

CITU

The Force of Working Class

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

TENTH CONFERENCE

COM. VIMAL RANADIVE NAGAR

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THE WORKING CLASS

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B T RANADIVE BHAWAN INAUGURATED

It was a historic day on 7th December, 2000 for the trade unions and their workers when Jyoti Basu, vice-president CITU, inaugurated the new CITU headquarters, the B T Ranadive Bhawan, at New Delhi. The impressively constructed new building has facilities for training, research and development. Speaking at the very largely-attended function, Jyoti Basu said that it was indeed a joy for him to inaugurate the new building named after Comrade B. T. Ranadive who was the founder president of the CITU. Fondly referring to BTR, Jyoti Basu said that it had been his dream to see India as a sound socio- economic socialistic society, free from inequalities. Even before independence, BTR had been involved with the development of the trade unions and bringing together workers so that they could fight for their rights, including the unorganised sector and women. Many many years ago, Jyoti Basu recalled BTR had given him the advice of always retaining his link with the trade union movement, which he had followed till date. It was announced that Jyoti Basu had agreed to continue to be the Vice- President of CITU.

Exposing the devious designs of the BJP and its communal agenda, Jyoti Basu pointed out that this will cause conflicts and great harm to the working class. The BJP government was bent upon globalisation and liberalisation at the expense of the workers, and dismembering India at the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank. Even the UN report had exposed that the World Bank had acted ONLY in the interests of developed nations at the expense of the developing countries.

Critical of the economic policies of the government, he pointed out that at present there was four crore tonnes of foodgrain rotting in the godowns of the FCI while the poor did not have enough to eat. Was this acceptable?

Jyoti Basu emphasised that he would like to see workers united in the struggle for economic prosperity. The BTR Bhawan must become a center for organising the working class movement to shape the government's policy towards a sound nation.

Jyoti Basu then unveiled a bronze bust of B T Ranadive which had been sculptured by Deba Brata Chakaraborty, a well-known sculptor from Calcutta.

Also addressing the gathering, CITU President E Balanandan observed that money for the building was collected in small contributions from workers who had donated from their own salaries. The building will be a reminder of the hard work and vision of B T Ranadive, as his goals are yet to be fully realised.

One of the BTR's dreams was to have a training center for workers in trade union movement. This he said will now come true, as the BTR Bhawan will house a permanent Trade Union School.

Samar Mukherjee, Chairman of the BTR Memorial Trust, stated how it had taken a great effort to bring up the building which will be open to all workers irrespective of their affiliation. This will be a center for trade union research, as so far, no such work was being done at the trade union level. The Bhavan would also house a big library.

M K Pandhe, general secretary, CITU, stated that this governemnt had declared several lakhs workers surplus, whom they want to get rid off and increase unemployment. In the manifesto of the BJP they had declared that they would create a crore jobs every year, but so far the BJP led NDA Government had reduced crores of jobs and job-potential with their policy leading to shutting down sale of PSUs, widespread closures and sickness.

Members of a number of countries' embassy were present and so was the director of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) who presented a set of books for the library. A large number of organisations - CPi, AIKS, SFI, DYFI, AIDWA, JANAM and a number of trade unions were represented at the function by their leaders.

(see pictures on page 14-15)

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EDITORIAL

THE SLIPPING MASK AND DEEPENING CONSPIRACY

The Lok Sabha, after adjourning without business for several days, ultimately debated and voted on a resolution that required the Prime Minister to drop three of his Cabinet colleagues, who face charges in the Babri Masjid demolition case. A similar resolution was debated in the Rajya Sabha as well.

The two Houses of Parliament handed down two different decisions on the same issue, depending on the arithmetic between the ruling coalition and the opposition.

But, what is a matter of serious concern for the nation and the working class is the ominous portents of the Prime Minister's two significant utterances. He first linked the Ram Mandir programme of the Sangh Parivar, assiduously cultivated by the BJP for electoral gains , with the freedom movement and practically sought to legitimize the demolition of the masjid. Secondly, Vajpayee pronounced his preference for building the Ram temple at the very site of the Babri Masjid, cunningly described as the disputed site.

The President of the BJP, Bangaru Laxman, stated that even the Courts of the country could not overlook the fact that a temple stands at the site of babri masjid demolition.

Though the Prime Minister reconciled himself to declare that the NDA Government would follow the NDA programmes only, his reiteration on the very next day that the Ram Mandir Programme on the Masjid site is an expression of national sentiment unmasked the crooked design of the BJP to push through its communal agenda, almost taking its so-called-secular NDA allies for granted.

Actually, there is no other go for BJP. In all fronts of Governance its utter failure is getting pronounced. All round decline in the economy, rising prices and unemployment, closures and sickness are leading to its increasing alienation from people from all walks of life and exposing the real face of the anti-national, anti-people policies of the swadeshi brand Govt. The peasants and workers, students, youth, women and other professionals- voices of anger and protests are being heard from all the segments of society against the disastrous misrule.

Hence, they have to bank much more on their communal card. Hence the desperation to survive through divisive design. And hence the desperate bid to glorify the most heinous crime as national sentiment from the highest seat of governance.

The hidden agenda no more remains hidden. It is coming out with all its fangs and claws.

We must gauge the depth of the conspiracy and cry decisive assault on these conspirators, who are out to break the nation and sell the country.

DEVELOPING RESISTENCE TO U.S. IMPERALISM

E. BALANANDAN

The world capitalist economy, despite claims of boom, is at present faced with a slow down, which according to many economic pandits will burst into another serious crisis. The imperialist driven economic policies pushed through by the IMF-World Bank-WTO trio has resulted in concentration of wealth in a miniscule minority, mainly the transnational corporations based in imperialist countries - especially the United States. It has adversely affected 80% of the world's population.

THE U.S. MILITARY HEGEMONY

It is well known that the American imperialism has, after dismantling of the Soviet Union, assumed the role of single super power. They are out to strengthen their global strategic military build up, ignoring even the concerns of their own NATO allies and of those countries, which were otherwise co-operating with them.

The expansion of NATO, by, bringing more countries under its umbrella, was done by the US in haste, without proper prior consultation with its other partners. They attacked Yugoslavia, without UN sanction, which is a must according to the existing international legal framework. This shows that they have no regard for the United Nations and the international law.

The US imperialists consider themselves above everything, possessing "a sovereignty that overrides the sovereignty of other countries". This is reflected in their attempt to make laws, which applies to the other sovereign countries beyond their territory. For example, the notorious "Helms-Burton law", used for tightening the blockade regulations against Cuba. The latest is a new law "Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act", which enables the US Government to seize the assets of any country that they target. Based on this, an U.S. Court recently decreed that Cuban assets amounting to US$ 58 million be seized and paid to the dependents of those who have been killed during the American aided attack against Cuba, by the so called "Cuban Americans" in February, 1996. This provoked huge protests in Havana. The increasing public outcry, the world over, for the revocation of US blockade - including the UN resolutions - is not only ignored, but the US is also adopting further crude methods of attacks.

In West Asia, the conflict between Palestine and Israel is on the brink of a war. Daily clashes are taking place and Israeli forces are killing dozens of people. Though Clinton administration is posing as a mediator trying to find a solution to the problem, the fact remains that the arrogance of Israeli rulers is arising from the US support.

The US still insists to continue the blockade against Iraq, though the war was over long before. Iraqi people are put to untold hardships by the blockade; they are denied food, medicine, and all the basic necessities of life. Many countries are opposing this inhuman blockade and have started dealing with Iraq.

Though the imperialist collective is acting in unison on many issues, reservations and resentment are on the rise. Many of them are realising the danger of the American policy to dominate the world through their increasing military might, their attempt to militarise space.

We must make the working class of our country aware of the nature of this imperialist offensive and they must be prepared to launch a broad democratic movement against the U.S. imperialism. In this, the CITU should be in the forefront.

DISTURBING FEATURES

The UNCTAD 'World Investment Outlook' has brought out the details of operation of the Transnational Corporations in the world. According to the report, 63,000 Transnational Corporations are working world-wide with 6,90,000 affiliates. Out of these, the largest ones are based almost exclusively in the developed countries. They are

the main leaders of global manufacturing activity. The globalisation is at work through FDI and in particular 'inter regional cross-border mergers'. According to the WTO, the MNCs will be the gainers from the globalisation, while the small and medium enterprises in the developing countries are affected adversely.

From this, it is evident that the MNCs driven world capitalist economy is more for the benefit of the developed countries, especially the United States, than for others. The World Bank analysis itself brings to light the devastating effects of present day capitalistic development.

INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

The World Bank Report (2000-2001) on poverty, stated that out of the world's population of 600 crores, 280 crores, i.e. almost 50%, are living on less than 2 dollars a day and 120 crores on less than a dollar.

The "jobless growth" model, at work in the developed countries, has drastically reduced the complement of work force and unemployment rate is all time high. Official data provided about this is not giving the correct picture. The OECD average of unemployment is well above 8%. Reduction of wages and welfare amenities, curtailing of trade union rights etc. has become the order of the day. People living below the poverty line in the developing countries are also on the increase.

Though economic growth is high in the USA, it is not reflected in the workers' income. Their real wages have not shown any improvement in the last one-decade, while salaries and incomes of the Chief Executives and the billionaires are booming to sky-high levels.

The World Labour Report 2000, published by the ILO, is a serious indictment of the economic policies implemented by the national Governments, under the dictates of the World Bank and IMF. The report says that of the 150 million people, who are unemployed in the world, 75% do not have any form of unemployment protection. The number of people living in extreme poverty has increased by 200 million in just last five years. 850 million people work less than they want and are earning less than a living wage. Poverty is the major factor driving 250 million children to the labour market.

A DIFFERENT SCENARIO

The scenario in the People's Republic of China is different. During the last two decades, the per capita income in China in real terms increased four times. The annual growth rate has been above 10%, which is more than any other country in the world. Some US economists estimate that China will overtake the United States, with the present rate of economic growth in per capita income, in three decades. This idea itself is a jolt to those who talk of superiority of the capital system.

Another shining example is the small country of Cuba. In spite of the heinous blockade against Cuba by the United States, Cuba is upholding socialism with marvelous determination. Com. Fidel Castro, the tallest living revolutionary of our times, has succeeded in mobilising tremendous public opinion against the US blockade, including among the people of America.

DEVELOPING RESISTANCE

A 13 days general strike, against the privatisation of the public water supply system, forced the Government of Bolivia to cancel privatisation and the American and British companies had to pack up. The protests against oil price hike by truckers and farmers in France, Britain and Europe as a whole are shining examples of increasing resistance. They wanted the Government to reduce taxes on fuel so as to lower the prices. The French and Italian Governments had to yield to the demands of the agitating farmers and truckers.

The AFL-CIO in the United States is also being drawn into serious struggles against closures and downsizing of industries. About 10,000 Korean workers had a strike against electricity privatisation. In different countries, small and big, developing as well as under developing, protest strike actions are developing against curtailing of privileges enjoyed by the workers.

IN OUR COUNTRY

In sum, the mood of the workers is changing, though slowly.

The Govt. of India is engaged in implementing the structural adjustment programme dictated by the World Bank and IMF. The

ruinous effects of these policies are affecting not only the working class as a whole, but also the peasantry in a serious way - forcing many of them to commit suicide in different parts of the country.

The trade unions of the country today are in ferment. Protest strikes in different industries, which are being privatised, are on the increase. Though it is a welcome feature, they are not adequate to reverse the Government's policies. However, the mood of the working class has transformed into taking up the challenge, through unified serious actions.

The Indian economy is showing symptoms of slow growth affecting all sectors. The foreign exchange liability is on the increase, because of adverse trade balance. The rising oil prices and continuously depreciating rupee value is further aggravating the situation. The Finance Minister is still boasting that by the end of the year the economy will be on the rails; but nobody, including his own admirers, takes this seriously.

The Indian monopoly houses are vocal in demanding that the Government should take speedy measures to implement the second generation of the structural reforms. They demand that the process of disinvestment should be speeded up; all subsidies to be slashed; all the laws that restrict free play of foreign capital are to be removed; immediate liberalisation of labour laws to scuttle the labour resistance, etc. The only concern for them seems to be the grabbing of the wealth of the public sector in partnership with multinational capital. They are the least worried about the serious consequences of it on our own industrial development, the difficulties being faced by the entire small scale sector, besides the impact on the peasantry, the working class and large majority of the Indian population.

In our country, the workers in different industries are moving unitedly to face this offensive through industrial actions, which is spreading slowly, but concerted and effective joint actions are still lacking.

The peasantry throughout the country is moving ahead to oppose these policies of the Government. The small-scale industrialists throughout the country are in a fighting spirit against these policies. The unemployed youth, finding no opening or opportunity for getting employment, are in great distress. Thus, a new situation is developing in the country, leading to a total united assault against the World Bank dictated policies of the Government of India. The CITU must take all necessary steps to unify all sections in this fight.

We have to make an all-out effort to unify the workers and the peasantry, together with all other sections for a determined battle to reverse these policies of the Government.

COMMUNAL DANGER

The aggressive communal agenda, being pursued by the BJP Government, dividing the people on the basis of religious beliefs, is weakening the unity of the country. The secular democratic foundation of our Constitution is also in danger. The country never faced such a serious situation since independence.

The Hindu Communalism, which was being pushed through by the BJP and the RSS, is now coming to a new turn using their Governmental positions. The Prime Minister, Vajpayee, has now openly come out in favour of construction of Ram temple at the disputed site at Ayodhya, where the Babri Mazjid was demolished 8 years ago. The Prime Minister's refusal to take action against the Ministers, who face charge sheets for their involvement in Babri-Mazjid demolition. The Prime Minister's statement in this regard was contrary to the facts and the findings of the CBI and of the Courts. It is, therefore, clear that he is trying to push through the RSS agenda using the Governmental lever. Therefore, the Working class of the country should be mobilised against these dangerous policies of the Vajpayee Government in implementing the RSS agenda. The goal of CITU is to unify our class for intensifying the class struggle, which is a task yet to be realised. We, therefore, have to pledge ourselves that we will try our best to unify the class and to further strengthen the CITU, within the shortest time frame possible.

(Excerpts from address to the CITU Conference)

SURGING TIDE OF INTENSIFIED STRUGGLES

Last three years have witnessed intensification of working class movements both in the international arena as well as inside our country. It is being distinctly noted that the focus has shifted further from conventional issue based movements towards a resistance battle against the perils of globalisation. Seattle fiasco, where the WTO meet had to be aborted because of stiff internal resistance against globalisation that snow-balled in the United States itself, remains a land mark movement that set pace for such movements elsewhere all the world over. Today, demonstrations against WTO have become a common feature, be it in Geneva, Bangkok or Melbourne.

In our country also, the struggles against globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation are taking precedence over other struggles on local or other industry specific issues. This shifting of focus is a direct fall-out of the policies followed by the Government of India, which went for more expeditious and blatantly anti-national drive for privatisation and selling of country's assets, Overzealous drive to allow MNCs to enter our financial, insurance and banking sectors had evoked a wave of reaction among the working people, which is helping to build greater unity in action among the unions and organisations, which have not been in the picture before.

COUNTRY WIDE STRIKES

After the second BJP-led Government was installed in March '98, they announced their resolve to carryout the so-called economic reforms with greater speed. It was decided by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions in April '98 to revitalise the NPMO to face the challenges posed by the Vajpayee Government. The 5 central trade unions also met together to take stock of the situation and to consider possibilities to strengthen united movements.

The country-wide two general strikes organised by the NPMO, one on 11th December 1998 and the other one on 11th May, 2000 have created history in post-independence India. They received massive response all over the country, particularly because the call was given by mass organisations. These general strikes assumed great significance because the major issues were against economic policies like privatisation, disinvestment, surrender to foreign multinationals, liberalisation of imports at the cost of domestic industry and agriculture, as well as the issues of unemployment and so on. The intensive countrywide campaign for these general strikes through circulation of printed pamphlets, documents, coupled with other mass actions like State wise, area wise demonstrations, dharnas, mass meetings created such an impact that as many as 14 political parties supported the strike which saw a total bandh like situation in 8 States and partial bandh in many other States. A remarkable feature was that on 11th December strike in 1998, 60 lakh State Govt. employees, defence establishment employees and a good section of Central Govt. employees joined the strike. A large number of unions affiliated to INTUC and BMS also had joined the strike. West Bengal unit of INTUC had joined the strike openly defying the directive from their all India leadership

The 11th May, 2000 general strike has seen even wider and higher participation by all sections of agricultural and industrial workers, employees and people from other professions like lawyers, even small scale industrialists, plantation owners etc. In some establishments, managerial staff also participated, though tacitly. All these manifested the people's anger and denouncement of NDA Govt's economic policies. Through these actions the NPMO has become a powerful rallying point of all the forces opposed to the Govt policies. NPMO ranks are being joined by new forces, sufferers of the economic policies, every day.

AGAINST SECOND GENERATION REFORMS

After NDA's return to power in October 1999, in the name of second-generation reforms, the drive for dismantling Public Sector Units, Insurance and Banking institutions has been intensified. As a

result, the struggle by the workers and employees in these sectors has also peaked to a militant height. The strike by the PSU workers on 2nd February, 2000, at the call of Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU), is the most successful one, in terms of its coverage and intensity, cutting across trade union affiliations. The organising of repeated strikes by Insurance and Bank employees & officers against privatisation and entry of foreign MNC's, is the high water mark of the struggle for national sovereignty in financial sector. The signature campaign by Insurance employees and PSU employees to President of India have created greater awareness among the people about the efficacy and predominant role played by them.

This period has witnessed a remarkable spate of solidarity struggles by other sections of people, in specific locations, against closure, privatisation and disinvestment. The movements around steel plants like IISCO, Vizag, Salem, Durgapur, Rourkela, around other PSU's like MAMC, BOGL, TAFCO, IDPL, Fertiliser plants, textile units, coal fields, gold mine, petrochemical units, cement units etc., to name a few. The canard and dis-information campaign by the ruling classes against public enterprises and their employees, which had some impact on peoples mind, is gradually getting cleared, after seeing the real design and purpose of privatisation. But, much more is required to be done as yet in this regard.

IN PRIVATE SECTOR ALSO

The struggles in private sector units also have grown to unprecedented heights, manifesting the militant resolve of the working class not to be cowed down by employers' offensives. Even in the States, where democratic movement is otherwise weak, working class struggles have asserted itself in a noticeable manner.

* The three months long strike of the workers in Naptha Jhakri Power project in Himachal, braving heavy repression by the administration, the strike of the project workers in Maulana Hydel project and the continuous strike by Birla Textile Workers in Himachal are also examples of such militant struggles. The struggle of the industrial workers in and around Bhopal against the mill-workers' bid to go for massive retrenchment in collusion with local administration and replace the permanent workers by contract workers, have drawn, the support of the local people in a big way. The struggle against mass-scale retrenchment of daily-rate workers by Madhya Pradesh led by CITU is still continuing.

* The workers of PEPSICO in Kanpur have unitedly been fighting against the MNC employer's undeclared lockout of the factory and their effort to crush the CITU union there. The textile workers at Kanpur have also fought many battles on the street.

* The workers of Maruti Udyog are also unitedly fighting the Japanese Management's ploy to debar the workers from entering into the factory, unless they give an undertaking of not to go for any agitation.

* The textile workers at Panipat went on an united strike for several days in November 2000 to compel the factory owners to maintain workers' registers, issue of identify cards and increase the wages under leadership of CITU. The brick kiln workers in Haryana went on various forms of state wide agitation including month long strike under the leadership of CITU braving arrests and repression and ultimately achieved substantial wage rise.

* In the southern part of the country, the plantation sector in Tamilnadu witnessed an upsurge with the workers and small plantation workers raising their voice against unrestricted import of tealeaves. The industrial sectors in Tamilnadu, Karnataka, AP and Kerala also witnessed numerous industry-based actions during this period. In the unorganised sector in Bengal, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and other regions, there had been a massive upsurge from time to time against the oppression of the employers.

STRUGGLES BY ALL SECTIONS

In the last two years, there have been umpteen numbers of strikes by State Government employees, P&T employees, nurses and other para-medical staff, sometimes lingering for months, on the question of wages and other conditions of service. Special mention is to be made about the strike by electricity employees all over the country, in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in particular, who have fought valiantly against privatisation of power industry. The Port and Dock workers have also led heroic battles with

unprecedented unity that kept the entire port and dock services paralysed for 5 days.

The struggle of the telecommunication employees against corporatisation, the repeated struggles of insurance employees against privatisation which continued even after adoption of the Bill in Parliament, the strike struggles of Bank employees against the privatisation of banking industry, the struggle of NTC and IDPL workers for revival of industry are some of the notable struggles in this period. And last but not least, the historic three days' strike by the coal miners all over the country on 20-22 November 2000, by single-handed effort of the CITU, which has drawn out six lakh coal workers in action, despite opposition by all other major trade unions.

The basic feature of the struggles during this period is that even in the areas, where the trade union movement is weaker, workers of both organised and unorganised sectors demonstrated their anger against the mounting offensives of the Govt-employers nexus and desperate violation of all labour legislations. The spontaneous upsurge of the workers of the small scale industrial units in Delhi along with their owners, united road-blockades staged by them for days together in November 2000, against the order for closure and ban of the operation of those industrial units in Delhi, also manifests the depth of discontent against the anti-worker moves of the Govt., even among those who could not yet be unionised. Despite strong repressive actions by the Government and the employers, expression of such anger of the mass of the workers, through numerous spontaneous actions, is a pointer to the rising potential of a much bigger militant countrywide working class action, provided the trade union movement takes proper initiative to reach and organise them in a planned manner. And in fact, this is the urgent need of the hour.

MAINSTREAM THE STRUGGLES

At this juncture, all India and local struggles are on a higher curve, and the common peoples resentment is growing daily. But one thing has to be noted that in spite of commendable efforts made by the NPMO, CPSTU and other all India organisations, we are still way behind in co-coordinating all these movements and channelise them into a powerful force of mass action that can effectively challenge and change the Government policies.

Generally speaking, these movements have remained somewhat disjointed and sporadic. In some cases follow up actions were either absent or feeble. It is worrisome that in some places, the will to carry on with the struggle, is getting weak. We will have to overcome this weakness. On the other hand, the situation gives a different picture, where workers and employees from others' fold are joining our ranks and their struggles are intensifying. Comrades, let us, therefore, discuss how we can develop a powerful mass movement with sufficient strength that can stop de-industrialisation of our country and degradation of the lives of working people.

(Excerpts from the Report to the CITU Conference)

CITU TENTH CONFERENCE

DISCUSSIONS IN COMMISSIONS

The Tenth conference of the CITU devoted a whole day on 30th December 2000 for in-depth discussions in Commissions. Where papers was presented on the following seven topics:

(i) Imperialist Ideological Offensives
(iv)Casteism and Social Oppression: Our Tasks
(ii)Imperialist Economic Offensives
(v)Working Women : A Class Perspective
(iii)Fight against Communalism: Tasks of the Trade Unions
(vi)Informal Sector and challenges before the Trade Union movement
(vii) Unemployment and Trade Union Initiative

CITU TENTH CONFERENCE

TASKS ON ORGANISATION

The Report on Organisation, better known as the Bhubaneswar Document, identified the weaknesses and shortcomings of the CITU organisation and formulated tasks for overcoming them.

Greatly concerned about the tasks remaining largely unimplemented and the weaknesses and shortcomings persisting,the Ghaziabad session of the CITU General Council decided to conduct a three-day workshop on organisation.

The workshop held at New Delhi on 13-15 March 2000, worked out concrete steps to be initiated for implementation of the tasks. A detailed report on the workshop was presented at the General Council meeting held at Kozhikode on 20-22 April 2000. The General Council, after a round of discussion, directed the Secretariat to prepare the final document.

IMMEDIATE TASKS

As directed by the General Council, the CITU Secretariat, has worked out the following immediate tasks. The State Committees and federations must hold extended meetings of their committees, preferably workshops in consultation with the Centre, to work out plan for implementing these immediate tasks. Attempt should be made to complete the process before the 10th conference of CITU.

FOR THE CENTRE

1. To hold a full-fledged discussion on the Centre's responsibility in regard to implementation of Bhubaneshwar Document in the CITU organisation as a whole.
2. Revival of the system of daily meetings, sharing information, regular exchange of views etc to ensure collective functioning, with proper role of the General Secretary as a coordinator and team leader, regular check up on the work of the Centre and individual comrade at the Centre.
3. Exercise on identification of "priority" areas for development and expansion in consultation with concerned State Committees. To start with one or two states should be selected for the purpose.
4. Similarly one or two Hindi belt states should be selected for special attention.
5. The education sub-committee may if necessary be reconstituted, the syllabus must be finalised and lecture notes prepared before the 10th conference. Plan for organising a system for education should also be finalised immediately after the conference.
6. Suitable machinery should be evolved for regular monitoring the implementation of organisational tasks.

FOR THE STATES

1. Several States did not prepare a review report in the light of the Report on Organisation for a detailed discussion on how to implement the tasks laid down there in. The defaulting State Committees must immediately undertake the work.
2. Those States, which had organised discussion and took initial steps to implement the tasks should organise in consultation with the Centre, review meetings or workshops to assess the present position and work out steps for progressive implementation of all organisational tasks.
3. Only in a few advanced states there are functioning State centres. No improvement in organisation and functioning in the state is possible without a functioning state centre.

For the States, which do not have a functioning State centre, the most important immediate task will be to take steps for setting up such centre.

4. While the State level workshops will of course identify priority area/industry for expansion, a detailed review of State level movements and those conducted by major unions should be undertaken in a following extended State Committee meeting.
5. To ensure submission of annual returns and affiliation fee in proper time is a regular priority task of the State Committees.

FOR THE FEDERATIONS

1. The Federations are also to organise workshops adopt plans for membership expansion and expansion to new areas/unity.
2. Ensure proper functioning of the Federation committee and Centre
3. Develop proper mechanism for coordination with State

Committees for joint effort for development of State level activity and organisation.

DEMOCRATIC FUNCTIONING

1. Task for the Centre has been enlisted above

2. One major aspect of democratic functioning as discussed in the earlier documents and also in the workshop is involvement of ordinary members and general workers. The problems will of course be discussed in the State and federation workshop. To start with at least some pilot projects involving some major unions/industry must be taken immediately. Collaboration between State Committees and federation leadership will be helpful.

3. All unions must make it a regular practice to complete their conferences according to the periodicity prescribed in their respective union constitutions. If the periodicity is not otherwise prescribed, the unions must complete their conferences before every all India conference of the CITU. The State Committees must ensure this and Federations also should cooperate.

4. Regular meetings of the State Committees (at least once in two months every year) and more frequent meetings of the State Secretariat have to be ensured. Regular meetings of Federation committees must also be ensured. Meetings must be prepared with written reports as stipulated in the documents.

WORKING WOMEN

1. All the State Committees should identify the priority areas/ industries with large number of working women.

2. Allot cadre, preferably women, for work among working women, at the State Centre, and wherever possible, at district level. One office bearer of the State Committee, functioning from the State centre, to be given the responsibility of this work.

3. State Committees should review the work among working women periodically.

4. The State Committees should ensure that necessary funds are provided for the activities among working women.

5. State Co-ordination Committees to be formed immediately, wherever they are not formed; they should be mode functional where they exist, but are not active.

6. The All India and state centres should regularly check up the implementation of the decisions.

7. Special attention should be paid to identify and train cadres.

EDUCATION ETC.

1. Primary responsibility lies with the Centre. Centre's main tasks in this regard have already been noted.

2. Centre has planned publication of a number of pamphlets on various issues related to the policy of liberalisation and globalisation, etc. The remaining pamphlets must be brought out early.

3. State and Federation committees should make serious effort for their sale on large scale and translate them in local languages, publish own pamphlets on state and industry specific issues.

4. Organise popular lectures on all-important issues.

Implementation of the tasks brooks no delay. For a whole decade the working class in India has been carrying on relentless struggle against the offensive launched by the imperialist forces and the Indian ruling classes in the name of the new economic policy, the policy of liberalisation and globalisation and CITU has played the most significant role. The attack is intensifying with every passing day communalism is being increasingly used along with other traditional weapons to disrupt the struggle. On the other hand, however, the beginning of the current year witnesses definite symptoms of a fresh upswing in the working class movement. The recent strike wave in the country, and wider participation of the workers and other toiling people in 11th May general strike are clear indications of this trend. The situation demands strenuous efforts on the part of the trade unions to carry forward the struggle to its logical end by properly harnessing and consolidating the new forces that are coming up to join the struggle. The CITU will have to play the most important role. But, the CITU cannot play its historic role effectively unless it overcomes all its weaknesses and shortcomings and strengthens the organisation. Here lies the paramount importance of implementing the Report on Organisation. There is no doubt the CITU at all levels will adequately respond to this urgent need of the hour.

CITU TENTH CONFERENCE:

OUR IMMEDIATE TASKS OUTLINED

The fast changing situation in the country is becoming more and more favourable to us. The day-to-day experience is convincing the working class and the people of India about the dangerous consequences of the policies of globalisation. Even the middle class employees are coming in the vortex of struggle owing to accumulated discontent among them.

The NDA Government's high and mighty attitude towards these struggles, in an effort to please the World Bank-IMF bosses, is making the workers more determined to fight the Government policies. The struggles of electricity, telecom, postal, bank and insurance employees, the coal miners, the State Government employees and numerous struggles in various industries all over the country, braving onslaughts and repression, are just portents of rising curve of working class struggles.

The CITU has to play an important role in the forthcoming struggles. We should mark our presence, not only through solidarity actions, but also by being a part of these struggles. Without taking firm steps to overcome our organisational weaknesses at all levels, our resolve to play a leading role in these struggles will not fructify. The indifference in overcoming our weaknesses must be ended without any further delay. Mere ritualistic discussion and expression of lip-sympathy to Bhubaneswar document and organisational workshop conclusions, will not take us too far. The CITU Centre will have to monitor implementation of these decisions, so that we can discharge our duties in a time bound framework. Any negligence on our part in this regard will cost us very dearly.

Carrying on consistent struggle against communalism and the naïve design of the communal and divisive forces to disrupt the unity of the working class and toiling people is also a major task before us. This struggle is a continuous one and must be carried out along with other activities simultaneously.

The growing challenge to class unity of the workers from the casteist forces needs to be countered, keeping in mind our commitment to uphold social justice and end social oppression.

We will have to pay more attention to our work among the unorganised sector and strengthen our organisation among the most neglected segment of our class.

We have to implement the tasks on the working women's front, as proposed in our documents, and see that we must accelerate our progress in this sector.(see Box) With growing unemployment in the country, we can ignore our responsibility in this regard, only at great peril. Our campaign for right to work as a fundamental right must be pursued seriously by us, so that we can mobilise the youth in our movement, to fight for generation of more jobs in the economy.

We must develop close fraternal ties with the kisan sabha and agricultural workers' union and take expeditious steps to build an active worker peasant alliance. It is only through coordinated struggles that such an alliance can be built. Our dialogue with the leadership of AIKS and AIAWU should be pursued continuously. Our fraternal relations with organisations of women, students and youth should be developed further, so that solidarity actions and coordinated moves can help in strengthening of nationwide direct mass action programmes.

Cadre building and their education should be given more priority at all levels in our day-to-day activities. In our new premises, we will have sufficient infrastructure to undertake these activities. Thousands of workers, who have come nearer to us in the recent struggles, should be involved in educational activities. Training of teachers will have to be organised on a priority basis to fulfill the task.

We have to improve the quality of our journals and increase their circulation, so that our message and policies reach larger and

larger sections of the working class. Making these journals financially self-sufficient should be given special emphasis.

We have not been able to fulfill the quota of 40-lakh membership during the last 3 years. Our weakness in the matter is most glaring. Let all the State Committees and industry-wise Federations decide on appropriate targets, so that the 40-lakh membership can be fulfilled in the next three years.

Our growing international relations must be developed further to widen the worldwide struggle against globalisation. Special emphasis should be given to our solidarity actions with the TU organisations in SAARC and other Asian countries, so that we can play a more important role in regional cooperation.

The present situation all around has thrown up innumerable challenges, as well as a great opportunity. The overzealous and desperate pursuit of the Fund/Bank dictated economic policy has posed a serious threat, not only to our economic sovereignty but also to the democratic structure and rights of the workers and common people. The dangerous pursuit of the communal agenda by the Sangh Parivar and the Government drive for saffronisation of administration and education and social institutions, has brought to the surface the imminent threat to the secular fabric of the society and unity and integrity of the country and the people.

On the other hand, the fast rising discontent and anger against the misrule of the BJP led Govt is expressing itself in various ways - through numerous sectoral struggles all over the country, in all segments of the society and with surging spontaneity. We must take up these challenges and convert them into an opportunity to channelise the spontaneous expression of discontent of the common people into organised countrywide mass actions against the anti-people and anti-national policies. We should, thus, seize the initiative to force the reversal of the disastrous policies, defeat the communal, divisive and disruptive forces to save the country from disaster, to defend the people from economic and social onslaughts.

TASKS ON WORKING WOMEN'S FRONT

The Sixth All India Conference of Working Women was held on 16-17 September 2000 at Haldia. The report adopted by the working women's conference laid out certain suggestions and tasks regarding our work on this front..

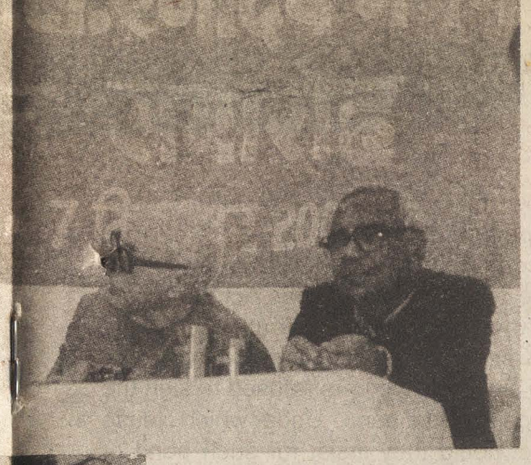
Taking into consideration the suggestions made by the All India Conference of Working Women, the Tenth All India Conference of CITU enjoined

The following tasks, calling upon all the State Committees and Industry wise federations to implement them:

* All the State committees should allot a full timer, preferably a woman, for the work among working women; If this is not immediately feasible, a part timer at least should be given the responsibility of the work in this front.
* An office bearer of the CITU State Committee should be given the responsibility of the work among working women.
* All the affiliated unions/ industrial federations with large number of women should form women's sub committees. The State Committees should identify the unions/federations in the State where such sub committees can be formed by mid-2001 and formation of sub committees be completed by end-2001.
* All State committees should conduct exclusive trade union training classes for working women activists - at the State level and at district levels, after assessing the need, at regular intervals.
* An All India campaign should be conducted on the three major issues of workingwomen - Equal wages, Maternity benefit and Sexual harassment- culminating in a mass mobilisation of working women in Delhi in the first half of 2001.
* Com Vimaldi's birthday to be observed every year by organising a memorial lecture on one important issue concerning workingwomen.
* The CITU Secretariat should discuss and finalise the draft working paper on home-based workers by June, 2001; An extended meeting of the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women to be held to discuss the paper; thereafter the State Committees to take up a campaign programme on the issues of home-based workers and decide priorities of organising them.















Com Jyoti Basu Inaugurating BTR Bhawan 7 December 2000

DESIGN OF SLAVERY WILL NOT PASS

TAPAN SEN

Obstinacy should have a limit ! The employers' lobby in the country has crossed all limit demanding total enslavement of labour statedly to ensure employment generation, but actually to meet their insatiable thirst for profit at the cost of labour.

In the liberalised economic scenario, every day they are receiving a big assault from the foreign companies and owing to boundless import of foreign products on Indian soil and getting marginalized gradually in Indian market. They are not in a position to hit back at their rivals from abroad, nor they are potent enough to ask for retuning the policies of the servile Govt to give them a level playing field. And such impotence of theirs has found expression in their mad cry for deregulation of labour laws.

The full page advertisement in the National dailies on 15th and 16th December 2000 by Indian Chamber of Commerce appealed to Prime Minister to 1) Remove all legislative hurdles for contract employment and allow deployment of contract labour everywhere 2) Remove all such clauses from the Industrial Disputes Act which discipline the employers and 3) Put a virtual ban on strike. All these they are proposing to facilitate employment generation.

Hypocrisy has crossed all bounds of shamelessness. And unfortunately such hypocrisy is getting profuse publicity in electronic and print media as wisdom. But the united struggles and trade union views have been blacked out. After all, when class interest is to be protected, propriety and rationality become meaningless to the ruling polity and their patrons.

The Chamber demanded for removal of chapter VB of Industrial Disputes Act to ensure that for closure and retrenchment, employers are not required even to observe even the formality of taking permission from the Govt.

But the Chamber's officials most cunningly suppressed the fact that they are already very much enjoying this facility. Should they reply: of the closed industrial units numbering several lakhs, in how many cases their members have taken prior permission from the Govt ? Not even in one percent cases. Should they reply under which clause of Industrial Disputes Act the Maruti Udyog management at Haryana and that in Pepsico at Kanpur could oust the entire workforce from the job since the workers refused to sign the so called good conduct bond. Under which clause of the ID Act could they insist for such bond of slavery ? The concerned workers were not on strike, but still they were out of the factory gate only because their employers wanted so. No body was prosecuted for such daylight violation of the ID Act. What more facility do you want Mr Indian Chamber ?

The Chamberwallas are also quite innovative in finding many more crooked ways to retrench workers and usurp their dues. One example may be given. The management of the M/s Roto Pump Ltd (plot no 14) of Noida Export Processing Zone (NEPZ) has driven out all the 60 workers, working in the factory since last 10/12 years, from 23-11-2000 without even serving the dismissal/ retrenchment order. As per their record those workers deserted the job and now they were operating with new set of workforce. The mechanism is plain and simple. Those workers of Roto Pump were initially debarred entry in the NEPZ campus itself by the customs officials at the gate under secret instruction of the concerned employer. And bonhomie of the employer and the NEPZ administration was such that the security of the customs deptt at the NEPZ gate are now insisting from the concerned workers for a signed declaration on the employer's proforma that "they were not on work on their own" as a condition for allowing their entry into NEPZ. In this manner the customs authority has thus obediently shouldered the responsibility of illegally retrenching the workers at the behest of the employers in the NEPZ. Same is the situation in all the Export Processing Zones in the country. Further it has become the regular practice for many companies in all the EPZs to just close down after the tax-

holiday period, retrench all the workers and start a new company at the same place with a new set of workers. Only workers stand to lose.

The Chamber demanded removal of all legislative hurdles for contract employment everywhere without any bound. What they are doing now, when the Contract Labour(Regulation &Abolition Act) is very much in existence ? Farming out/outsourcing permanent jobs have now become a regular phenomenon in industries both in public and private sector. The Govt itself is the biggest employer of contract workers in the country. There are plenty of examples where the employers in big industries and those particularly in MNCs in consumer goods and pharmaceutical sector have been getting sizable quantum of their regular production done through contractors, sometimes keeping departmental apparatus idle, which is squarely illegal as per existing statutes. This is going on unbound and unhindered since last one decade. In some Govt institutions, contract workers got regularized by court orders. But hardly any private employer did face such hurdle anywhere although they are the biggest offenders. This is going on unhindered, unbound since last one decade particularly after the onset of liberalisation. Nobody has been punished for such offences, as the offenders and executors are hailing from the same stable.

Can illegality and disrespect towards rule of law go further ? Probably it can go limitless when the enforcement authority— the Govt, surrenders with quadrupadal loyalty to serve the employers by all means. Had such illegality been committed by the workers or their unions, they would have been behind the bar. But the law offender employers are found in break-fast table or dining with the ministers or in Prime Ministerial advisory panels. Now, being given all such blank cheques to defy laws throughout the decade, if not from earlier, how much emoloyment did the Chamber's clan generate ?

As per official figures and also various studies and surveys, growth of employment has been declining although the decade consistently despite all noise of the proponents of liberalisation and despite incidence of strikes remaining much lower than the incidence of closures and lock-outs. And it is the considered observation of the World Employment Report that the deregulation of labour laws has little relations with prospect of employment generation. Thus all noise of employment generation by the coveted Chamber while demanding complete deregulation of labour and its wide circulation in the media is a naïve ploy to befool people.

In the background mounting offensive from the foreign companies, the Indian Chamber along with other employers' organisations has been trying to find ways and means to survive at the cost of labour. They fail to see that they cannot survive through this route. Even if labour laws are dismantled, the benefit will be totally reaped by the MNCs and their relative position will remain unaltered. Rather they should spend more effort for getting at least a level playing field which the Fund/Bank/WTO regime and the servile Govt is denying to them. No doubt, Govt is their ally, but at the same time it is under servility with the MNCs. The paradox is that despite the ferocious onslaught from the employers' lobby with all their fangs and claws, the trade union movement cannot help fighting against the policies of reckless liberalisation of import and boundless concession to foreign capital which is also benefiting the employers lobby to the extent Govt could be compelled to take some corrective measures. The recent raising of customs duties in certain sectors in the background of removal of QR is the outcome of militant involvement of workers and peasants countrywide in the protest actions benefited the employers more.

However, this paradox would continue to remain, and the owners' lobby are not expected to change their attitude much. The onslaught on labour rights woud continue to mount in the coming days particularly after the constitution of Second Commission of Labour by the BJP Govt with predetermined decision to retune the labour laws with the liberalised economic scenario as clearly mentioned in its terms of reference. The same ID Act and the Contract Labour Act are the prime targets for total dismantlement to facilitate total enslavement of labour.

The adversaries have come out with their fangs and claws to disarm the labour. The trade union movement must consolidate itself and keep the powder dry. Design for slavery will not pass.

CONFERENCE OF KERALA STATE CITU

The 8th State Conference of the CITU concluded on December 1 in Alappuzha town, with a massive procession and rally in which nearly one lakh workers from all over Alappuzha District participated. It literally shook the town which more than five decades ago had witnessed the militant uprising of workers of Punnapra-Vayalar against British imperialism and the 'American Model' propounded by Diwan C P Ramaswami Iyyer of erstwhile Travancore.

E Balanandan and M K Pandhe, national President and General Secretary of the CITU, K N Ravindranath and P K Gurudasan, newly elected President and General secretary of the state unit, and C Kannan, outgoing state president moved in front of the mammoth procession in an open jeep. Wave after wave of workers from 12 areas of the district marched behind them, holding high the banner of working class unity.

The election to the 139 - member state committee and 28 - member state executive, including the president and general secretary was unanimous. This unanimous election to the new state committee put at set the malicious, false propaganda let loose for quite some time now and strengthened on the eve of the commencement of the four-day conference, that the factional feud between the CPI (M) and the CITU had widened, and a dogged fight for leadership was imminent in the conference.

CONFERENCE DEBATES

The Alappuzha conference deliberated in detail on the economic policies pursued by the BJP-led government and called upon the working people and other sections of the common masses to defeat the large-scale privatisation being implemented in the telecom, bank and insurance sectors. The conference also urged upon them to raise their voice against rise in the cost of petroleum products, as also to fight the attempt to privatise the oil companies in the public sector.

Another conference resolution, warned against the continuance of agitation nurtured by some vested interests on the Travancore Titanium Products Ltd, Thiruvananthapuram, the only factory in India producing titanium dioxide and wanted that the factory to be opened immediately.

A women's seminar, held alongside the conference, called for united, militant struggles for achieving equality for women in all spheres of life.

The mammoth procession and rally on the concluding day of the conference gave assurance that in days to come, the toiling masses of Alappuzha district will do justice to their glorious revolutionary tradition.

DELHI STATE CITU CONFERENCE

New Delhi, 10-11 December, 2000, the 10th conference of Delhi State CITU was held with the participation of 167 delegates from Delhi, Ghaziabad and Faridabad industrial area.

Com MK Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU inaugurated the conference. In his inaugural speech, while explaining the mounting onslaught on the working class and common people's life and living by the BJP led Govt at the centre and also the disastrous impact of the Liberalisation policies, Pandhe also pointed out to the increasing incidence of spontaneous protest actions against the same by the toiling people all over the country. Even Delhi is no exception to that which witnessed several spontaneous actions by those oraganisation is yet to reach. To organise those large sections of unorganised workforce in Delhi and adjoining area and convert the

upsurge of spontaneity into oragnised statewide action against the disastrous policy regime is the most urgent task before Delhi State CITU, Pandhe emphasised.

The General Secretary's report was placed by S B Bharadwaj which details of activities of State CITU during last three years with self critical evaluation of the success, shortcomings and failures. It was pointed out in the report that although many struggles were conducted in the state during the intervening period on state based issues besides the national level action programmes called by Sponsoring committee, NPMO etc, which has resulted in considerable increase in the influence of CITU in the state, that could not yet be consolidated in the oragnisation. Planned effort has to be made in this direction with topmost priority, the report stressed.

33 delegates took part in the deliberation on the report which reflected several suggestions for bringing about improvement inorganisation, strengthen democratic functioning at all level, building up unity at the grass root level and sharpen the edge of struggle in the days to come.

W R Varada Rajan, Secretary CITU also addressed the delegates dealt on the immediate organizational and movemental tasks. After reply to the deliberations by S Bharadwaj, MK Pandhe, General Secretary CITU delivered the concluding speech and reiterated the urgent tasks before the movement.

The Conference elected a 27 member State Committee with a 9 member Secretariat with S B Bharadwaj as President, Mohan Lal as General Secretary and Harish Ch Pant as Treasurer.

ELECTRICITY WORKERS' COUNTRYWIDE STRIKE

December 12, 2000, the employees and engineers of State Electricity Boards all over the country observed massive countrywide strike in protest against new power policy of the Govt, against unbundling of the electricity boards for privatisation and demanding dropping of the Electricity Bill 2000.

The National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers had given the call for strike.

As per report received from various parts of the country, strike was complete in Assam, Tripura, Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, West Bengal, Bihar, Tamilnadu, Kerala and Gujarat. In Haryana and Rjasthan, strike was partial. In Himachal Pradesh, employees enmasse had observed sit in strike throughout the state. In other places, the electricity employees took part in other forms of protest actions like dharna, rallies, demonstration etc. Nearly five lakh employees out of total nine lakh took part in strike action.

Massive participation of the electricity employees in the countrywide protest action manifested strong disapproval of the workers of the disastrous power policy of the Govt. B S Meel, General Secretary of Electricity Employees Federation of India have congratulated the employees for their massive participation in strike and protest actions.

MASSIVE COUNTRYWIDE POSTAL STRIKE

At the call of three National Federations, the 6 lakhs postal employees have gone for indefinite strike from 5th December 2000 to press for their vital demands including granting the status of Govt employees to 3 lakh extra departmental employees working for several years, with substandard pay and no social security/retrial benefit.

In fact, despite repeated assurances of considering the genuine demand of the ED employees who are keeping the

postal network alive in the remotest corner of the country, the Govt of the day has flouted commitment made to the unions again and again and this has compelled the employees to go in for continuous strike.

The strike took off well since 5th. Never before, the country witnessed such massive and united strike action crippling the entire postal network all over the country. Despite all kinds of threat, employees irrespective of affiliations remained firm in the strike picket. On 14th Govt invoked ESMA on the striking employees and declared the strike illegal. Instead of demoralizing the employees, such threat has ignited the fighting spirit of the strikers and incidents of arrest of some leaders and ceaseless threats being showered by the Govt through electronic media, could not affect the countrywide strike in the least. On the same day all the major central trade unions viz., AITUC, INTUC, HMS, BMS and CITU have condemned invoking of ESMA on the striking employees and expressed solidarity with the striking employees.

But unfortunately, two federations associated with INTUC and BMS have suddenly withdrawn from the strike on 17th night although the Govt did not concede to most of the substantive demands of the strike and arrogantly refused to grant status of Govt employees and even pension entitlement for the extra departmental employees. Only the leadership of National Federation of Postal Employees (NFPE) remain firm with the demands and refused to succumb to Govt's pressure tactics. Despite betrayal by the INTUC and BMS federations, and their withdrawal from the strike from 17th night, the overwhelming majority of the postal employees remained on strike all over the country on 18th December denouncing the betrayal by some leaders. And the postal employees at Delhi staged massive demonstration in Delhi which was addressed by various central trade unions including CITU. However, keeping in view the overall situation, the strike has been ended on 19th.

COM. DARSHAN KUDA, VICE PRESIDENT, RAJASTHAN STATE COMMITTEE OF CITU MURDERED

Comrade Darshan Kuda, the veteran leader of CITU has been murdered by the goons of the local industrialist on 18.12.2000. He was Vice President of the Rajasthan state committee and President of the Sri Ganganagar district committee of CITU. As per report after addressing a meeting of the workers of the Ginning Mills at Gajsinghpur comrade Kuda was returning by bus. On the way he was abducted by the hirelings of the mills management. He was given murderous beatings by the abductors and consequently he breathed his last.

It is a case of cold blooded murder of a popular trade union leader to crush the on going trade union movement by the employers' class - the profit haunting heinous blood suckers of labour. The startling, but perhaps not surprising, revelation is that the actual villain behind the horrendous crime is the local Congress (I) leader Shri Kundan Miglani. He was a minister in the previous BJP Government in the state. This is yet another eye opening instance to show that there is no difference between the Congress (I) and BJP parties in providing political berth to rank anti-labour criminals. It may be mentioned that to protest against the atrocities of the management and demanding implementation of certain statutory matters the workers of the Mill have been agitating. It is relevant to note that the owner of the Mill is relative of the local Congress (I) M.L.A. It may also be recalled that like the previous BJP Government, the current Congress (I) Government in the state has been demonstrating their rabid anti-labour stance. Such attitude of the Government has been providing signal to the

employers' class to let lose reign of terror.

Comrade Kuda was a very popular leader of the poor exploited mass of the workers in the district. His contribution in organising the unorganised workers shall always be remembered by the trade union movement. His popularity can well be gauged from the fact that the call of 'Band' given by the CITU received overwhelming response from the mass of the people in the entire district. The district CITU leadership took a very militant stand on the incident, organised huge moblisation and took a stand that, "till the culprits are arrested and SP of district is transferred, the dead body shall not be taken to funeral". The state Govt. had to ultimately concede the demands. The CITU Centre and Rajasthan State CITU, have condemned the ghastly murder and demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits.

ASSAM STATE CONFERENCE OF CITU

224 delegates including 26 working women representing a membership of 47,025 attended the 7th state conference held at the Oil Township of Digboi on 3-5 Dec'2000. Com Amin, Minister of the Government of West Bengal and Com. S.Dev Roye, both Secretaries of CITU attended as central observers. 42 delegates participated in the discussion on the report placed by the General Secretary Com.Deben Bhattacharyya. Discussion in two commissions based on two prepared papers were organised on "Problems and Prospects in organising the Tea workers" and the other one "On organisation". The reports were adopted unanimously by delegates. A seminar on 'the NEP and PSUs' was held during the conference.

The conference decided to shift Com. Michael Lugun, one of the Secretaries in the state centre, to convene the state level conferences of the Tea workers, the working women and the public sector workers to reconstitute the respective co-ordination committees, to form three more district committees, to organise four days trade union class. The new target for membership was fixed at 80,000.

The conference unanimously elected a 36 Member State Committee with Com. Amal Ghosh Dastidar and Deben Bhattacharyya as President and General Secretary respectively. 31 delegates for the all India conference were also elected from the conference. A public meeting on 3.12.2000 preceded the delegate session with mobilisation from the district.

DEMONSTRATION AGAINST DISINVESTMENT

December 20, 2000, a large demonstration was held inside the campus of the office of the Disinvestment Ministry at Yojana Bhawan at New Delhi to protest against desperate exercise of the Vajpayee Govt to sell out the PSUs. Even on the day the finance ministry spokesman declared that all the PSUs will be privatised within a time-frame.

The demonstration was addressed by KL Mahendra (AITUC), P K Ganguly (CITU), Asit Ganguly (UTUC), Shyama Charan Gaur (TUCC), S R Saini (AIIEA) and Ramanand (AIBEA).

From the demonstration, a five member delegation met the Disinvestment Minister, Arun Shouri and handed over a memeorandum to him demanding immediate stoppage of the disinvestment process. The minister declared to the delegation that a meeting with the central trade unions shall be convened on the issue on 5th January 2001.

WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST NUCLEAR BOMBS

On 6th August, 2000, at 7.00 A.M., 50,000 people from world over gathered in front of Hiroshima Peace Memorial to pay homage to the memory of victims of the World's first Atom Bomb attack way back in Hiroshima in 1945 by America. Japanese Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori and Russian Ambassador to Japan, Alexander Panov attended this ceremony.

The entire city was virtually levelled, thousands upon thousands of lives were lost. Those who survived suffered irreparable physical and psychological damage. The intense heat rays and blast crushed and burned nearly all buildings within 2 KMs of the hypocentre. By the end of December, 1945, when the acute effects of initial radiation had subsided, the bomb had taken 2,10,000 precious lives of Japanese Military personnel and scores of innocent and unarmed civilians from Japan, America, China, Korea etc. Several millions of people including the unborn were affected.

'LANTERN FLOATING'

On the 6th August evening, the 'Lantern floating Ceremony' was held where peace activists lighted thousands of colourful lanterns and floated in the Motoyasu River in Hiroshima. Written on these lanterns were messages in many languages hailing world peace and opposing nuclear bombs.

The Organising Committee consisting of hundreds of peace and anti-nuclear movements and organisation of nuclear victims, organised the 2000 World Conference against Atom & Hydrogen Bombs from 2nd to 9th August, 2000 at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The main theme of the Conference was "Action and co-operation for a nuclear free-21st century". About 300 delegates including 76 from overseas representing 8 international organisations and 34 national organisations in 20 countries as well as 10,000 delegates from across Japan representing anti-nuclear peace movements, Japanese Hibakusha and world nuclear victims, researchers and other prominent personalities participated in the Conference.

Sixteen delegates from India representing various organisations participated in the Conference. CITU sent the following eight delegates:

1. M.M.Varghese, All India BHEL Employees' Union, New Delhi
2. Satish Kumar Sharma, Air Corporation Employees' Union, New Delhi
3. Manoj Kumar Sharma, Air Corporation Employees' Union, New Delhi
4. Mary Varghese, All India BHEL Employees' Union, New Delhi
5. MV.Tandel, Port & Dock Workers' Union, Mumbai
6. Gurupada Burman, CWFI, Haldia
7. Sudarshan Manna, CWFI, Haldia
8. Depashish Dey, Air Corporation Employees' Union, Calcutta

PEACE MARCH

On arrival from Tokyo in the afternoon of 1st August, the overseas delegates visited the Peace Park and Peace Memorial Museum at Hiroshima.

A three-day Peace march was organised from 2nd to 4th August. At the end of the peace rally, Depashish Dey from CITU was one among the speakers who addressed the rallyists. Five CITU delegates viz, Depashish Dey, M.V.Tandel, Mary Varghese, S.K.Sharma and M.K.Sharma joined the peace march. The participation of the CITU delegation in the peace rally very much enthused the local people. They were warmly welcomed with flowers and gifts by the local organisations.

M.M.Varghese, Burman and Manna attended the information meeting held on 1.8.2000 in the evening wherein four overseas and four Japanese delegates were elected as Chairpersons to conduct International meetings and the plenary sessions.

In the morning of 2nd August, two

teams of 5 each overseas delegates visited two hospitals meant for the A-bomb victims. M.M.Varghese was one among the 5 overseas delegates who visited the Fukushima Co-operative Hospital for Hibakushas in Hiroshima.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

The Opening Session and Plenary Sessions of the International Meeting were held on 2.8.2000 at Hiroshima. M.M.Varghese represented the CITU in the International Meeting.

In the Plenary Session on August 2nd and 3rd, discussions focusing on the sub-themes were held and the delegates presented several reports on each topic.

CITU representative, Sudarshan Manna, participated in the Workshop on 3rd August and Depashish Dey spoke in the Opening Plenary on 4th August. More than 10,000 participants attended the meeting. On August 5, M.M.Varghese and Satish Kumar Sharma participated in the International Solidarity Meeting and the Workshop. Mrs.Mary Varghese participated in the "No Nukes" programme organised by the Women's Forum on August 5. On 7th morning the delegates moved to Nagasaki and visited A-bomb Epicenter Park and A-bomb Memorial Museum. On the 8th morning, five delegates visited the A-bomb Hospital. On the 8th, Satish Kumar Sharma and Depashish Dey participated in the Issue Based Meeting on "Grass-roots movements".

As a part of Nagasaki Day International Joint Action, a signature campaign for the "Appeal from Hiroshima and Nagasaki" was conducted. The international delegates collected signatures from local people at Nagasaki. The appeal has been sent to the U.N. Secretary General and the heads of 189 countries of the world.

DECLARATION CALL

The Closing Session of the Conference was held on 9th August. A declaration of the International Meeting was adopted in the closing session to express the common will of the participants. The declaration concluded with the following call: "We appeal to the people of the world. We can change the world. This is our firm conviction, which is growing stronger every day. Let us bring together all our efforts and action to build a decisive momentum towards the earliest possible realisation of a nuclear-free 21st century. Let us bring about ever greater changes in the state of the world, and rally the fruits to the 2001 World Conference against A & H Bombs, the first of the 21st century."

Most of the foreign delegates had home stay at Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To promote international goodwill, home stay with volunteer families in Japan was a very pleasant and useful experience. The friendly treatment provided by the host families to the foreign delegates left an indelible impression on us. Keisuke Fuse, International Bureau of Zenroren, despite other responsibilities member of the World Conference, accompanied the CITU delegates even during the peace march for three days and provided all assistance.

(Report by M.M.Varghese)

HIGH COURT ORDER TO REGULARISE CONTRACT WORKERS IN NBCC

In response to the writ petition by the CITU union, The Calcutta High Court passed an order directing the Central Govt and National Buildings Construction Co Ltd (NBCC) to absorb 57 contract workers of NBCC, working since last 17 years. These workers were all working in permanent perennial nature of jobs. The NBCC Thikadar Workers' Union(CITU) have demanded immediate implementation of the Court Order.

(Report by A Khan)

GLOBALISATION, EMPLOYMENT & ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

The three-day International Symposium on Employment and Role of Trade Unions held at Hakone, Japan from 30 Oct to Nov 1, 2000, effectively brought forward the fact that Globalisation has resulted in restructuring the present pattern of employment all over the world. The trend is deregularising employment, removal of customary or legal protection, elongation of the working day, expanding low paid jobs, cutting manufacturing costs by lowering wages in general and simultaneously, amassing super profits by the corporate. All the participant trade unions, representing the developed and underdeveloped countries, were unanimous that the problems they are facing are similar and that International solidarity and action alone can reverse the process.

Zenroren, the militant trade union of Japan, sponsored the symposium. Six other participants, representing five countries were the overseas delegates. The CITU was represented by V.J.K.Nair, General Secretary of Karnataka State Committee. Bob Kingsly, Director-organisation, United electrical and machinery workers Union, Pitsburg, from the USA; Andrew Ferguson, State Secretary and Tom Roberts, National Legal Officer, both of Construction and General Division of Construction, Forestry, Mining Energy Union (CFMEU), from Australia; Reckson Silaban, Vice President, Central Board, Indonesia Prosperity Trade Union (DIWAN PENGURUS PUSAT, SERIKAT BURUH SEJAHTERA, and INDOINESIA); Kang Hoon-Jong, Federation of Korean Trade Unions were the other participants.. Paul Hamon, CGT, France had sent a paper.

The sponsors had circulated in advance the Draft Introductory Report and obtained reports from all participants in advance. Three rounds of discussions followed by debates and conclusions.

The report from Japan showed that the Japanese Traditional System based on three factors, i.e. Life Time Employment, Annual Increase in wages (based on seniority), and Enterprise based Unions are all being restructured presently. Increasing employment of part time workers, migrant workers, replacing the system of employment by forceful introduction of performance based pay system, elongation of the working day, and general movement of workers resisting these trends, destabilizing enterprise based trade unions is the trend there.

In USA, even as the right to hire and fire was all along there, collective agreement, betrayed unions were treated as contracts and workers had enjoyed protection within that system. It is largely upset by many transferring plants shifting their activities to Mexico and other countries, to low paid wages and the workers in USA who had the protection of collective gaining by the unions recognized by the state supervised ballots, loosing employment and obtaining informal and unprotected employment.

Australia still enjoys labour protection and that country's representative felt that it is being subjected to tremendous pressure, when the day will not be far off when the labour will be overthrown and subjected to global restructuring.

Korea, which underwent financial and economic crisis, had thrown out of employment large number of workers. Real wages have fallen by 4%. Rate of unemployment has increased. But a distinct feature of Korea is that statutes widen social security net during this period. Every establishment employing even a single worker is brought under the net of National Insurance schemes guaranteeing pension, unemployment allowance, compensation for accidents and other benefits. However, the Korean Govt., which enacted these laws from 1998 to 2000 under pressure of militant trade

union actions, is not taking any financial burden for the expanding social security net. It has put the entire burden on the self-financing schemes i.e. on the organised segments of workers who contribute to these schemes will have to carry the burden of satisfying the needs of the unorganised and informal sections. Trade Union movement in Korea is bracing up for pressurising the Govt. to bear its share in pension and unemployment benefits etc.

Indonesia is witnessing a nascent form of developing their industries and enlarging employment. They have just come out from the dictatorial, corrupt regime, which subsisted only on foreign assistance. The young and dynamic movement there is searching for guidance and pattern as to how to steer their course.International assistance to them in this regard by militant and responsible movement such as ours could be of great use. The trade union movement there has set up their own economic and production agenda and is setting up self-sustaining production units. Our report had projected the increasing unemployment particularly after the liberalization. It reported about the restructuring, privatisation and deregulation of labour. This report projected as to how public sector was maintaining the rate of growth and employment evenly, as against the private sector corporate whose profit has increased tremendously in the post liberalisation period but is keeping the employment low.

Zenroren mooted the idea of better international co-ordination, which has got to be followed up in order to fight back the international offensive against labour.

The visits arranged by Zenroren firstly to the employment office at Yokohama and then to a construction workers hospital showed how the system of social security operates there. We have seen in the employment office that anyone could walk in, operate a computer, fill in the forms and get a job offer on the spot followed by registration and sponsoring letter to the employer. Jobseekers who do not get absorbed are paid unemployment allowance for six months from the State. The percentage of unemployed is presently around 3% the ratio of unabsorbed jobseekers to job offers. The construction workers hospital, we visited was organised in 1943 from out of National Insurance Fund. In Japan the trade union movement is taking up the issue of unemployed, by organising the Job-hunters' network and also taking up nationally the issues relating to unprotected labour on a large scale.

(Report from by V J K NAIR)

MARUTI WORKERS STRUGGLE

Workers of Maruti Udyog Ltd have been continuing united struggle against severe repression and victimization of the Maruti management since October 2000. The management in utter violation of all statutes had debarred the workers from joining duty since 12-10-2000 unless they sign a good conduct bond languaged by the management foregoing all their rights. The overwhelming majority of the workers refused to accept such bondage of slavery.. Since 13th December, 4000 workers have been staging sit-in demonstration before Udyog Bhawan continuously, day and night and started hunger strike since 16th December in protest of Govt's tacit support to the law-offending management. Till going to press, report of ongoing discussion between Industry Ministry, Management and the union has been received.

RAJYA SABHA COMMITTEE REPORT ON DETERMINATION OF PF INTEREST RATE

The Government of India had reduced the rate of interest on the Provident Fund payable to the subscribers of Employees Provident Fund from 12% to 11% for this year, viz 2000-2001.

The CITU, protesting against this arbitrary decision of the Government, over-ruling the unanimous recommendation of the Central Board of Trustees of the EPF, made a representation to the Rajya Sabha Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

The CITU brought to the notice of the Committee the "serious violation by the Government of India of para 60 of the EPF Scheme, 1952, in the matter of their unilateral decision to reduce the rate of interest payable to subscribers of the (Employees Provident) fund for the year 2000-01." The CBT in its meeting held on April 25, 2000 unanimously decided to recommend interest @ 12% to be credited to EPF members for the financial year 2000-01, but the Government "did not consult the Central Board on their proposal not to accept the recommendation of the Board"

In a supplementary representation dated 8th August, 2000, the CITU informed the Committee that "a special meeting of the Central Board of Trustees was held on July 25, 2000 and in that meeting, the Chairman of the Board had "agreed to take up the issue of rate of interest for the year 2000-01 with the Ministry of Finance." The Committee's attention was also drawn towards "violation and contravention of some provisions of EPF and MP Act, 1952 in some paragraphs of the EPF Scheme". A reference was made to the provision of sections 5(1) and 5(1A) of the Act and para 52 of the Scheme, and it was pointed out that the powers vested in the CBT by the Act cannot be taken away by the Scheme framed by Government. The CITU further informed the Committee that the Government had not constituted the Board of Trustees in the States, as contemplated under Section 5 B of the Act. The EPF Scheme, 1952 does not have any provision to govern the constitution of the State Board, but on the other hand, it only provides for setting up of "a Regional Committee for the State until such time a State Board is constituted".

The Committee called for comments from the Finance and Labour Ministries of the Government of India. They also held hearings to ascertain the view of the Secretary, Ministry of Labour, as also the representatives of five major Central Trade Unions, including the CITU.

The Committee after in depth a consideration of the issues involved adopted a report, which was presented to the Parliament on 1st December 2000, by Dipankar Mukherjee, Chairman. The salient points from the report are reproduced herewith:

A. Powers vested in the Central Board of Trustees under the Act by the Employees Provident Fund Scheme.

The Committee has suggested that the Ministry of Labour should undertake a review of the relevant provisions of the Act/Scheme so as to ensure that the Central Board of Trustees, which has been set up under the Act, is conferred with powers, as contemplated under the Act. In that process, the Board could be made more accountable and the Central Government could issue certain guidelines within which the Board must function.

B. Non-compliance of consultation process between CBT and Central Government. The Committee feels that a combined reading of the provisions of the Act and the scheme does give an impression that the power to administer the fund which has been vested in the Central Board under Section 5 has to some extent been watered down by the provisions of the scheme, particularly, the provisions of para 60 which vests the power to determine the rate of interest with the Central Government. A perusal of the provisions of Section 5(1A) of the Act gives an impression that the Central Board has full powers to administer fund. There is no proviso to this provisions in the Act and in that situation, vesting of powers to determine the rate of interest with the Central Government does not seem to be in consonance with the above provisions of the Act.

In Committee's view consultation is not a one way traffic; it is a process which facilities dialogue between two parties. The dialogue is essential. In this case the Ministry of Labour, after consultation with the Ministry of Finance over the question of rate of interest, did not go back to the CBT finally for "consultation". The Committee for this purpose recommends that, first, the Ministry of Labour should act as the nodal agency for the Central Government and secondly, the consultation process is undergone during the meeting of the CBT itself, where the Central Government is represented both by the Ministries of Labour and Finance. The Government's view on the rate of interest should be placed unambiguously in the meeting of CBT and this process should be treated as consultation process, before the Central Government takes a final view in the matter. In Committee's opinion, this procedure would ensure compliance of the provision of the Act/Scheme.

C. Review of interest rate for the year 2000-01.

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Labour should call for another meeting of CBT where all the parties should be apprised of the exact position of the fund and the existing decision of 11% interest for the year 2000-2001 is reviewed so that the consultation process is carried out.

D. Non-constitution of State Level Boards.

The Committee expresses its extreme unhappiness with the way this issue has been handled by the Ministry of Labour. The Ministry of Labour have not amended the Act, although a Committee which had been set up by them had recommended deletion of Section 5B as far back as in the year 1983.

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

With the inauguration of B.T.Randive Bhawan, the new premises of the CITU, the all India headquarters of the CITU has been shifted to the following address:

Centre of Indian Trade Unions,
B.T.Ranadive Bhawan,
13 A, Rouse Avenue,
New Delhi 110 002.
Telephones : 322 1288 and 322 1306
Fax : 322 1284
E'mail : citu@vsnl.com
Website : www.citu.org.in

All communications to the CITU Centre, All India Working Women Coordination Committee, 'The Working Class', 'Citu Mazdoor', "Voice of the Working Women' and the Secretariat Members at the Centre may be sent at the above address.

All remittances may be sent, preferably by Demand Draft payable at Delhi and crossed 'Account Payee', in favour of "Centre of Indian Trade Unions', at the above address.

M K Pandhe
General Secretary



Let us continue our endeavours with more vigour and dedication for ushering in a world without want, hunger, poverty and exploitation.



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