective customer of the power plant of Rourkela in the steel township through massive demonstrations. On May 7 as well, when representatives of M/s Mekinsey were scheduled to visit Rourkela Steel Plant, CITU organised a massive

demonstration and did not allow Meckinsey-men to detrain at Rourkela station itself.

A joint TU convention held at Rourkela on CITU initiative on 16-5-99 has planned for further united action to resist the evil designs of Govt of India. The Steel Workers Federation of India at its meeting in Calcutta on 23.5.99 has chalked out countrywide united actions of steel workers.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

The 87th Session of the International Labour Organisation is being held in Geneva from the 1st June, 1999.

M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU will attend the meeting as Adviser in the Workers' Side delegation, besides representatives of BMS, INTUC, HMS, AITUC and UTUC.

DELHI: RALLY BY FCI WORKERS

At the call of the All India FCI Mazdoor Federation, over 15,000 workers of the Food Corporation of India, from all over the country, participated in a mass rally at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on 11.5.1999. Their demands included introduction of

direct payment system by abolishing contract system, formation of wage board for the departmental workers and introduction of Standing Orders already certified by the Labour Deptt in 1996.

The demonstrators was led by

Ashim Bala MP, and Binoy Bhattacharya, Vice President and General Secretary of the Federation. K L Mahendra (AITUC) also addressed them.

A delegation of the Federation met the M.D of the FCI and presented the charter of demands.

GIC MOVE FOR PRODUCTIVITY LINKED WAGES

There is a unilateral move by the Govt of India to impose productivity linked wage system on the insurance employees.

Three consultant firms (two of which are foreign multinational companies) have been appointed to prepare a blue print for switching over to a productivity linked wage scheme for the employees of General Insurance Corporation. Such a move had been taken unilaterally without consulting the trade unions.

While striving to improve

productivity in work place is laudable, linking wages with productivity can by no means be accepted. Experience shows that productivity linked wage system acts as an instrument to downsize workforce and drastically reduce the paypackets of the workers during the period of recession. Our public sector insurance corporations account for substantially high level of efficiency and high settlement ratio, which is much above the international average. Their

contribution of funds to Govt exchequer is consistent and substantial. The present move of Govt of India and the management to impose productivity linked wage system is aimed at making the workers wage packets vulnerable to market fluctuations. CITU, in a statement issued on 14.5.99, condemned the move of the Finance Ministry and exhorted the insurance employees to build up organised and united employees resistance to such anti-employee design.

BIHAR: SUCCESSFUL STRIKE BY GOVT STAFF

The Government employees in the State of Bihar went on an indefinite strike from January 12th which culminated in success after 116 days on May 7th. The State Government, in the name of parity with central scales of pay, resorted to downgrade the pay scales of employees. The strike was in pursuance of the employees' demand for withdrawal of the Govt order in this regard, filling

up of vacant posts and ending retrenchment.

Bihar State Non-Gazetted Employees' Federation spearheaded the strike. Sukomal Sen, General Secretary, All India State Govt Emp. Federation (AISGEF) guided the struggle and also led the negotiating team which finally concluded a settlement with the authorities.

As per understanding reached, the

disputes raised by the employees will be referred to a committee headed by a sitting judge of the High Court for submitting the report within six months. The employees will get the pay for the strike period. The Bihar Government which initially hoped to tire out the employees by prolonging the strike, ultimately relented and reached a settlement with the strikers.

KANPUR: RAMASREY MEMORIAL INAUGURATED

May Day 1999 was celebrated in Kanpur with the inauguration of Com.Ramasrey Memorial Centre, which will house the IEL Employees' Union. M K Pandhe paid glowing tributes to the memory of late Com.Ramasrey, who made an

invaluable contribution to the left and working class movement. He also released a special souvenir brought out by the union as also the third edition of Ramasrey's book titled "History of May Day." Shyam Babu Misra, President of the union welcomed and narrated

the activities of the union. A massive May Day rally of thousands of workers was held at Ram Lila ground in the evening. The rally was addressed by M K pandhe, P K Ganguly, Lakshmi Sehgal, Daulat Ram, Subhasihini Ali and Arvind Kumar.

REGIONAL RURAL BANK EMPLOYEES' CONFERENCE

The 8th conference of the All India Regional Rural Bank Employees' Association was held at Visakhapatnam on 17-19, April, 1999. N M Sundaram, General Secretary, All India Insurance Emp.Assn. inaugurated. Basdev Acharya Ex-MP and Sukomal Sen of TU International for Public & Allied Employees addressed the

conference. Delegates representing 120 RRBs throughout the country attended. The conference demanded that the wage revision benefits applicable to commercial bank employees be extended to all the RRB staff. It also called for restructuring of all the 196 RRBs for formation of National Rural Bank of India or

Statewise Rural Banks. The Sri Vishaka Grameen Bank Employees' and Officers' Associations had successfully hosted the conference. Ashis Sen and Dilip Kumar Mukherjee were re-elected President and General Secretary of the AIRRBEA.

MAY DAY CELEBRATION IN TN

May day was celebrated all over Tamil Nadu, with the usual festivities including flag hoisting, rallies and meetings.

The campaign against globalisation and communalism was the focus of May Day rallies this year as per the call given by the National Platform of Mass Organisations. Rallies were jointly organised by NPMO constituents in majority of the district centres.

Flags were hoisted all over the state at the factory gates and union offices.

In Chennai, both the North and South Chennai district committees

of CITU, AITUC, AICCTU, DYFI, AIDWA and other employees organisations participated in the procession, which concluded in a massive public meeting addressed by N Sankaraiah, S S Thiagarajan and other leaders.

The meetings at the district centres like Coimbatore, Tirupur, Trichy, Nagarkoil, Thirunelveli, Salem and Pondicherry, was addressed by T K Rengarajan, J Hemachandran, A K Padmanabhan, A Soundarajan, a P M Kumar and others.

(Report from A K Padmanabhan)

CPSTU MEETS

An extended meeting of the Committee of Public Sector Trade Union (CPSTU) is being held on 15-16, June, 1999 at New Delhi. The meeting will discuss (i) sickness, disinvestment and privatisation of PSUs, (ii) wage negotiations and (iii) future course of joint struggle on the pressing demands of PSU workers.

On 16.6.1999, massive demonstrations by PSU workers will be held before the office of the Department of Public Enterprises.

MAY DAY IN MAHARASHTRA

May day rallies were organised with much enthusiasm throughout Maharashtra.

The rallies in many places were organised by CITU jointly with AITUC, HMS, HMKP, UTUC, Kamgar Aghadi, Sarvasramik Sangh and independent unions. 5,000 copies of marathi translation of the CITU May Day manifesto were brought out and distributed. In Mumbai, the rally was organised under the banner of Trade Unions Joint Action

Committee at Maharashtra High School Maidan at Curry Road in South Central Mumbai. Preceding the meeting, CITU and AITUC jointly took out an impressive procession from Kamgar Maidan wending its way through Parel and Lalbaug, the traditional working class areas of this one time textile city. The meeting was chaired by R G Karnik of State Govt Employees Confederation. K L Bajaj, CITU Maharashtra State General Secretary, G V Chitnis of AITUC, Dada Samant of Kamgar

Aghadi, K K Thekkedat of BUCTU, Jaiwant Chawan of Sarvasramik Sanghatana, Suryakant Bagal of HMS, Jagdish Pathak of HMKP and others addressed the rally. The *CITU Sandesh* was released by R G Karnik in this meeting.

Similar meetings and rallies were organised in Pune, Aurangabad, Ichalkaranji, Solapur, Nagpur, Kolhapur, Chandrapur, Thane and other districts and industrial centres.

(Report from P R Krishnan)

MOVE TO PRIVATISE INDIAN AIRLINES CONDEMNED

The caretaker Govt, headed by BJP at the Centre, has decided to allow selling of majority shares of Indian Airlines to private parties, in the depressed stock market. The manner and modality of this exercise exposes the hell bent attitude of the BJP Govt to fritter away public wealth for benefit of monopoly houses and foreign companies. It is noted that in order to make the disinvestment

of Indian Airlines' share attractive, the Govt has decided to pump in fresh funds of Rs 325 crores from public exchequer to Indian Airlines. This fresh Govt investment in Indian Airlines to upgrade and strengthen its capacity, spending public money in a company is only to make it saleable. The real motive of the BJP Govt to faithfully serve the interests of MNCs and monopoly

houses. This is not in the interests of either the concerned PSU or the country.

CITU, in a statement issued on 11.5.99, vehemently condemned such a disastrous move of privatisation of Indian Airlines by the Govt of India and calls upon the working class and the patriotic people to unitedly oppose such nefarious design of the caretaker BJP Govt.

WORLD ENERGY MEET IN FRANCE

The Executive Committee of the International Energy and Miners Organisation (IEMO) was held in Paris on 23-24 April 1999. Arthur Scargil, Chairman, IEMO, presided over the meeting which was attended by 27 representatives from France, UK, Russia, Cuba, India, Vietnam, Spain, Norway, Romania, Algeria, Libya,

Morocco, Guatemala, Ukrain, besides 8 observers.

Alain Simon, Secretary General submitted a Report on the world situation. The report was discussed at length and adopted unanimously.

The meeting decided to hold the World Energy Forum in France in the last week of October 1999 to

review the World Energy Scenario and to consider ways of tackling the problems of Energy in the next century.

M K Pandhe, Vice Chairman, IEMO and D Janakiraman, Member, IEMO Executive Committee participated in the meeting from India.

GLOBALISATION AND MIGRATION

The last quarter of the twentieth century has witnessed an acceleration in the process of globalisation. It has three dimensions - international trade, international investment and international finance - which also constitute its cutting edge. But this is now new. There was a similar phase of globalisation from 1870 to 1914. In many ways, the world economy in the late twentieth century resembles the world economy in the late nineteenth century. The parallels between the two periods are striking in terms of the characteristics and the underlying factors. Yet, there is a fundamental difference between these two phases of globalisation. It is in the sphere of labour flows. There were no restrictions on the mobility of people across national boundaries, then, and international migration was enormous. In sharp contrast, now, the cross-border movement of people is closely regulated and highly restricted.

It is striking that the gathering momentum of globalisation over the past three decades has been juxtaposed with a discernible slowdown in international labour migration. This is not a coincidence. It is the outcome of the ideology, the interests and the institutions associated with the process of globalisation. The asymmetry between the free movement of capital and the unfree movement of labour across national boundaries lies at the heart of the inequality of the rules of the game for globalisation as the twentieth century draws to a close. Even so, migration has continued on a modest scale, constrained by immigration laws but driven by income disparities and population imbalances between countries. There are new and different forms of labour flows: not only emigrants and refugees but also guest workers, illegal immigrants and professionals.

The process of globalisation is driven by economic forces in the market. Thus, it can influence the push and pull factors underlying international migration. Globalisation is not likely to reduce emigration pressures on the supply side. It may

even accentuate them. For the past 25 years have witnessed a divergence rather than a convergence, in levels of income, between rich and poor countries as also between rich and poor people within countries. What is more, the incidence of poverty has registered an increase in most countries of the developing world and the erstwhile socialist bloc. Similarly, globalisation is not likely to reduce the need for labour imports on the demand side. This is attributable in part to the fact that the demand for guest workers and illegal immigrants in the industrialised countries will persist, despite high levels of unemployment, because there are unpleasant or menial jobs that nationals are simply not willing to do. It is also, in part, attributable to the emerging labour scarcities in parts of the world which were not the traditional destinations for migrants.

The story does not, quite, end here. Globalisation, in itself has also set in motion forces which are creating a demand for labour mobility across borders and is, at the same time, developing institutions on the supply side to meet this demand. The basic reason is simple. The factors which make it easier to move goods, services, capital, technology and information across borders, but for explicit immigration laws and implicit consular practices that are barriers to entry, also make it easier to move people across borders. It would seem that the process of globalisation is going to increase labour mobility in three categories. The professionals will be almost as mobile as capital. Similarly, the use of contract workers who move across borders on a temporary basis is bound to increase. And, given the political reality of immigration laws, the market-driven conditions and institutions created by globalisation will sustain and increase illegal migration.

In conclusion, there will be a potential conflict between the laws of nations that restrict that movement of people across borders and the economics of globalisation that induces their movement. And, within limits, markets are adept at circumventing regulations.

Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers on base: 1982 = 100

Sr. No	Centre	Jan 99	Feb 99	Mar 99	Sr. No.	Centre	Jan 99	Feb 99	Mar 99
1	Gudur	437	428	416	45	Amritsar	380	374	372
2	Guntur	407	406	403	46	Ludhiana	383	372	375
3	Hyderabad	390	388	386	47	Ajmer	401	399	397
4	Visakhapatnam	404	400	399	48	Jaipur	387	385	386
5	Warangal	409	403	401	49	Chennai	443	438	438
6	D D Tinsukia	376	366	365	50	Coimbatore	395	390	388
7	Guwahati	423	419	423	51	Coonor	414	411	400
8	Labac-Silchar	359	356	361	52	Madurai	420	407	410
9	Mariani Jorhat	419	406	405	53	Salem	415	401	404
10	Rangapara-Tezpur	397	393	391	54	Tiruchirapally	465	446	449
11	Jamshedpur	399	393	387	55	Agra	392	391	392
12	Jharia	359	355	355	56	Ghaziabad	427	426	434
13	Kodarma	381	368	368	57	Kanpur	418	417	417
14	Monghyr Jamalpur	417	412	411	58	Saharanpur	385	382	383
15	Noamundi	375	368	370	59	Varanasi	460	457	457
16	Ranchi-Hatia	412	406	402	60	Asansol	397	386	385
17	Ahmedabad	414	410	405	61	Calcutta	429	419	421
18	Bhavnagar	441	432	430	62	Darjeeling	380	375	369
19	Rajkot	410	405	397	63	Durgapur	430	423	426
20	Surat	430	423	418	64	Haldia	452	446	445
21	Vadodra	401	391	394	65	Howrah	471	459	457
22	Faridabad	432	422	427	66	Jalpaiguri	389	384	382
23	Yamunanagar	386	386	381	67	Raniganj	373	366	363
24	Srinagar	461	487	495	68	Chandigarh	434	432	435
25	Bangalore	398	397	398	69	Delhi	472	472	471
26	Belgaum	454	458	452	70	Pondicherry	469	462	459
27	Hubli-Dharwar	426	432	427					
28	Mercara	440	441	440		All India	420	415	414
29	Alwaye	416	416	415		Additional Series of Labour Bureau			
30	Mundakayam	427	438	433					
31	Quilon	416	419	421	1	Kothagudem	406	410	414
32	Thiruvananthapuram	451	463	463	2	Himachal Pradesh	400	402	402
33	Balaghat	370	371	373	3	Bhilwara	413	412	419
34	Bhilai	362	360	361	4	Chhindwara	416	413	415
35	Bhopal	443	440	441	5	Tripura	399	388	391
36	Indore	418	412	424	6	Goa	464	471	474
37	Jabalpur	436	425	427					
38	Mumbai	467	462	461					
39	Nagpur	439	438	431					
40	Nasik	441	440	429					
41	Pune	468	463	459					
42	Solapur	472	449	440					
43	Barbil	385	381	374					
44	Rourkela	497	489	386					

Government of India
Ministry of Labour
Labour Bureau
Shimla - 171 004

VIZAG: CITU WORKERS JOIN STRUGGLE FOR LAND

In Andhra Pradesh, Visakhapatnam is one of the fast developing industrial centres. Surroundings of Visakhapatnam city are still very much backward in agriculture and other aspects. As the cost of land in and around Vizag city had escalated, the landlords and industrialists had been grabbing the government lands and lands of the poor in these surroundings.

All India Agriculture Workers Union (AIAWU) of Vizakhapatnam district organised the rural masses in Anandapuram Mandal with the slogan of 'land to the tiller'. But the landlords, with the connivance of revenue authorities and with the help of the courts harassed the activists of AIAWU by foisting false cases and by approaching judicial courts on every small issue. In spite of the difficulties, AIAWU has been able to fight against this onslaught.

Recently AIAWU and CITU district committees prepared a joint action programme of occupying the land by the poor dalits and other backward communities. On 6.4.99 about 150 activists of AIAWU and CITU occupied 40 acres of land in Gandigundam village and picked up cashewnuts and on 11.4.99, 300 activists of AIAWU and CITU occupied another 40 acres of land of

mango and cashew gardens in Muccharla village. All these lands belong to poor people who are having land pattas with them. But the landlords grabbed these lands by paying very meagre amounts during starvation time and on some important occasions like marriage etc.

In all the 32 Panchayats of Anandapuram Mandal, this type of land grabbing had taken place. An impressive 'land struggle rally' was conducted on 14.4.1999 throughout the Mandal. Over 100 industrial workers from Vizag Steel Plant on scooters joined the rally; shipyard, BHPV and Defence sector workers also participated in the rally, along with agricultural workers who came in 15 vans and lorries from Boimili and Gopalapatnam divisions. The land struggle rally created confidence among the dalit poor and other sections, who lost their lands to the landlords. On 1st May 1999, at a public meeting at Pendurti on the occasion of 'Mahila Janma Bhoomi,' agriculture workers demanded the Chief Minister to arrest the land grabbers under the 'Land Grabbing Act.' But in his speech the Chief Minister Chandra Babu Naidu supported the land grabbers. Surprisingly, one of the big landlords, Peela Mahalaxmi Naidu was also on the dias. It revealed the class nature of

TDP Government in Andhra Pradesh.

Under pressure of the struggle, the revenue authorities had no alternative except to agreed to conduct an emergency re-survey of the lands in Anandapuram Mandal and return the lands to the poor, as per 'pattas' held by them. Already 500 acres of land in different villagers are in various stages of processing for handing over to the poor villages. The joint efforts of AIAWU and CITU gained momentum and created greater confidence to fight for their lands and against the landlords.

During this period two schools, at Gandipuram and Muccherla villages, were conducted to educate the agriculture workers. 100 workers participated in each of the schools held for 2 days.

The AP State and Vizag District Committees launched this struggle as a practical way of building worker-peasant alliance. The struggle highlighted the role of the trade unions in extending solidarity to the struggles of rural poor.

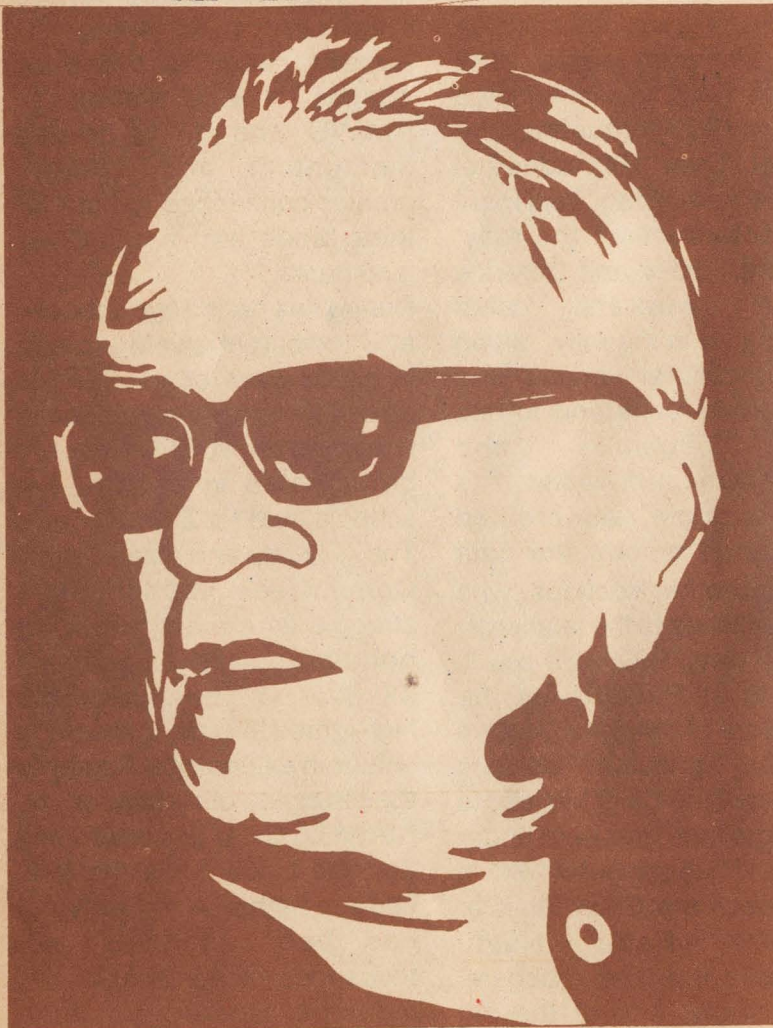
AIAWU & CITU discussed and decided to continue the land struggle further. A mass dharna has been planned with thousands of agricultural and industrial workers in June 1999, in front of MRO office at Anandapuram.

(Report from Ch. Narasingha Rao)

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