



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

General Council Meeting of CITU,
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Presidential Address

E. Balanandan

Dear Comrades,

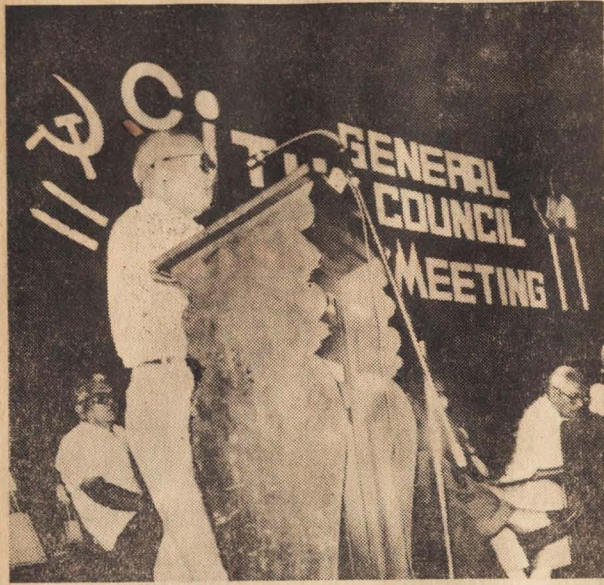
At the outset, let us pay our homage to the memory of those innocent people who were massacred in the communal flare up in different parts of the country after the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by the Hindu religious fundamentalists led by the Sangh Parivar on the 6th of December 1992 and also to those who fell victims to the communal orgy organized by the Shiv Sena and their allies during the first half of January, 1993 in Bombay. While expressing our agony and protest over these ghastly human slaughter by the communal forces, we send our condolences to the bereaved families.

This session of the General Council of the CITU is specially being held to discuss organizational questions as per the decision of the last General Council held at Nagpur. We had to postpone this meeting due to the development of communal frenzy in the country after the Ayodhya incidents. The demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya by the BJP, RSS, VHP combine denotes a very significant aggressive phase of Hindu communalism in the country. We all know the turn of events which I do not wish to deal in detail. While the Prime Minister was claiming to be engaged in negotiations for solving the issue, the Sangh Parivar declared that they will start Kar Seva in Ayodhya on 6th of December. Under the Pressure of the left and democratic parties the govt. convened the National Integration Council on 23 November which was boycotted by the BJP and its 4 Chief Ministers. This NIC unanimously approved the resolution moved by Com. Harkishan Singh Surgeet, the General Secretary of CPI (M) empowering the govt. to take all necessary steps to protect the Babri Masjid and ensure national unity. But in spite of this the govt. did not take any positive steps but only continued the dialogue with the very same BJP, RSS, leaders. Meanwhile the Supreme court intervened and directed the govt. of U.P. to allow no construction in the disputed site and the Kar Sevaks should not be allowed to do anything other than Bhajans and Kirtans at Ayodhya. The Govt. of U.P. filed an affidavit before the court agreeing that the directions of the court will be

followed. The public posture of BJP leadership and the Chief Minister of U.P. that they are not going to allow any illegal construction in Ayodhya was a ploy to hoodwink the Central Govt. and to avoid central intervention so that they can implement their plan of demolition of the mosque which is no secret to day.

The demolition of the mosque was a serious blow to the secular foundation of India's Constitution on which rests the unity of our country. The Chief Minister of U.P, Mr. Kalyan Singh saw to it that the police and the administrative machinery of the state facilitate the demolition of the mosque. To cover up this operation from the public view the press and media persons were attacked brutally by their special squads. A section of the U.P. police were also directly engaged in demolishing the mosque.

The communal conflagration which followed was unprecedented. More than 2000 people were killed in different parts of the country, besides indescribable destruction of property. Industrial cities like Bombay, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, etc were affected by the riots. Kerala and West Bengal too were affected by communal clashes and death though not in a big way. The administrative machinery, particularly the police succumbed to the communal virus in many places and joined Hindu communalists in attacking the minorities. This cancer of communal virus creeping in to the administrative and police machinery of the state will pave the way for a fascist take over unless other wise checkmated by the forces of democracy. The game plan of Sangh Parivar is to develop communal polarization throughout the country which they want to utilize for attaining the so called "Hindu Rashtra" in which the other religious communities will have no place. The Hindus too in their definition means the upper castes who will only have the decisive say. The Harijans, tribals, backward class, etc. have only to obey the orders. The inaction of the Narasimha Rao Govt. mainly facilitated the demolition of the mosque by Sangh Parivar. Due to the intense public pressure the Govt was forced to dismiss the U.P.



govt and other BJP Govt which have played active roles in the planning and execution of the demolition of the mosque together with banning of the RSS and some other organizations. The ban of these organizations is only in paper and nothing is being done to check their activities.

The Presidential Ordinance proclaimed to take over the land in the disputed area and the reference made under Section 141 of the Constitution to find out and decide whether there was any Hindu structure that existed before when the mosque was constructed 460 years ago etc are only to provide an escape route to the "Hinduthava" gangs and not intended to resurrect the secular foundations of our country which are to be destroyed at Ayodhya. The much advertised plan for the construction of Mosque and Temple at Ayodhya by the govt is yet to see the light of the day.

Comrades,

During the first half of January the Shiv Sena together with their allies again organized an attack against the Muslims and the linguistic minorities who were living in the city of Bombay. In the name of protesting against the Muslims performing "Namaz" outside the mosque on Fridays, the Shiv Sena started organizing Maha Aarati (Poojas) blocking the public roads. From there the trained killer gangs were sent to attack the per-planned targets. The Muslim busties in slum areas, the houses and business establishments of Muslims were selectively chosen as their targets. Arson and looting went on for almost 10 days in different parts of Bombay city. In broad day light people were attacked and killed irrespective of young and old, men and women. The non-Marathi minorities who were working in Bombay were also made the target of their attacks.

The total death toll is officially estimated at about 600. The devastating destruction of property is indescribable. The loss is estimated to be several thousand crores. The Congress (I) Govt in Bombay failed to give protection to the Muslims and other linguistic minorities. Lakhs of them left Bombay to escape from the Shiv Sena attacks. More than 30 to 40,000 Muslims were taken to the different relief camps. In short the industrial city of Bombay was completely paralyzed and the defacto control of the city was taken over by Shiv Sena and their allied gangs.

Mr Bal Thackeray publicly declared that his men were engaged in this attack and this has been done to teach the Muslims a lesson and declared that Muslims will have no place in India. They have to go to Pakistan.

The police and administrative machinery did not do anything to give protection to those who were crying for help. Just like the earlier occasion this time too the police were helping and aiding the Shiv Sena and their killer gangs in their attack against Muslims. Though the military has been brought to the scene they were kept only as onlookers. The police mainly arrested the Muslims while they did nothing against the goonda gangs. The recorded messages sent from the police control room to the police personnel who were dealing with the riots is now under court custody which speaks volumes. The police men were asked not to give any protection to Muslims. Such was the deplorable state of affairs which prevailed in Bombay. The constitutional and legal protection to the people were thrown to the winds. Religious and ethnic minorities have lost faith in the administration and they felt that they are treated as aliens by the Government. Even many industrialists including Mr. J R D Tata came out against the inaction of the Govt and demanded declaration of emergency in Bombay and hand over its administration to the military. The Chief Minister Mr Naik and the Defence Minister who visited Bombay during this period could not do anything. The Prime Minister who visited Bombay after 10 days of continuous riots did not utter a single sentence against those who killed hundreds of people and took the industrial capital of India to ransom.

Thus today we see that the fascist gangs are allowed to subvert the Constitution and democracy in the country. The latest is that the Shiv Sena trade union, 'Bharatiya Kamgar Sangh' is not allowing Muslim workers to join duty in the factories and work places. The non-Marathis—"the outsiders" also are being threatened like that. The Shiv Sena's "sons of the soil" policy is thus being implemented. Besides they are trying to capitalise on the fear psychology for capturing trade unions in many areas using strong arm methods. The tragedy of the situation is that trade unions and the democratic forces failed to muster strength unitedly to fight back this fascist offensive. Life in Bombay is yet to be normalised.

NEW OFFENSIVE BY RSS

Another Sant (Sanyasi) Sammelan was organized by RSS, BJP leadership at Allahabad on 24-25 January 1993. They have formed a new organisation which is called Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas Manch. Swami Vamdev is the new chief of this organisation. The declared aim of this organization is said to be attainment of Hindu Rashtra and to facilitate the same a Govt. headed by 'Ram Bhakths' is to be installed at the Centre. The political resolution adopted by them claimed among many other things that Hindu clergy "alone are the worthy successors today of the glorious traditions laid down by the Rishis, Munis and Mahants through centuries." They declared that Ayodhya will be religious city comprising an area of 96 x 34 Kms which would encompass Faizabad and other Muslim areas which has a considerable Muslim population, It has been declared that no mosque will be allowed in this area and they will strongly oppose any attempt by the Government to build a mosque within this area. They have demanded that India should sever connections with Pakistan and Bangladesh since they are supporting the construction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and India should get out of SAARC.

We have to note of the new technique of the BJP, RSS, VHP leadership to enlist the Hindu Sanyasis to make their policy declaration. The earlier decision to start Kar Seva on December 6 was also taken by them. The RSS, BJP leaders throughout the country are campaigning for the change of the Constitution. In their private talks they are demanding that the Muslims should be disfranchised. In the Hindu Rashtra of their version there will not be any place for non-Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs etc. They are using their religious garb plus the might of their armed gangs for capturing political power at the Centre. The UP Govt. under the Central rule has provided all protection for holding the Sant Sammelan while they refused permission to the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan (Campaign for National Unity) to hold rally at Varanasi on February 2. Thus the Narasimha Rao Govt. is still not taking any steps against these forces and is providing them with all necessary help. They had decided to hold a big mass rally at New Delhi on 25 February on the eve of Parliament session. The apprehension of the people at large was that this rally would have paved the way for a Bombay type holocaust in Delhi. Narasimha Rao Government banned this BJP rally apprehending communal disturbance. Simultaneously they banned all other rallies also. Thus the rally organized by the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan at Delhi on 30th March also was axed. By showing so called neutrality they equated the anti-communal rally upholding secularism and the unity and integrity of the country with the communal forces represented by the Sangh Parivar. We condemn the Government for such equation. The Hindu communalist force are on the offensive while the Congress (I) party and the govt at the Centre is still sitting at the fane with-

out any effort towards political mobilization of the people in defence of national unity.

On the 19th of December the left parties organized a meeting of all secular opposition political parties and mass organizations to develop nationwide united campaign in which the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan was formed with representative of all secular parties and mass organizations including the CITU.

They adopted a month long programme in January, which included oath taking, signature and mass rallies at important centers. The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions discussed its proposals and endorsed the programme. The CITU Centre has taken steps to discuss with the INTUC leadership. They have also signed a national unity pledge, and agreed to join in the campaign for national unity. Due to the Bombay disturbances this programme could not be carried out in full swing in certain areas. However we have seen that in almost all areas the joint activity against the communal virus and for national unity is gaining momentum. The CITU should take the lead to mobilize the whole workers in each centre against this communal fascist forces.

The historic 10,000 kilometers long human chain organized in West Bengal comprising of 2 crores of people shows the way. If proper steps are taken, the people's consciousness can be aroused. The rally organized in Patna was attended by more than a million people which was the biggest rally held in Patna in recent memory. In Kerala, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh and all the major cities in all the states the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan is organizing mass rallies in which we have to actively participate and make them the mightiest mass mobilizations in each area. The Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan has condemned the Government for banning all rallies along with the BJP rally. Preparations for the 30th March rally however are a foot. We must take all steps to make it the biggest rally to be held in New Delhi.

In sum, the communal and fascist forces are out to disturb the national integrity and to subvert democracy in the country. Therefore, it is the duty of the working class to come forward to defend democracy and national unity at all costs.

FIGHT AGAINST ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

Comrades,

The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions organized the second all India General strike on June 16th against the new economic policies, and again organized the biggest ever working class rally on the 25th of the November 1992 at New Delhi. In the strike nearly 15 million workers took part. In the rally public and private sector workers, State and Central Govt. employees, banking and

insurance employees and a contingent of officers of the public sector were among the participants. The workers owing allegiance to IPF, the Railway Men's Federation etc. were there in large numbers. This rally adopted a declaration indicating the guideline for the future action which has far reaching significance. Let me quote a few paragraphs from the operative part of the resolution for your ready reference.

"Such a magnificent unity can initiate effective resistance to evil effect of the economic policies on various sections of people in urban and rural India. It will be able to organize sectional as well as local and regional movements and struggles to defend the vital interests of the people. It will further mobilize large sections of the people in Central, State, regional and local conventions, seminars, rallies to create more awareness among the people to fight these policies and work out viable alternative policies to save the country and its economy.

"The new platform will unleash a phased programme of mass action all over India culminating in a Bharat Bandh which will express the powerful voice of the Indian people against these draconian policies."

What is envisaged in the resolution is to broaden the movement with the participation of mass organization of peasants, agricultural workers, youth, students etc for involving all sections of the people on the basis of a new platform. The direction is to enlist the support of the broad masses and to enlarge the scope of the fight throughout the country including the rural areas. The Sponsoring Committee has decided to take steps to discuss with the various mass organizations for united action on this basis. The successful implementation of this declaration will definitely put further pressure on the Govt. to retrace their steps and change these policies.

Comrades,

In spite of the fact that we have organized two successful strikes and a massive protest rally in Delhi within a year, the Govt of India is dead set to implement the IMF/World Bank dictates. Narasimha Rao Govt. went for the IMF loan as soon as they came to power saying that it is imperative to meet the immediate exigency of foreign exchange difficulties and it is only a temporary phenomenon. But now again within a span of one and half years we find that the Govt. is after the IMF for a bigger loan of 9 billion dollars and the pressure from the bank fund bosses are on the increase. The Govt. in order to show their fidelity to the commitments made is out and out for implementing the conditionalities even without caring for its immediate and long term impacts on our economy and the country's development as a whole. The steps which has been taken to reduce the fiscal deficits from 8.4 to 6 per cent by 91-92 and the present commitment for a further reduction to 5 per cent forced the Govt to curtail the developmental expenditure for the 5 year plans.

The investment in public sector, education, health, etc are being cut drastically. The adverse impact of the same is now visible in various sectors including industries. Many industries cannot continue their production in full capacity due to recessionary conditions. To cite one example the govt purchases of cement have come down to 15 per cent from 40 per cent since the reduction of the funds for developmental construction activity. Consequently the cement manufacturers of India had to curtail production to the extent of 20 percent. This is the story of many other industries including engineering.

The expectation of 3 to 4% increase in industrial production for the year 1991-92 did not come true and the increase was only 0.9% and this financial year the expected increase is 5% which can at best be below 3% according to expert calculation. Still recessionary conditions prevail in many industrial sectors.

Indiscriminate import liberalisation, import tariff reduction, foreign exchange de-regulation, besides subsidy cut imposed on fertilizers food etc are having its adverse impact in many industries. Many fertilizer plants, engineering companies titanium products, etc are going to be closed. The prices of food grains are being jacked up and life of the ordinary citizens are being made miserable. The prices of many essential commodities are on the increase. Though the Govt continues to claim that the inflationary spiral is being checked by them. The selling of public sector shares is being continued which is the new process of privatisation. Private banking is allowed even with the multinational monopoly participation. Multinational corporations now need not worry about the FERA restrictions. According to the IMF directions, the Chelliah Committee has now reported further reduction in the import tariff. Thus the Govt is taking all the steps to placate the IMF/World Bank bosses which goes against the people of India.

The refusal to negotiate and settle the demands of the public sector employees, denigration of public sector continues with vehemence. The proposal for closure of public sector through BIFR. Is continuing and thus the public sector workers are forced to move ahead jointly for an all India strike action.

The labour ministry is proceeding with the proposal to amend the Industrial Disputes Act in order to remove the hurdles for retrenchment and closures, and put a curb on right to strike and many other things favouring the employers. Therefore, comrades, in has become all the more important today to mobilise the whole of the working class and the people to fight back these policies as pointed in the Delhi declaration about which I have referred.

DEVELOPING CRISIS IN THE CAPITALIST WORLD

Comrades, I do not wish to go into the details of the developments in the international arena. I only

want to bring to your notice the developing crisis in the capitalist world. You might remember that Mr George Bush, the then American President declared after the collapse of the Soviet Union that he is going to build "a new world order" which according to him will bring prosperity for humanity. But today, Mr Bush is no more the President of the United States. The new.

President, Mr Clinton who assumed the office is now faced with a serious crisis in the economic front. Rise in industrial production in the developed capitalist world during the year 1992 averaged below 1%. The following table will give the latest figures for GDP, industrial production, unemployments etc in developed capitalist countries.

	Industrial Production		GDP		Unemployment % rate	
	3mthst 1 year		3mthst 1 year		Latest Year ago	
Australia	- 1.0	+ 2.1 Oct	+ 1.4	+ 2.4 Q3	11.3	Dec 10.6
Belgium	+ 0.5	+ 0.4 Sep	na	+ 1.6	8.6	Dec 7.8
Canada	+ 6.5	+ 0.7 Oct	+ 1.4	+ 0.7 Q3	11.5	Dec 10.3
France	- 2.7	- 3.8 Nov	+ 1.2	+ 1.4 Q3	10.5	Nov 10.0
Germany ●	- 7.5	- 5.1 Nov	- 1.9	+ 0.9 Q3	7.4	Dec 6.3
Holland	- 5.7	- 3.3 Nov	+ 3.7	+ 1.3 Q3	4.5	Nov 4.5
Italy	- 11.5	- 1.4 Oct	- 2.4	+ 0.8 Q3	10.0	Dec 10.0
Japan	- 10.2	- 8.2 Dec	- 1.5	+ 0.9 Q3	2.3	Nov 2.1
Spain	+ 6.0	- 0.6 Sep	na	+ 1.0 Q3	15.5	Dec* 15.2
Sweden	- 0.8	+ 0.7 Oct	+ 2.3	+ 0.1 Q3	5.5	Dec* 3.5
Switzerland	+ 14.4	+ 1.7 Q3	- 0.5	- 0.6 Q3	4.2	Dec** 1.9
U.K.	+ 4.6	+ 0.1 Nov	+ 0.4	- 0.7 Q3	10.5	Dec 9.0
USA	+ 3.6	+ 2.9 Dec	+ 3.4	+ 2.1 Q3	7.3	Dec 7.1

● Average of latest 3 months compared with average of previous 3 months, at annual rate. ** GNP.

Source : The Economist Jan 30th—Feb 5th 1993.

It shows that in all the developed countries unemployment is on the increase and the industrial production has come down in many countries and the GDP growth is only nominal. However this does not give the whole picture. Industrial recession is haunting all the developed capitalist countries including, Japan, Germany, USA, Britain, etc. To begin with Japan, it is haunted by a big recession. Japanese industrial production has slowed down as shown above to more than 8% during the year 1992. The electronic industry which was leading the industrial sector in Japan is now faced with serious slump. The electronic equipment industry not only simply slowed down, during 1992 it actually declined by 10.6% according to the electronic industries Association of Japan. The Japanese corporations are eliminating marginal business and are quietly cutting thousands of people from their work force. Corporate bankruptcies rose by one third in 1992, jumping from 10,723 cases in 1991 to 14,167 cases, the highest total since 1986. The Federation of Bankers' Associations of Japan also announced that the liabilities of companies whose transactions with banks were suspended climbed 2.9 percent to a record 4.32 trillion Yen i.e. US\$ 34.4 billion. The trade war between Japan and America is on the increase. Mr Clinton's Govt declared that they intend to revive in some form the now expired Super 301 of US Trade Act of 1988 under which the United States could impose retaliatory tariffs against a trading partner, if it is found that any country maintained

significant barriers to US goods. The Japanese Director General of the International Trade Policy Bureau at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry said that "Tokyo would take retaliatory action" if the US administration revives the so called Super 301 trade provision and applies its penalties unilaterally to Japan. Thus Japan, the wonder of the East is now slowly limping into economic recession and bankruptcies are increasing.

Unemployment and closures are also on the increase. The production levels in European Economic Community countries has fallen to the lowest levels in the year 1992 which is the worst in the last 12 years. The total plan of European Economic integration etc cannot be implemented because each of the European Community countries are facing serious crisis in the economy and they are fighting each other for markets for their own economic survival. Passenger car industry and steel industry in Germany are facing serious crisis. Volkswagen AG, Europe's biggest automaker has decided to send out 30,000 of its employees out of 2,73,000 by the end of 1993. German steel industry is also in serious crisis. The cheaper steel produced in former East Germany and steel supplied from the erstwhile Soviet Union is competing with German steel industry and they are finding it difficult to continue production in full capacity because of lack of demand and therefore large scale employment reduction is being contemplated, besides restricting imports from the Russia many

more industries are facing recessionary situation and they are facing crisis because of the cheaper products coming from East Germany. Car sales in Germany are expected to drop by as much as 10 per cent in 1993.

As per newspaper reports, the Clinton administration and its allies crossed swords in middle of January when the Commerce Department ruled that 19 nations, including Europe's major industrial powers, had violated US trade laws by dumping steel exports in the US at less than "fair market value." So also the American Govt intends to impose sanctions against European telecommunications and power manufacturing industries.

In USA the situation is far worse. It is estimated that 25% of all US Corporations are planning to drastically cut their production targets and heavy reduction in their workforce. The steel and auto industries are disappearing in the economic black hole. Never the USA experienced such a situation even during the period of the great depression. Many Corporate giants are trying to transfer their production centers to other countries where labour is cheaper and the taxes are lower. The US Govt has set up a special department to facilitate this process. The percentage of unemployment in the US is said to be 7.5% which is the highest in the recent past. But daily announcements are being made by Corporate managements of their intention to reduce the strength of the workforce.

The biggest corporate entity in America, the IBM is facing serious crisis. In the history of the company such a situation never arose. They have decided to reduce more than 25,000 jobs and to close down many of their branches in several countries. The biggest retail company in the US, Sears Roebuck & Co. has decided to cut 50,000 jobs due to market slump and they have decided to stop publication of catalogue, etc.

As mentioned earlier the Americans have started trade wars against their allies—Germany, Japan, Britain, etc. Thus it shows that the claim of globalisation of economy is thrown to the winds and the trade wars, restriction on imports, etc are becoming the order of the day.

In December alone 60,000 people lost their jobs in Britain and the total unemployment rate officially came to 10. % i.e. around 3 millions. In many British companies employment is being reduced as they are facing serious crisis.

The claim of progress through capitalism is nowhere seen and just the reverse is happening. The countries which came out of the socialist system is also facing the very same serious crisis which they could not imagine earlier. Within the short period they found that the unemployment rate and price rise etc has become unbearable and the so called help promised by the developed capitalist countries are not forthcoming and the trade which they wanted to do with these countries are also being blocked by them.

Thus all the major industrial nations world over facing recessionary trends and are in serious crisis. Crisis free capitalism is seen nowhere in the world. To get out from this crisis many methods are being resorted to by the imperialist countries. The lever of World Bank and IMF is being used for transferring the crisis to the third world countries. Besides, American imperialism the trying to intervene militarily in many countries, especially in the oil rich nations to impose their control over their economy. Ethnic and racial conflicts in several parts of the world is also being used by imperialists for imposing their domination in these areas. Therefore, it is evident from the above that crisis free capitalism is only an illusion and capitalism means poverty for large majority of the population. Unemployment and the consequent miseries, cultural degradation, etc are the results. Therefore, comrades, we have to educate the working class to fight for socialism which should be taken seriously by the CITU.

The imperialists, especially the US imperialists are using their might for the subjugation of people which we have seen in their attack against Iraq and the United Nations is also being used by them for the imposition of their domination over other peoples and nations. Therefore, comrades, the fight against imperialism should always be in our agenda. We must expose all their misdeeds.

Finally while dealing with the industrial crisis in our country, the CITU unions should take all possible steps to mobilize workers of their own industry to fight back this menace.

The fight against aggressive communalism which is threatening the unity and integrity of the country, the fight against the retrograde economic policies which compromise our economic freedom, the fight for socialism, the fight against imperialism, the fight for strengthening the workers unity and strengthening the CITU are to be taken seriously in our daily working agenda.

I request you to consider the report being presented by our General Secretary about the organization and enrich the same to make it the guide for our future activity in the above perspective and to build up the organization to effectively face the new challenges. With these words I conclude. Thank you.

Editorial Board

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CITU Secretariat's Call

STRUGGE AGAINST COMMUNAL FORCES

The Secretariat of the CITU in its meeting held on 6th and 7th February expressed deep concern over the communal situation prevailing in the country following the demolition of Babri Masjid on 6th December and the Bombay riots in particular. The Secretariat expressed its satisfaction at the programmes taken by the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan holding campaigns and rallies all over the country against the fascist forces represented by the RSS-BJP-Bajrang Dal-Shiv Sena. The meeting further expressed satisfaction at the INTUC's joining other trade unions and signing the pledge to fight the communal forces and maintain the unity and integrity of the working class and the country.

The meeting especially expressed concern over the holocaust created by the Shiv Sena in Bombay. It is a matter of serious concern that the Shiv Sena is preparing for performing Maha Artis at Kanpur and other places in UP, and both the BJP and the Shiv Sena have declared their plans to go ahead with the destruction of Mosques at Varanasi and Mathura. However, the decision of the BJP to hold a rally at Delhi on 25th February is fraught with the grave danger of making further communal polarisation in the country.

The Secretariat called upon all the CITU State Committees and the unions and federations to forge the broadest possible platform with other secular, democratic and patriotic forces to stem the communal forces and the developing fascism in the country. It appealed to all the trade unions to particularly remain vigilant at all the industrial centres in the country to maintain working class unity and come in the forefront of the struggle against the communal forces.

Against the Economic Policy of the Govt

The Secretariat welcomed the decision of the Sponsoring Committee to convene a meeting of other mass organisations of peasantry, agricultural workers, students, youth, women, etc to build up the broadest united platform and step up the struggle against the IMF dictated economic and industrial policies in pursuance of the call of the 25th Nov. rally at Delhi to culminate in a Bharat Bandh. It congratulated the public sector workers for the decision to go in for a countrywide strike from April 20-22 and appealed to all trade unions to extend active support to this strike.

Proposed Industrial Relation Bill

The Secretariat noted with serious concern the Union Labour Minister's statement in the Consulta-

tive Committee meeting that the Government is going to introduce the proposed Industrial Relations Bill in the ensuing Budget Session of the Parliament. In the 30th Session of the Indian Labour Conference held in September last the Labour Minister had committed to consult the trade unions before finalising the draft Bill. But so far the Govt has not accepted even the unanimous recommendations of the Ramarajam Committee as demanded by the trade unions, nor taken into consideration the note of dissent jointly submitted by five Central Trade Unions. On the contrary, the Government is unilaterally going ahead with the Bill in keeping with the IMF-dictated new economic and industrial policies as demanded by the World Bank. The Secretariat warned the Government against any such retrograde Bill that would seek to curb the trade union rights of the workers and their right to strike. The Secretariat appealed to all the trade unions to remain vigilant and launch united struggles to protest against such anti-working class Bill.

Hike in Steel & Coal Prices

The secretariat condemned the recent hike in the price of steel by an average of another 5%, the maximum rate of increase being Rs. 1000/- per tonne. After decontrol of steel this was the fourth price hike. Every time the private sector TISCO initiated the move to increase the price as it liked, followed by the public sector SAIL and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam. It is obvious that with the Railway Budget round the corner, steel prices may be further increased on the plea of probable hike in railway freight.

The secretariat further condemned the move to increase the price of coal by 17% before the end of the current financial year. With decontrol of coal already in the agenda of the Government, the coal price rise will give a serious blow to the industrial production. The industrial units using coal as feed stock for generating energy would further increase the prices of their products.

Both the steel and coal price rise will have inflationary pressure pushing up the prices of all commodities in chain reaction, hitting hard the consumers and poorer sections of the society most. The Secretariat appealed to the trade unions to build up united movement against these price hikes.

On NTC Mills

The Secretariat expressed surprise over the reported decision of the Government to offer the sick NTC mills to the workers to run them under co-operatives. Having made the PSU mills sick in pursuance of its policy of privatisation, the Government now has brazenly come out to wash its hands off the NTC mills. It is to be noted that earlier in 1986 the

Government had made such a proposal. But all the trade unions including the INTUC had rejected it.

The statement made by the Textile Minister that "in the Tripartite Industrial Committee for Textiles none of the trade unions came forward with any suggestion", is totally wrong and misleading. The only one meeting held on 21st February 1992 decided that after the trade unions received the data on the sick NTC mills, the next meeting to be called within two months will discuss the issue, and that the Government will not take any decision regarding the mills and will continue the budgetary support till the Tripartite Committee takes a final decision.

All the trade unions repeatedly urged upon the Labour Minister to call a meeting of the Tripartite Committee to discuss the issue, but the second meeting was never called.

Thus the so-called Turn Around Scheme adopted by the Govt is absolutely unilateral and arbitrary and in keeping with the IMF sponsored industrial policy of the Government to wind up the PSUs.

The Rs. 50 crore fund for so-called rehabilitation and re-deployment of the workers is also a hoax, as the mills are going to be closed. The workers are being pressurised to accept the VRS to get powerlooms as it is the policy of the Government to switch over to the powerlooms which will deprive the workers of reasonable wages, labour laws and all social security measures.

The decision to form yarn reeling cooperatives to supply hank yarn to the handloom sector is yet another crude joke with the weavers who have been deprived of hank yarn supply both from the NTC and the private mills. The government has thus deliberately flouted the Hank Yarn Scheme evolved by itself after the 1985 Textile Policy due to pressure from the private mill magnates.

The Secretariat of the CITU condemned the Government for unilaterally deciding the Turn Around Scheme for the NTC mills and totally rejected it. The Secretariat called upon the textile workers and the trade unions to oppose the move and step up united actions against it.

On W. Bengal Bill on Recognition of Trade Unions by Secret Ballot

The Secretariat expressed satisfaction at the President's assent given to the W. Bengal Bill on recognition of Bargaining Agent by secret ballot. The Bill which was first passed by the United Front Government in 1969 was refused Presidential assent for 13 years and returned in 1982. The Left Front

Government again passed it in September, 1983 and sent to the President for his assent, which has now been given the Presidential assent after ten years.

The Secretariat noted that it was a victory on a vital issue faced by the working class due to their long drawn struggle and the efforts made by the Left Front Government. The Secretariat called upon the working class and appealed to all trade unions to unitedly carry forward the struggle demanding secret ballot for recognition of trade unions at Central level.

Coal Workers to Demonstrate Before CIL Head Quarters

As per decision of the all India Coal Workers Federation massive demonstrations were organised before all the company headquarters throughout the country on 9th February. The demonstration before Asansol ECL Headquarters was 50,000 strong. The BCCL headquarters at Dhanbads of coal workers. Several land losers also participated in these demonstrations. Similar demonstrations were organised at Ranchi, Singrauli, Bilaspur, Nagpur and Singareni collieries.

The demonstrations were organised in protest against non-implementation of the clauses of the last wage agreement, ban imposed by Government of India on fresh wage negotiation, failure of the management to implement the Pension Scheme, delay in implementing the recommendation of Tripartite DA Committee for public sector undertakings, failure to implement the safety rules and against policy of privatisation and decontrol of coal industry.

Massive programme of leaflet, postering was organised by union will be organised before Coal India Headquarters on these issues on 12th March 1993 where workers from all over India will rally in thousands to protest against these anti-worker policies by the CIL managements.

During this propaganda unions campaigned extensively against the communal forces and called upon the coal miners to preserve communal harmony,

The unions also popularised the CPSTU decision to organise 72 hour all India strike of public sector workers on 20-22 April in all the public sector undertakings including coal miners.

CITU General Council Resolves to Strengthen Organisation

P. K. Ganguly

The Special General Council meeting of the CITU held at Bangalore from February 19-21, 1993 was a landmark in its resolve to strengthen the organisation in various aspects of its functioning, so as to meet the new challenges effectively and serve as the beacon light of India's trade union movement.

The meeting which was scheduled to be held in December last as per the decision of the Nagpur General Council meeting held in March 1992 had to be postponed due to the communal holocaust created by the RSS-BJP-VHP-Shiv Sena. Before the General Council, the Working Committee of the CITU held at Delhi in November last discussed in depth the organisational functioning and gave valuable suggestions to strengthen the various facets of the CITU as an organisation. The report prepared by the Secretariat for the Bangalore General Council meeting was in the light of the suggestions of the working Committee. The meeting was attended by 315 members.

After the flag hoisting by E. Balanandan and placing of wreaths at the martyrs' memorial the

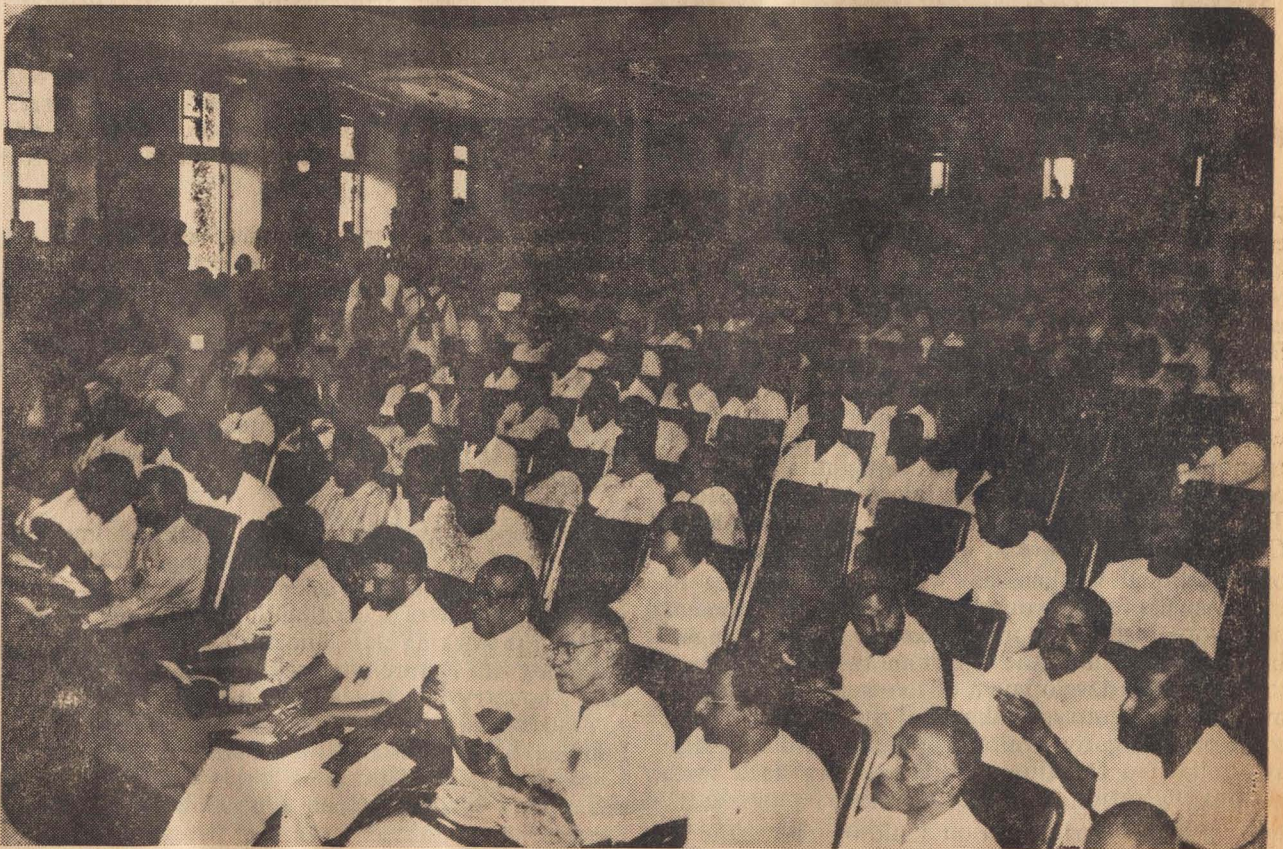
meeting started with the welcome address by R. V. Deshpande, Leader of Opposition (Janata Dal) in Karnataka Legislative Assembly.

Presidential Address :

E. Balanandan then delivered his presidential address. He dealt at length on the communal polarisation created by the RSS-BJP-VHP in the country. The demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya by these forces denoted a very significant aggressive phase of Hindu communalism in the country, he said. It was a serious blow to the secular foundation of India's constitution, on which rested the unity of the country

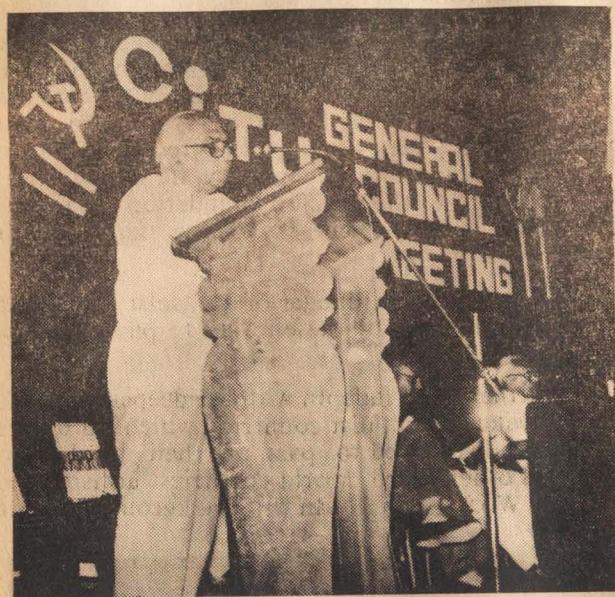
He pointed to the danger of a fascist take over of the central power by these forces to pave the way for a Hindu Rashtra.

He further dealt in depth with the deepening crisis in the advanced capitalist countries, which led by the US imperialists tried to pass on their burden to India and other third world countries utilising the IMF and World Bank. In the background of this



A section of the General Council members

situation he called for carrying forward the fight against the IMF-Dictated economic and industrial policies alongwith all other mass organisations of peasantry, agricultural workers, students, youth, women etc, so as to culminate into a Bharat Bandh as per the call given by the 25th November Delhi rally. He urged to strengthen and build up the organisation so as to be able to face these new challenges (The full text of the presidential address has been published in the front pages—Ed.)



M. K. Pandhe placing the report

Report on Organisation

The report on organisation was placed by M.K. Pandhe, the General Secretary. The report was enriched in the light of the suggestions of the Working Committee held earlier. It dealt with the stages of development of united struggles by the trade unions and the leading role played by CITU in the formation of United Council of Trade Unions (UCTU), NCC, CPSTU and now the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions. The report also dealt with the initiatives taken by the CITU in its efforts to mobilise the trade unions to fight against the communal forces and also on international questions. The report while highlighting the advance of the CITU in the above areas, also dealt with the various organisational weaknesses which were standig as impediments for all round growth and development of the organisation so as to meet the new challenges. In a critical manner the report analysed and pointed to the uneven development of the trade union movement in the country, weakness of the Hindi belt and some other negative traits with regard to democratic and collective functioning. The report dealt with various suggestion to overcome the legacy of the past so that the organisation could be fortified in all aspects of functioning where by the mass of workers can be brought in to participate actively for running

the organisation as a genuinely cadre based organisation. The report referred to the CITU constitution which clearly spelt out the aims and objectives of the organisation which made it basically different from other central trade union organisations. While fighting for day today demands of the workers, the CITU was meant for educating the working class for social transformation and to fight for abolition of the capitalist exdloitation and for the establishment of socialist society. This task could not be fulfilled unless the working class played a leading role in the task of social transformation. They must struggle with this objective in organised sectors of the economy as well as in the un-organised sector. But without bringing them together in a well knit organisation, they will not be able to play this leading role. With this perspective the report dealt with the various aspects of the organisational position and functioning of the CITU. It dealt with the functioning the CITU centre, the state centres and at union levels. It stressed the importance of strengthening the functions by collective discussions. It emphasised the important role of the state committees and state councils to mobllise all workers at the grass root levels. It also pointed to the necessity of district functioning and formation of district committees as per decisions of the state committees, wherever necessary, depending on the concentration of industries and unions in the particular districts. It gave utmost importance in maintaining communications and information sharing from the All India centre to the union level and back. It laid strees on ideological campaign and education and organising trade union classes both at the central and state levels as also in district and union levels. It laid great strees on the Hindi belt and ideological education in Hndi states and co-ordinating their activities under the centre.

Above all the report emphasised in ditail on democratic functioning and collective functioning and curb all bureaucratic tendencies amongst leaders and cadres. The report further laid emphasis on functioning among working women and mobilisation of minority communities and other ethnic minorities into the CITU movement by championing their specific demands. It also pointed to the importance of improving tne quality of the CITU journals and their further circulation.

The report enumerated several tasks to improve all facets of organisational functioning. It resolved to strengthen the organisation in the priority sectors and develop cadres accordingly. For ideological training of the working class it decided to prepare a syllabus alongwith lecture notes within 3 months and prepare a countrywide education programme. Following comrades were entrusted with this task: M.K. Pandhe, Sukomal Sen, R. Umanath, P.K. Ganguly, Kanai Banerjee. The states were asked to prepare self critical review of their functioning as well as the district committee. Review of struggles conduted by unions to be prepared and discussed in the states and they were asked to launch drives to increase

membership of the CITU fixing target of enrolment every year so as to increase the membership in planned way. Strengthening of industrywise co-ordination and steps to introduce trade union democracy at all levels were called for. The report also dealt with the importance of discussion of alternate policies to overcome the economic crisis.

Discussion on the Report

A record number of fifty four members participated in the discussion on the report. Since the working committee had earlier discussed the issue of organisation, and gave suggestion, only the General Council members participated in the discussion at Bangalore. The record number of participants showed the enthusiasm among the members in strengthening and building up the organisation according to the demands of the situation. They self critically analysed the functioning of the CITU organisation. They highlighted the positive aspects and the achievements of the CITU which made the CITU the fore-runner in the trade union movement in the country and a consistent champion for trade union unity so as to bring the entire working class on the path of class struggle.

While highlighting the achievements of the CITU, they at the same time noted the shortcomings, weakness and negative traits which accompanied CITU alongwith its growth. In this respect they earmarked a number of areas where CITU required to concentrate. These were, functioning in the organised industries and the public sector units to consolidate the foot hold of the CITU amongst the workers, in the vast unorganised sector of industries, in the Hindi Belt, in States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, etc which are industrially very advanced in the country but with a weak trade union movement including that of CITU; amongst working women and minorities, among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, support to peasantry etc. They stressed for ideological education and building up of cadres and organising trade union classes to be taken up as a permanent agenda of the CITU. Above all they stressed for curbing bureaucratic tendencies and for democratic functioning at all levels of the CITU from the centre to the unions.

All the speakers emphasised the need to fight the communal forces which was emerging as a fascist force in the country. They opined for united struggles by the trade unions to stem the growth of these forces and stop them from affecting the industrial centres and the trade union movement. They opined for putting these struggles in the forefront simultaneously with the struggle against the economic policies of the govt. and building up the CITU so as to be able to launch the two pronged struggle simultaneously and effectively.

The members further pointed out that the CITU was formed to struggle for socialism. Therefore, the organisation has to be strengthened on this basis and all the struggles have to be carried forward in this direction making the ideological moorings strong, so as to change the correlation of class

forces in favour of the working class. While struggling for trade union unity, they pointed to the importance of the formation of Confederation so that the unity of the trade unions and the working class could be further consolidated against the policies of the govt to safeguard the sovereignty of the country. The report was adopted after the reply given by M.K. Pandhe. The meeting came to the understanding that to strengthen the organisation in its various facets has to be a continuous process and such discussions should continue at the lower levels as well. It was further decided that the report would be discussed at the state level and further enriched with the experience and views given from the state levels and then discussed in the next working committee meeting.

Apart from the report the meeting adopted two resolutions viz against economic policies of the govt and against the communal forces. The resolution on the economic policy called for massive preparations alongwith various other mass organisations to be culminated into a Bharat Bendi as per the call given by the 25th Nov rally. The resolution against the communal forces called for massive participation in the rallies organised by the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan as endorsed by the Sponsoring Committee of trade unions and make preparations for the success of the 30th March rally at Delhi.

Summing Up Com. E Balanandan

Com. E. Balanandan summed up the deliberations. He said, "we know that while dealing with the trade unions we are dealing with our own class. The CITU has been organised to strengthen the resistance against the bourgeoisie landlord policies which is against the people. From the very inception, as noted earlier, the CITU was trying to unite all the trade unions in a common front, on which we have succeeded to a large extent. Our influence today is sizeable among the working class. But that is not reflected in our organisation which is the basis for further development. Therefore, this task has to be pursued seriously by all our comrades. The CITU unions though represent a section of the workers in an industry for the time being, it must project the demands of the total workers and must educate the workers about the industry. Through this the CITU unions can assume leadership in the industry and strengthen the union's base. Democratic functioning of the trade unions must not be only formal democracy. Trade unions are the organisations through which the workers get educated on all the problems the society and enable them to play the leadership role in changing the society. Therefore, the trade union leaders should find time to sit with the workers, discuss with them and to educate them. A trade union leader who is the president of 30 or 35 unions cannot do justice to the workers. Therefore, our leaders should only assume leadership of unions to the extent he can effectively function. Instead of one leader for 30 unions, we want dozen of leaders developed from each union. Today the

(Cont'd on Page 16)

Finance Commission Meets Trade Unions

P.K. Ganguly

The Tenth Finance Commission called a meeting of the central trade unions at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 2nd Feb. 1993. It was for the first time that the Finance Commission held a meeting with the trade unions.

The meeting was called in the background of the deepening crisis of the economy despite its so called globalisation, the recessionary trend and the critical financial position of the state govts. Apart from the main terms of reference as the distribution of the net proceeds of taxes between the Union and the states, the meeting discussed matters like reduction in fiscal deficit, economy in expenditure, etc. which were additional terms of reference conferred on the 10th Finance Commission as compared to the earlier commissions.

In his introductory speech, K. C. Pant, the Chairman of the Tenth Finance Commission, although sang praises about the economic reforms (dictated by the IMF) being pursued by the Narasimha Rao Govt, yet pointed out to the serious state of the economy faced due to crunch in fiscal resources. He particularly referred to the "mounting" fiscal deficits, etc, the increasing wage bill of the employees, the question regarding D.A and bonus "excessive" manpower and subsidies and the role of the public sector. He drew the attention of the trade union leaders to a meeting of the state finance ministers held in August 1992 where the views extended by the majority states were that there should be a moratorium on the payment of additional DA, bonus, etc. He further said that in the face of inflationary pressures, burgeoning public debt and deepening balance of payments crisis, curbing the fiscal imbalance was the single most important task of economic management in India. He hailed the relaxation in industrial licensing, import control and foreign exchange regulations being done by the govt which according to him were required to enhance the competitiveness of the Indian economy promoting its integration with the world market. However, according to him the growing revenue deficits were standing as impediments in the way of the growth of Indian economy. He further called for remedial measures in these areas whereby the cost per employee should be reexamined and the entire approach to job security to be reoriented. Simultaneously he pointed out that the approach towards public sector also needed a fresh look. According to him the public sector which was originally conceived to give a commanding height to the economy, had failed to generate internal resources and had become a major constraint on the economic growth of the country. The condition of the state public sectors were worse according to him, particularly the state electricity boards and the state road transport corporations. Further budgetary support to the public sector

enterprises were causing serious strain to the economy. He requested the trade union leaders to give their view points with particular reference to the above matters and sought cooperation from the trade unions to help the govt in rejuvenating the Indian economy so as to enable it to compete in the international arena.

Speaking first, Gopeshwar of the INTUC opposed the policy of the govt towards the public sector and emphasised for giving it a leading role for the growth of a self-reliant economy. He opposed any DA freeze and demanded a freeze on the prices first. He further demanded a National Wage Policy and employment generation programme. R K Bhakat of BMS also opposed the Govt's policies and proposed for a self-reliant economy. Kamala Sinha of HMS drew attention to the corruption at top level in the public sector managements and demanded stops against this.

Prithvi Chanda of UTUC (LS) also spoke in the same line and opposed any wage or DA or bonus freeze.

T N Siddhanta of AITUC assailed the Govt of India for not imposing any corporate taxes or wealth tax and for its amending FERA and MRTP to allow free entry to the multinationals. He further criticised the Govt for not tapping the huge black money to garner financial resources. He opposed any exit policy and demanded giving a leading role to the public sector.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU squarely criticised the economic and industrial policies of the Govt being formulated under pressure by the IMF and World Bank which resulted in progressive deterioration of the Indian economy. He called for revamping the expenditure and revenue collection pattern of the Govt. He said evasion of income tax should be checked. He also called for tapping black money. He opposed any freeze on wages, DA or bonus and demanded withdrawal of the DPE circular banning wage negotiations in public sector. He also demanded the pension scheme as agreed upon by the managements in public sector be implemented immediately. He also opposed the policy of de-regulation, decontrol and de-licensing and dismantling of the MRTP and FERA which allowed the multi-nationals to have control over the Indian economy.

P K Ganguly also spoke on behalf of the CITU and demanded devolution of funds by the Central Govt to the states and major share of the revenues to the states so that the states could plan their
(Continued on Page 16)

The Communal Riots in Bombay

(We are publishing hereunder a report on the recent Bombay riots and the efforts made by the trade unions for communal harmony—Ed.)

Pre December 6, efforts : For about three weeks prior to December 6th, there was extensive campaigning at suburban railways stations all over the city collecting signatures on a petition appealing for communal amity on the Mandir-Masjid issue. CITU took up main responsibility for the campaign at Kurla, Andheri and Bhandup and also participated in all the other locations. On November 30, a joint Dharna was organised at Chrchgate station in which CITU participated together with other democratic organisations and Unions. On 4th December a massive rally of trade Unions under the joint banner of Rashtriya Ekta Samiti marched from V. T. to Maharashtra High School Maidan (Curry Road), shouting slogans of anti-communalism and national unity. Unions participating included CITU, AITUC, UTUC, Sarva Shramik Sangh, INTUC, HMS.

Events after December 6th : Disturbances in Bombay city began on the night of 6th December. On 8th the disturbances had spread to different parts of the city including the suburbs. Hundreds of persons, mainly from the minority muslim community were killed in police firings. In most parts of the city the character of the disturbances were mob attacks by the majority community on pockets of minority community dwellings followed by looting and arson. A notable feature of the disturbances was extreme reluctance of the Bombay police to take any action against the majority community offenders with many instances of looting taking place in the presence of the police. The working class was particularly affected, especially the unorganised sector and daily wage earners.

The January riots were even more severe in intensity and took the character of organised pogroms against the minority community after some incidents of attacks by anti-social elements against majority community mathadi workers in Dongiri, and a stabbing spree on 7th January in minority dominated Dongiri-Null Bazar area and four people being burnt alive in Jogeshwari. The initial events appeared to be the work of professional provocateurs hired by some interested agency. The attack on the minority community started on 8th January and intensified during following days to engulf the entire city. Shiv Sena and RSS were directly and openly involved with the Govt showing a total unwillingness to take action against these organisations except for symbolic statements. The new features of the January disturbance were that for the first time in some factories, majority community worker threatened and even physically attacked muslim co-workers. These incidents led to mass absenteesim by muslim workers, some of whom are not likely to return to work in future also. Such developments occurred in factories

with Shiv Sena unions like Larsen and Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra, Otis Elevators, though muslim workers in some Textiles Mills were also threatened.

Factories with CITU unions were generally free of such instances, though it cannot be denied that the communal influence affected workers in general as evidenced by the low-turnout for the anti-communal parishad held on 16th January, while the disturbances were still in progress.

Anti-Communal Programmes : Relief work on a massive scale was necessitated by the disturbances. An all party, Rashtriya Ekta Samiti was formed, including elements from Congress(I) and INTUC. Relief camps were organised in different parts of the city and the trade union centres actively involved in the relief work. The trade union joint action committee was recently expanded to include the state Government employees and the state transport employees.

Jan. 26, Day for Secularism and National Unity : The 16th January Parishad passed a resolution to observe 26th January as a day for secularism and national unity by organising flag hoisting at factory gates and displaying the national flag at the residences and shops etc. of all members of trade unions. This call had a salutary response on the communal situation in the city.

A mass trade union shibir organised on behalf of CITU, HMS, HMKP, AITUC, Datta Samant Union, Sarva Shramik Sangh, State Government Employees Union, Bank employees Union, UTUC, and various middle class organisations and TUJAC on the issue of trade Unions and communalism was held on January 30th.

Pledge : From 30th January onwards, Meetings of workers well organised in different locations as at CITU units to explain the pledge for secularism and collect signatures before March 23rd.

Communal Harmony Rally at Delhi on March 30

Join Communal Harmony Rally
at Delhi on March 30, 1993
being organised by Rashtriya
Ekta Abhiyan

BEFI Condemns Bank Privatisation

[Press Statement was Issued By Ashis Sen, M.P.,
General Secretary, Bank Employees Federation of
India]

By announcing intended establishment of new banks in the private sector the Government and the Reserve Bank have set themselves to completely reverse the considerations and objections that led to nationalisation of the banking industry. In the name of reforms they are out to throw the banking system open again to the caprice and mercy of private sector industrialists and big business vested interests who monopolised economic power by their control over the banks in pre-nationalisation days for amassing sectoral fortunes without caring for the country's needs and common man's interests. Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) strongly opposes and condemns the move. None can deny the worth while role of public sector banks in developing the economy and in catering resources to the credit-starved vast masses specially in the rural and semiurban regions by large expansion of their branch network. Instead of strengthening them by eradicating the ills created by the Government itself in appointing inept managements to subserve the policy-makers political interests, they are clearing the field for wide-scale entry of private banks including foreign ones under the garb of efficiency improvement by a so-called competition. Simultaneously, the Government is working out large-scale disinvestment of its holdings in public sector banking institutions and asking them to raise funds from the market on the plea of implementing imported capital adequacy norms.

All these directly flow from the financial reforms guidelines given by the World Bank and IMF as conditions precedent for granting loans. The Narasimham Committee appointed by the Government have faithfully incorporated these in their recommendation. The projected actions of the Government are nothing short of implementing those guidelines.

In Reserve Bank's dispensation the new private banks will be given amnesty for years together from the obligation of priority sector lendings. This forebodes initiation of the process of squeezing this sector to the detriment of the vital needs of the poorer sections of the people both rural and urban.

Net profits of public sector banks are reported to have increased from Rs. 475 crores to Rs. 804 crores in 1991-92 as compared to the preceding year despite huge non-performing assets. Advances to the tune of some Rs. 25,000 Crores, euphemistically termed as bad and doubtful debts, are outstanding from big borrowers who do not pay back their dues. The amounts are virtually misappropriated. Had the Government taken appropriate steps by amending the relevant laws for recovery of these outstandings, the income generating therefrom would have helped

the nationalised banks to overcome their weakness, improve net profits several fold more and thereby strengthen their capital base by enlargement of the reserves. Instead of moving in that direction, the Government is embarking upon permitting new private sector banks and dilution of ownership of public sector banks.

The game-plan of the Government carry ominous portents for the banking industry as a whole, the public sector banks in particular. The bank employees movement has fought for nationalisation of banks. The Government measures for undoing it will not be taken lying down. Bank Employees Federation of India along with other organisations in the industry is preparing for building up powerful movement against these measures.

Workers Hold Rally in Orissa Against Communal Danger

The state level Sponsoring Committee of Central Trade Unions and different Federations in Orissa organised a state level big convention for communal harmony and national unity and integrity in 27th Dec. 92 at Cuttack. The convention was also addressed by the leaders of Janta Dal, C.P.I. (M), C.P.I., S.U.C.I. From the said convention a call was given to hold a state level Rally.

On 30th January, 93 the state capital, Bhubaneswar witnessed colourful big rally. Processions of thousands of working people, Kishans, Students, Youths and women and state Govt. and central Govt. Employees came through Trains, Cus, Tractors and moved to the Meeting place at PMG square.

The Meeting started with patriotic songs and slogans. The presidium comprising of Com Sivaji Patnaik, M.K. President CITU Orissa, Dutikrushna Pands (AITVC), K.C. Patra (HMS), Bijaya Sahoo (UTUCLS), S. N. Sirkar, Kishor Jena, B. Samal of different employees organisations conducted the proceeding of the meeting. Com Sivaji Patnaik led the Rally by reading the Pledge declaration and all followed him by standing.

The Central Trade Union state leaders Prabir Palit (AITUC), Lambodar Nayak (CITU) General Secretary, Orissa state committee, Sambunath Nayak (UTUCLS), Rajendra Singh (HMS) addressed the Rally. The central leaders A. B. Bardhan (CPI), Prakash Karat (CPIM), Sarat Yadav (JD), Tapas Dutta (SUCI) addressed the Rally. Among others included Nitish Rumar, MP, Lokanath Choudury, MP, Samarendra Kundu Ex. MP, Janardan Pati (CPIM), State secretary and Minister of Orissa included Prafulla Samal, Surendra Nayak, Nalini Mohanty and Bhagat Behera Minister. The famous

(Con'd on page 16)

Countrywide Strike by Financial Institutions on March 29

[The Coordinating Body of Associations Federations in Banks, Insurance, and Financial Institutions has issued the following statement on Feb. 15]

A meeting of the Co-ordinating Body for Pension comprising:

All India Bank Officers Confederation (AIBOC), National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE), Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI), All India Insurance Employees Association (AIIEA), All India Reserve Bank Employees Association (AIRBEA), National Confederation of Genl. Insurance Officers Association (NCGIOA), All India Industrial Finance Corporation Employees Association (AIIFCEA), All India NABARD Employees Association (AINBEA), All India RRB Employees Association (AIRRBEA), and All India RRB Officers Federation (AIRRBOF) representing over ten lakhs employees and officers in Banks, Insurance and other financial institutions held at Bombay on 14th February 1993 strongly deplored the apathy and rigidity of the managements and the Government to introduce pension scheme in the financial sector as a social security measure in addition to existing superannuation benefits, out of mutual contributions of the employers and the employees. It may be noted that the Finance Minister is on record having conceded to the Co-ordinating body on 5th August 1992 to give some "extra" amount towards superannuation benefits if it could resolve the dispute. However, there has been no progress in the direction. On the contrary it is apprehended that from some interested quarters efforts are being made to divert the employees' Provident Fund contribution of around Rs. 3000 crores in lieu of pension.

The meeting strongly repudiated the total apathy of the managements of financial sector to meaningful wage negotiation, though last settlements have experi-

Air India Continues Discrimination Against Air Hostesses

The Air India management due to the pressure of the Air India Hostesses Association, has decided to increase the age of retirement from flying duties from 45 years to 50 years. However, the discrimination against the Air Hostesses continues since male flight purser can do the flying duties upto the age of 58 years.

It should be noted that the Indian Airlines has already increased the age of retirement of Air Hostess to 58 years at par with male cabin crew. Miss Dawn who was the first to resist the wrong policies of the Air India management was grounded in a vindictive manner for about 20 months,

The Air India management agreed to increase the age of retirement to 50 years provided Miss Dawn and other Air Hostesses agreed to give in writing

red everywhere long back and fresh charter of demands have been submitted. There is a distinct threat to shelve wage issue on the plea of "no brief" from the Government.

The meeting took strong note of the fact that more and more employees are going out of purview of bonus parameter and recipients are very few and that too a meagre quantum is being spent by various sectors. Manywhere in the financial sector, employees are not entitled to Bonus at all. The meeting urges that Bonus should be extended to all without any restrictions.

The meeting cautioned the Government to desist from their illadvised and IMF/World Bank sponsored policies of large scale entry of Private and Foreign Banks, entry of multi-national in Insurance Sector, proposed privatisation of Industrial Finance Corporation (IFC), a nationalised outfit, and disinvestment of shares of nationalised Banks. These measures of de-nationalisation, privatisation and opening up to powerful multi-nationals will seriously undermine national interest apart from jeopardising the interest of large work force.

Therefore, on the demands of (1) Pension as 3rd retiral benefit (2) Meaningful wage negotiations in financial sector (3) Bonus for all in this sector and to protest against (4) Government's deplorable move of privatisation of financial sector, it has been decided to observe a Country-wide Strike in Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions on 29th March 1993 which will be followed by consecutive two days strike in April 1993 in case of no positive response from the Government/Management.

A joint action Committee consisting of representatives of the Constituent Units of the Co-ordinating Body has been set up to direct the action programme.

that they would not claim flying duties beyond the age of 50 years. However the Air Hostesses resisted and faced grounding without wages for a long time.

However the Bombay court directed the management to allow them performing flying duties without giving any undertaking to them.

Malini Bhattacharya, Jayant Natarajan and other women MPs took up the cause with the Prime Minister and they are pursuing the matter with the Civil Aviation Minister.

She Air Hostesses in Co-operation with the CITU, are determined to struggle till the management puts an end to the callous discrimination against them.

CITU Condemns Decision for Entry of Private Sector in Banking Industry

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) has issued the following statement to the Press:

The CITU strongly condemns the decision of the Government to allow entry of the private sector in the banking industry in a massive way without any restriction. It is no secret that such decision is a part of the Fund-Bank dictated new economic policy pursued by the Government which will give a direct blow to the growth of self-reliant economy in the country.

That the Government has been heading for such dangerous step was indicated from the report of the infamous Narasimhan Committee. It is a matter of serious concern that the Government has shown no respect to the opposition of the entire trade union movement in general and that in the banking industry in particular to the report.

The decision is a total negation of the very purpose and objective of nationalisation of the banks. Monopolisation of economic power following privatisation of banks will undermine and corrupt the entire financial system. The recent swindling of huge bank funds has shown the shape of thing to come after privatisation.

The capital lending pattern will undergo serious change which would hamper the healthy industrial development of the country. The owners of the small scale and unorganised sector of industries will be ruined. The rural vested interest will corner all the benefits and the peasantry will be subject to further fleecing and usury. The public sector banks would suffer further set back and get sick under the so-called rationale of introducing competition, which is in fact designed to kill the public sector banks for complete privatisation of banking sector.

Further, while taking this anti-national decision the Govt has totally ignored the fact that the private sector foreign banks played a key role in the security scam. Even in the selling of PSU shares, the ANZ Grindlays Bank played foul game which has been established before the JPC, investigating the scam.

The CITU while expressing its total opposition to the private sector's entry in the banking industry appeals to the trade union movement in general and in the banking sector in particular to mobilise its strength to fight the policy unitedly.

(From Page 11)

capitalist system is facing crisis world over including India. They are taking steps to solve it in their favour and they are putting forth their own solutions. The working class and the people are trying to solve it in their favour. That is the essence of the on going fight today. Therefore, without a strong organisation at grass root level this fight cannot be successfully carried forward. The battle can only be decisive provided the majority of the class is thrown into it. Then only we can ensure substantial democratic advance."

Open Rally

The open rally was held at Jubilee park on 21st evening. It was attended by several thousands of workers. The rally was addressed by Com. E. Balanandan, M.K. Pandhe and S. Suryanarayana Rao.

(From Page 12)

development according to necessity and also meet the demands of the employees. He said, by strengthening the financial position of the states, the question of uneven development and the ethnic problems could also be solved. It was also necessary that for employment generation the states should get sufficient funds to develop the small scale industrial sector which is under their jurisdiction. He opposed cut in developmental expenditure, cut in the state's shares and cut in subsidies and employment generation programmes and disinvestment of public sector undertakings for reduction of fiscal deficits. He condemned the exit policy and the so called globalisation of the economy under the dictates of the IMF.

Several Govt representatives and other members of the Finance Commission also spoke, all in tune with the Govt policies. Concluding the deliberations the Chariman assured that the views of the trade unions will be considered while finalising his report.

(From Page 14)

Orissa singer Prafulla Kar also sang two patriotic songs in the Rally.

The Rally decided to collect 50 lakh signatures on the pledge declaration from Orissa. The speakers by and large criticized the role of BJP, VHP, RSS, BD & SS and also they denounced the role played by PVN Govt. and expressed their sincere desire to uphold the secular banner and to protect our country's national Unity and integrity.

Resolutions

Com. Ganesh Ghosh

The General Council meeting of CITU mourns the death of Com. Ganesh Ghosh, the veteran freedom fighter and the legendary leader of the Chittagong armoury raid. He devoted his entire life for the advancement of communist movement. He was a member of the W. Bengal State Committee of CPI(M), a member of the West Bengal Assembly and also of The Parliament. The meeting pays respectful homage to Com. Ganesh Ghosh.

Com. Biren Datta

The General Council meeting mourns the death of Com. Biren Datta, former member of the Working Committee, General Secretary of the Tripura State Committee of CITU and the Minister of Labour of the Left Front Government of Tripura. He was a veteran leader of the communist movement in Tripura and a member of the Tripura State Committee of CPIM(M). For some time he was also a member of Parliament. The meeting pays respectful homage to Com. Biren Datta.

On Condolence

This General Council meeting mourns the death of Com. Dalip Singh Joha, the veteran Kisan and communist leader of Punjab; Com. Thakorbbhai Shah, the veteran leader of Gujarat; Com. N.K. Krishnan, the veteran leader of CPI from Tamilnadu; Com. K.A. Rajan, former secretary on NFPTE, who made valuable contributions in the advancement of the united Council of Trade Unions; Com. K.K. Roy ganguly, the former General Secretary of Water Transport Federation of India; Com. K.M. Mathew, the general Secretary of All India Defence Employees Federation and Com. Dalip Singh, Tapiala, the CPI(M) leader of Punjab.

The meeting further condoles the death of those who were killed in the communal carnage that engulfed the country in the Babri Masjid demolition by the vandals of RSS-VHP-BJP-Bajrang Dal and there after in Bombay by the Shiv Sena.

On Martyrs

The General Council meeting held at Nagpur from February 19-21, 1993 pays homage to all those martyrs who were killed by the extremists in Punjab and Tripura, while defending the unity and integrity of the country.

The meeting also pays homage to those martyrs who laid down their lives under police and gangster attacks, while defending the cause of the working class and the toiling people.

ON COMMUNAL SITUATION

This General Council meeting of the CITU held at Bangalore from February 19-21, 1993 expresses serious concern on the communal situation in the country created by the RSS-BJP-VHP-Bajrangdal and the Shiv Sena.

The demolition of the Babri Masjid was the worst vandalism and assault on the Constitution and the secular Indian state. The communal riots that followed were unprecedented since independence, affecting the industrial centres also. The Shiv Sena thereafter created a holocaust in Bombay. Workers belonging to the minority community and even non-Maharashtrian Hindus are not allowed to enter the factories and other establishments.

With a fascistic vengeance the Sangh Parivar and the Sena are trying to polarise the people of the country on communal basis. While the Sangh Parivar has announced the programme of proceeding to Varanasi and Mathura to demolish the mosques, the Shiv Sena have declared their plan of performing Maha Aratis at Kanpur, Lucknow, etc apart from Bombay. These fascistic forces have made declarations to go ahead with the 25th February rally at Delhi defying the ban, to repeat the Bombay carnage at Delhi.

In this entire development the Narsimha Rao Government at the centre has utterly failed to stem these communal forces or protect the Babri Masjid. It has on the contrary compromised with them at every step, thereby encouraging them to go ahead to threaten the unity and integrity of the country and undermine the Constitution and the rule of law. It is condemnable that the Government equated the anti-communal rally announced by the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan with the BJP rally and banned all the rallies to show neutrality.

While condemning the Sangh Parivar and the Shiv Sena for their communal onslaught and the Government for its appeasement role the General Council calls upon the CITU state committees and the unions to gear up their activities to mobilise the trade unions and other secular, democratic and patriotic forces in struggle to resist all the fundamentalists and fascistic forces and safeguard the unity and integrity of the country.

The meeting further appreciates that the INTUC has also signed a pledge with the trade unions to carry forward the struggle against the communal forces. All State Committees should make all out efforts to strengthen the unity in the common struggle of the trade unions against the communal and divisive

forces who receive all help from imperialism.

The formation of the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan with the secular opposition political parties and the mass organisations is a welcome development in this regard. The meeting congratulates the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan for organising massive rallies and human chain in different states and calling for a central rally at Delhi on 30th March rally a big success.

ON ECONOMIC SITUATION

The General Council meeting of the CITU held at Bangalore from 19th to 21st February 1993 expresses its deep resentment at the constant all round deterioration of the economic situation of the country. True to the apprehensions expressed by the trade unions the IMF-World Bank dictated New Economic Policy (NEP) pursued by the Narasimha Rao Govt. has been playing havoc in all fronts of the economy and the false propagation of the government that NEP would put the economy to a very sound position totally belied.

One of the main justifications propagated for going for the hefty loan from the Fund/Bank under the conditionalities to which the Government has compromised our economic sovereignty has been to fight the balance of payment crisis. But within two years the BoP situation is moving towards a crisis position due to increasing import and growing trade deficit. As per reports, in the coming financial year the country's imports are likely to reach \$ 35.5 billion and exports at \$ 27.5 billion leaving a trade deficit of \$ 7.00 billion. Further the external debt now has reached \$ 75.00 billion. The debt to GDP ratio has reached 25% and debt service ratio has also risen to 32 percent.

According to recent Reserve Bank's survey the Indian economy is slowing down. The industrial growth has registered clear decline in many important sectors which includes basic sectors, durable and non durable consumer good etc. The nondurable category, which includes salt, tea, coffee, vanaspati, biscuits etc, has registered average decline of 1.67 percent.

The Chellaiah Committee recommendation on the tax structure is highly favourable to the multinational companies Indian monopol houses and the rural rich.

The share scam and the facts brought before the JPC have highlighted the scandalous behaviour of the financial institutions and the share brokers resulting in swindle of thousands of crores of rupees of public funds.

Prices of all essential commodities are continuously rising despite the so called fall in the rate of inflation which does not have any reflection in the market price. Price of steel after decontrol has been hiked four times. Coal is also going to be decontrolled and the price to be enhanced by 17 percent just before the ensuring budget as recommen-

ded by the BICP. The issue price of foodgrains through PDS has been increased.

The privatisation drive is going on in full swing through disinvestment of shares, entry foreign and Indian monopoly in the industries earlier reserved for public sector; off loading of jobs and marketing of products as has been done in case of coal. The privatisation of banks and massive infiltration of foreign banks in the country's banking sector has been given green signal by the Government. Customs duty on foreign goods is being reduced while excise duty on domestic products is being increased, thereby increasing the prices of the domestic products and allowing the multinational companies to capture the country's market and making the indigenous industries sick. The FERA has been amended whereby restrictions under the Act have been almost totally withdrawn as a result of which the multinational companies would tighten their grip on our economy.

Due to withdrawal of financial support, stoppage of investment for revamping the old units which have become technologically obsolete due to aging, many public sector units are on the verge of closure. Industrial sickness is increasing alarmingly particularly in the small scale sector.

Thus lakhs of workers are threatened with retrenchment, accentuating the unemployment situation. This is not enough; the labour laws are sought to be amended to incorporate the Exit Policy and put a curb to right to strike as per the demand of Fund/Bank.

The General Council welcomes the decision of the Sponsoring Committee to convene a meeting of all other mass organisations of peasantry, Agricultural workers, students, youth, women etc on March 3 as per declaration of the 25th November rally, which called for phasewise movement culminating in a Bharat bandh. The meeting calls upon the State Committees, unions and federations to start mediate mobilization of all sections of workers and other mass organisations to implement the call of the 25th November rally successfully.

Total Strike in Oil India

On the 25th February 1993 Oil India Workmen observed one day token strike throughout India in protest against the non-approval of bilateral settlement on wage revision by Central Government which is awaiting approval since last 18 months. The strike was a spectacular success as out of the total workmen numbering 8538 in India, 8489 workmen observed the strike. The Co-ordination Committee of Regional unions of workmen of Oil India have urged upon the management of Oil India to implement the said settlement immediately failing which the workmen of Oil India will be forced to go for seventy two hours strike throughout India for which notice has already been served.

CITU Condemns Hike in Railway Freights and Fares

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

The CITU expresses its strong resentment at the steep hike of the railway fares and freights proposed in the Railway Budget.

The CITU condemns the Railway Minister's statement that the hikes will not affect the common people, as they are only marginal, whereas the hikes proposed by the Railway Minister are all round and unprecedented. Not only that both the fares and freights have been increased by another 10 to 12 percent, the freight rates of all commodities have been increased. Even the earlier freight exemption from sixteen essential commodities for human consumption like salt, edible oil, Kerosene, tea, vegetables, fodder, grains, pulses, manures etc. have been withdrawn and all these items have now been subjected to 10 percent freight hike.

The monthly season tickets have been increased by 18 to 25 percent. The computerised reservation charges, the supplementary charges for superfast trains and even the price of Platform tickets have been increased. The introduction of the so-called sleeper coaches is another ploy to put an extra burden of 25 percent on the people.

The CITU further condemns the Railway Minister's statement that the hikes in fares and freights had to be resorted to because prices of various items like diesel, power and all other inputs were increased. The Government itself is responsible for such price increase and the CITU had warned that all this will be followed by increase in the Railway fares and freights.

It is further to be noted that while the annual plan outlay of Rs. 6,500 crores is only a marginal increase in monetary terms than the previous year, the additional revenue that will be mopped up by fleecing the people will be a record Rs. 1,848 crores ie. about 5,00 crores more than the previous year, which itself was a record. But despite such stiff load on the people, no passenger amenities and facilities have been provided this year too.

The budgetary support to the railways has also been progressively reduced. From 75 percent during the Fifth Plan, it has come down to 14.7 per cent in 1993-94. The creation of the so-called Capital Fund for Railways is bound to meet the same fate as the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) as these measures cannot be a substitute for budgetary support.

In the matter industrial relation too the same attitude has been shown by the Railway Minister. No word has been said about over 400 victimised employees who have not been taken back despite promises by the Government since the last several years. Besides, the drive for privatisation and computerisation in the wake of the new economic policy has threatened the job of about four lakh employees in the Railways. The staff quarters allotment has also been reduced.

In sum, the Railway Budget is a true reflection of the Government's growing surrender to the dictates of the World Bank and IMF as seen in the further reduction in Budgetary support and subsidies and increased offensives on the common people and the workers. The Railway Budget shows the shape of things to come in the general budget. The Govt has stopped treating the Railways as a public utility service.

The CITU calls upon all its unions and appeals to all the Railway workers irrespective of affiliations to unitedly launch protest actions against the railway budget demanding withdrawal of the fare and freight hikes.

FORM IV

(See Rule 8)

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sd/-

M. K. Pandhe

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CITU Condemns Price Hike of Sugar & Coal

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

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions denounces the Government of India for its decision to hike the price of sugar by 20 percent and allow entry of private sector in marketing kerosene and cooking gas. The supply of sugar to the public distribution system has also been reduced by 13 percent to boost the fortunes of free market sugar.

The plea that it is being done to help the farmers is to fool the people. Nothing out of it will ever reach the farmers, to whom the arrears from the mills stand at a staggering figure of Rs. 400/- crores.

The Government's decision to allow entry of private sector in marketing kerosene, cooking gas is obviously done at the instance of IMF/World Bank bosses at Washington. The Indian consumer will dread the day when the multinationals will enter the market and start selling these items at the free market prices estimated at Rs. 150-200 per cylinder, which is priced at Rs. 82/- now.

The increase in the prices of coal will end up in pushing up the cost of all items of consumption by the common man, power generation, steel production and pushing up the prices of all manufactured goods. The exemption of domestic varieties of coal is no solace.

It is all the more condemnable that these announcements are being done just on the eve of the budget session, circumventing the Parliament. It goes to show that the IMF/World Bank bosses are mightier than our Parliamentary institutions.

The CITU calls upon its affiliated unions and state committees to chalk out programmes of mass mobilisation unitedly with other trade unions and mass organisations to fight back these attacks being engineered at the instance of the IMF/World Bank bosses and Indian big business and force the govt. to retrace its steps.

BJP Rally Flops

The much trumpeted BJP rally on February 25 at Boat club turned out to be a damp squib. Instead of 'lakhs of people,' not a single person could enter the Boat Club.

Budget will Hit Indian Industries and the Common People

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

The Budget for the year 1993-94 presented by Dr. Manmohan Singh in the parliament today will result in flooding the Indian economy of foreign goods at dumped prices and adversely affect the Indian industries.

The Heavy Engineering, steel and chemical industries will be adversely affected while the petroleum prices will go up substantially.

The convertibility of the rupee will make the foreign exchange costlier and the value of rupee in international market will further sharp decline.

The advanced capitalist countries which are facing recession will greatly benefit from this budget who were pressing Govt of India to open up Indian market more for the foreign goods. The tax holiday of 5 years for the investors in energy sector is only to facilitate the entry of multinationals in this sector. The exports are now being boasted at the cost of domestic consumption. The hand of the World Bank and the IMF is clearly seen in these measures taken by the Government of India.

The provision of Rs. 630 crores for National Renewal Fund only expressed determination of the Government to go ahead with the exit policies which will be resisted by the working class of India.

The policy of disinvestment is further extended to banking sector in order to show less deficit which is only a statistical jugglery.

The workers were expecting acceptance of the proposals recommended by the Tripartite Committee on DA for public sector, removal of ceiling on payment of bonus, enhancement of exemption limit in the income tax and withdrawal of ban on negotiations. However these hopes have been belied.

The Government has refused to introduce Agricultural income tax in order to woo the rural rich. The Budget should be seen in the context of steep rise in prices of steel, coal, sugar, cooking gas, railway fares and freights. It would lead to further inflation and reduction in standard of living of the working masses.

The CITU therefore calls upon the working class to raise their powerful voice by holding demonstration and rallies against this budget. The joint movement against the economic policies of the Govt of India should be further strengthened if we want to build a self-reliant economy in the country.

A Peep into the Bombay Textile Strike

[We are publishing hereunder a review, made by M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU, of a book "The Bombay Textile Strike, 1982-93", by H. Van Wersch University Press 1992.—Ed.]

The strike of two and a lakh textile workers in Bombay during 1982-93 was unique in more than one ways. The colossal mandays lost in this strike were not yet officially calculated but admittedly it was the largest ever strike action organised in India so far. Though it commenced on 18th January 1992 it was never called off while according to official sources it ended in August 1983. The strike was 100 per cent success despite opposition of the recognised union under the Bombay Industrial Relations Act which was a challenge to the very basis of this controversial Act.

Much is written here and there on some aspects of the strike but an attempt to study it in depth was lacking, may be due to reluctance to touch the controversial issues involved in the strike. It was a Dutch anthropologist H. Van Wersch who ventured to traverse 'a territory virtually unknown' to him and did a commendable job in bringing into sharp focus some of the major issues in the strike of this magnitude. "There may not even be another parallel world history", he noted.

The author had to stay in Prabhadevi Chawl for several days to acquaint himself with the living conditions of the workers. He also interviewed 150 workers to get a first hand information about the thinking of the ordinary workers on various issues involved in the strike.

After a general review of the growth of cotton textile industry in India based on the published data, the author has traced the post war developments in Bombay trade union movement, particularly the formation of Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (RMMS), an INTUC affiliated union which was recognised under the BIR Act. The author criticised failure of the union in defending the interests of the workers which led to growing discontent among the workers. He observed that the established non-INTUC unions had been campaigning among the workers on their demands but it was on a lower key. The author has narrated how Datta Samant could get the advantage of the situation and emerged as the champion of the textile workers. The workers were clearly in search of an alternate leadership. "Samant's rise reflects the political state of mind of the workers and explains the disappointment felt in left circles. He broke with bourgeois legalism, without however denouncing bourgeois values."

Though the strike was mainly on the question of bonus and against the agreement signed by the RMMS issues like HRA, leave travel allowance, annual increment, additional leave facilities and regularisation of the Badli workers were also attached to it a later. The conduct of the strike which was illegal under the BIR Act raised several questions about the character of the law itself. Though Datta Samant challenged the recognition of the union under that law, the author noted, "It protected the rights of the representative union to such an extent that it appeared to virtually impossible to dislodge union once it gained the status of representative union."

He found that "the present numerical strength of the Sangh (RMMS) is not based on love, but on fear." As a matter of fact the author complained that he could not find sufficient workers for the interviews because the workers were afraid to displease the Sangh". The Government as well as Mill owners Association, observed Wersch, were all out protecting the RMMS in return for a lukewarm policy on workers' demands.

The study deals with the much talked about problem of violence resorted to by Maharashtra Girni Kamgar Union (MGKV) formed by Datta Samant. Though the author criticised Samant for his arbitrary and individualist functioning, he found that the number of murders credited to MGKV was "wholly baseless. "He observed that the strike was nearly total for the first six months with full support of the workers. In a latter period the author noted that "violence was resorted to by the Sangh and that the police colluded with the mill owners in forcing the workers to resume work." (P. 236)

Despite the prolonged character of the strike for about 18.5 months the demands of the workers could not be achieved and the strike fizzled out. The author blamed Samant for not rettling the strike when he was riding on a popular wave. However after survey the author noted that, "only a minority of the workers blamed Samant for its disastrous results.

The Bombay mill owners took full advantage of the defeat of the strike. Wersch estimated that about 75 thousand workers lost their jobs, while the unilateral increased workload was imposed on the workers resuming duty. They further resorted to introduction of modernisation without much resistance from the workers. Manchal Kotwal, former HMS leader and Chairman of one of the Committee appointed by the Govt. of Maharashtra to enquire problems of textile workers told the author: "I

feel that one day they (the textile tycoons) will raise a statue of Dr. Samant for rescuing the textile industry."

The uncharitable remarks of Kotwal go too far to analyse the strike. The discontent among the textile workers was expressed through a longdrawn struggle. It was suppressed by the ganging of the recognised union, the mill owners and the state power. The issues raised by the strike still remained unresolved. History will alone show how non-RMMS unions will launch movement to take up these problems once again.

The 5 case studies presented by the author gives insight to the thinking of the workers from time to time during the strike period.

The author had difficulties in understanding Indian conditions. Badli workers was considered by him merely as a casual worker, ignoring his role as a substitute to a permanent worker. The translation for 'Savakers' has been made as business class. Despite such weakness the author has done his best to understand the Indian conditions.

The efforts of Wersch will be properly rewarded if the trade unions in Bombay go into the strike in further depth and draw proper lessons for posterity.

(From page 24)

the pressure to accept GATT proposals.

Prof. Surindra Patel, former Specialist of UNCTAD analysed how systematically the GATT proposals have been developed as conspiracy to undermine the economy and sovereignty of the third world countries expressed through 'New International Economic Order' which was declared on 1st May incidentally. He mentioned that GATT is the apek of IMF and World Bank and once proposals are accepted, even by changing the national Government one cannot get rid of the tangles of the agreement.

The convention concluded with such a high tone that all delegates unanimously resolved that the proposals of Arthur Dunkel be rejected forthwith. The convention decided that based on the research of the participating experts, a critique of the proposal covering most of the aspects will be prepared. The convention also suggested that mass action against the GATT proposals be initiated. A day will be internationally observed to protest against the Structural Adjustment Programme and GATT proposals. The convention also decided that an international network shall be formed to oppose the proposals and to coordinate mass action programme.

Com. Nilima Roy No More

Comrade Nilima Roy, one of the old Comrade in steel workers' movement breathed her last on 5th February 1993 at New Delhi. She had to undergo bi-pass surgery at Delhi owing to acute heart blockade and could not survive after the operation. She was fifty two.

Com. Nilima Roy played an active role alongwith others since the early stage of trade union movement among the steel workers in Durgapur steel plant and also in organising the women workers in particular. She was among those few women comrades of Durgapur who were instrumental in organising not only the working women but also the general women folk in Durgapur steel township from its nascent stage and rally them in general stream of democratic movement. Particularly during the struggle against semifascist terror in West Bengal in early seventies when the Durgapur witnessed concentrated and concerted attack of the ruling class and its lackeys against the working class movement and democratic people. Com. Nilima was one of the front liners in the said struggle.

Despite failing health Comrade Nilima was all along active in the trade union and women's movement and she was also an active member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) till death. Her death caused great loss in the movement of the steel workers and the working women in particular.

Com. Nilima was survived by her husband Com. Jibon Roy, Secretary of CITU and numerous other comrades of hers.

Com. Nilimas's funeral was held in Durgapur on 6th February where her body was flown ou 5th night itself. Since 6th morning thousands of steel workers and common inhabitants of steel township of Durgapur flocked to the union office and the party office to garland and pay last homage to Com. Nilima. The leadership of Hindustan Steel Employees Unions of DSP & ASP, Steel Workers Federation of India, Contract Workers Union of DSP & ASP, AIDWA unit of Durgapur, Zonal and district leadership of CPI(M), leadership of students and youth organisations and also from AITUC offered last homage to comrade Nilima.

In Delhi also Com. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU Com. Vimal Ranadive, Com. P.K. Ganguly, Com. Kanai Banerjee, Secretaries of CITU, Com. Ranjit Basu, Treasurer Com S. Deb Roye, Com. Parameswar Singh offered garlands/flowers to human remains of Com. Nilima Roy among others. Also Com. Prakash Karat and Sitaram Yechury & Sunil Maitra garlanded the last remains of Com. Nilima on behalf of CPI(M).

HIMACHAL T.U. CLASS

The Himachal state committee of CITU organised a three day T. U. class at Chandigarh from 25th to 27th January 1993. The facilities for holding the class were provided by the Punjab State Committee of CITU. Forty Comrades from all over Himachal participated in the class.

M. K. Pandhe and Balawant Singh took the classes. The topics covered during the class included History of the Indian Trade Union Movement, Political Economy of Capitalism and Task of the Trade Unions in the present period.

A meeting was organised on 26th January in the

compound of Cheema Bhawan to observe the Republic Day. Addressing the rally M. K. Pandhe spoke on the present national situation and warned the working class about the fundamentalist forces in the country who are bent upon to destroy the unity and integrity of the country. He called upon all the secular forces to rally behind Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan to defeat these machinations. He also appealed for strengthening of the struggle against the economic policies of the Govt. of India.

Chandra Shekhar, General Secretary, Punjab State Committee of CITU also spoke on the occasion.

Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers

(Base 1982 = 100)

Centre	Nov,	Dec,	Linking	Belgaum	251	249	—	Varanasi	258	256	5.12
	1992	1992	factor								
				Mercara	237	241	—	Calcutta	246	243	4.74
				Alwaye	231	233	5.19	Darjeeling	224	223	4.55
				Mundakayam	240	247	4.67	Durgapur	251	248	—
				Quilon	243	247	—	Haldia	254	252	—
ALL-INDIA	244	243	4.93	Trivandrum	249	252	—	Howrah	260	265	4.12
Gudur	249	250	4.33	Balaghat	245	241	5.24	Jalpaiguri	226	222	4.16
Guntur	246	246	5.60	Bhilai	220	217	3.49	Raniganj	223	222	4.40
Hyderabad	230	229	5.23	Bhopal	255	260	5.46	Chandigarh	244	242	—
Visakhapatnam	246	247	—	Indore	251	250	5.18	Delhi	258	257	4.97
Warrangal	244	237	—	Jabalpur	259	257	6.41	Pondicherry	269	274	—
Doom-Dooma-				Bombay	260	260	5.12				
Tinasukia	219	218	4.05	Nagpur	256	254	4.99	Additional Series of Labour Bureau			
Guwahati	243	243	—	Nasik	255	250	—	Kothagudem	253	240	3.25
Labac-Silchar	223	222	3.96	Pune	267	265	—	Himachal Pradesh	232	230	3.75
Mariani-Jorhat	236	234	3.95	Sholapur	265	262	5.03	Bhilwara	241	239	3.20
Rangapara-Tezpur	234	235	4.29	Barbil	237	238	5.00	Chindwara	246	247	2.59
Jamshedpur	232	233	4.68	Rourkela	224	224	3.59	Tripura	247	247	4.37
Jharia	223	223	4.63	Amritsar	225	225	5.19	Goa	264	267	3.40
Kodarma	219	218	5.43	Ludhiana	226	226	—				
Monghyr	240	238	5.29	Ajmer	244	242	5.01	Other Series of Labour Bureau			
Noamundi	233	234	4.58	Jaipur	233	233	5.17				
Ranchi-Hatia	243	240	—	Coimbatore	238	241	5.35				
Ahmedabad	244	239	4.78	Coonoor	254	254	4.80	Centre	Base	Mar.	Apr.
Baroda	244	241	—	Madras	248	249	5.05		1990	1990	
Bhavnagar	243	238	4.99	Maduri	256	256	5.27	Ammathi	1960	873	895
Rajkot	240	234	—	Salem	234	238	—	Chickmagalur	1960	887	894
Surat	252	249	—	Tiruchirapally	255	256	—	Kolar Gold Field	1960	910	914
Faridabad	232	230	—	Agra	232	225	—	Gwalior	1960	1022	1025
Yamunanagar	223	222	5.53	Ghaziabad	238	235	—	Sambalpur	—	—	—
Srinagar	240	242	5.47	Kanpur	249	244	4.69	Berhampur	—	—	—
Bangalore	240	241	5.66	Saharanpur	237	237	5.06	Cuttack	—	—	—

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

—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series.

International Convention on People's Approach to GATT Negotiation

Amitava Guha

Delegates from 17 countries arrived at New Delhi to attend an International Convention on People's Approach to GATT Negotiations held on 18-20 February, sponsored by the Working Group for Protection of Indian Patent Law.

The convention was inaugurated by Shri P. N. Haksar, former Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission. 97 speakers in the three days' convention were unequivocal in their deliberations that the proposals of the Director General of GATT will not only affect the third world countries but endanger the people of the developed countries also and therefore should be rejected. It was revealed from the experiences placed by the delegates from different countries that the Structural Adjustment Programme formulated by the World Bank had already severely affected the third world countries. If GATT proposals are added, it will ruin sovereignty of many countries.

Dr Muchkund Dubey, former Foreign Secretary, expressed that the Multilateral Trade Organisation (MTO) proposed by GATT will marginalise UN systems and develop a new regime to control the global economy by the strong developed countries, while the developing countries will take a back stage. MS Myrium Vander Stichele from Belgium said that organisations which have been benefiting the developing countries, like UNCTAD, will become subordinated to MTO while an organisation like UN Commission for Transnational Corporation which have been monitoring the activities of the multinationals are made defunct. Most of the international laws will have to be confined to trade issues. She regretted that most of the negotiators from different countries look after the interest of the industry and there is a very limited system of voting in GATT.

Dr Rajiv Dhawan raised the issue that even the European Community had to take the opinion of their citizens for approving the Maastricht Treaty, but the GATT proposals do not opt for similar process for the signatory nations. Bio-technologist Dr J Ruchanan informed that US considered that the salvation of their deteriorated economic situation depended on biotechnology. They have already invested 60 billion dollars for research in this area. Therefore, they are desperate to monopolise this field and pressurising GATT to enforce patent in biotechnology. Explaining the implications, Dr Upendra Baxi, Vice Chancellor of Delhi University

told that the proposals on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) will not only take away the sovereignty but endanger the fundamental human rights also. Dr Carlos Correa of Argentina speaking in the same tune expressed that the proposals have been made under the threat of economic sanction mostly by USA.

In contrast, Dr A V Ganeshan, Chief Negotiator in GATT from India was speaking mostly in favour of protection of IPR. He argued that the protection is mainly needed to encourage inventions. But he has agreed that GATT proposals will push up the prices of drugs and may adversely affect national drug companies. Trade union leaders and political leaders like A B Bardhan, Indrajit Gupta, M A Baby, Prakash Karat also criticised the hesitancy of the Government in taking people's opinion in respect of rejecting the GATT proposals. Prakash Karat, Member of the CPI(M) Polit Bureau said that India has deviated from maintaining its essential role as the leader of the non-aligned countries and was surrendering to the terms of IMF-World Bank. The government had already planned to demolish the public sector and was secretly negotiating for collaboration ventures in the insurance sector. But the so called reforms envisaged by Narsimha Rao Government are already in deep trouble. Demand for Joint Parliamentary Committee for discussion on GATT proposals shall again be raised. He stressed that all concerned should work out for a popular resistance against the economic policy and

(Cont'd on page 22)

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